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**REPORT TO THE NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD**  
**15 December 2023**

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**TITLE:** Gateway Review (PAR) Action Plan  
**AUTHOR:** Alwen Williams, Portfolio Director  
Hedd Vaughan-Evans, Head of Operations

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to present the action plan in response to the 2023 Gateway Review (PAR) recommendations for the North Wales Growth Deal.

**2. DECISION SOUGHT**


- 2.1. That the Board support the action plan developed by the Portfolio Director and timescales for implementation in response to the 2023 Gateway Review (PAR) recommendations.
- 2.2. That the Board note that there may be a requirement to amend the action plan following the follow up Assurance of Action Plan (AAP) review in December and that in such an instance the Portfolio Director would consult the Chair and Vice-Chair on those amendments.

**3. REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

- 3.1. It is a requirement for the North Wales Growth Deal to respond to the recommendations set out in the Gateway Review report.

**4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1. In December 2020, the Economic Ambition Board and the Welsh and UK Governments agreed the Final Deal Agreement for the North Wales Growth Deal.
- 4.2. As part of the assurance arrangements for the North Wales Growth Deal, the portfolio must undertake an annual Gateway Review (PAR) assessment and respond to the recommendations.
- 4.3. The 2023 review took place between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2023. The review team were tasked with identifying the blockers to the delivery of the Growth Deal and make recommendations that would enable the Portfolio Management Office to address these blockers and speed up the delivery of the Growth Deal. The report set out 15 recommendations for the Portfolio Management Office to address.
- 4.4. The Gateway Review (PAR) report was presented to the Board as part of the 2023 Portfolio Business Case update on 27 October 2023.
- 4.5. The action plan included as Appendix 1 has been developed by the Portfolio Director and Head of Operations following discussions with Economic Ambition Board, Portfolio Board and the



Portfolio Management Office. The action plan was endorsed by the Portfolio Board on 24<sup>th</sup> November. Due to the timescales set out in the Gateway Review (PAR) report and the need to demonstrate progress by the follow up AAP review in December 2023, the majority of actions are already underway. The action plan sets out the timescales for completing activities as well as the resources required.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. There are no financial implications from the decision sought. The action plan is to be delivered within existing PMO resources.

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. It is a requirement for the Portfolio Management Office to respond to the Gateway Review (PAR) recommendations and put in place an action plan.

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### APPENDICES:

**Appendix 1** Gateway Review (PAR) Action Plan

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### BACKGROUND PAPER (Confidential document):

- 2023 Gateway Review (PAR) Report
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### STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

- i. **Monitoring Officer – Host Authority:**  
“I am satisfied with the propriety of the recommendation and I am ready to work with the Portfolio Office to implement the actions.”
- ii. **Statutory Finance Officer (the Host Authority’s Section 151 Officer):**  
“I have discussed the content of the review with Ambition North Wales officers, and Finance Service officers have been involved in the interviews. I particularly note that recommendation 11 includes a reference to allowing partners to access the financial support that the Portfolio Management Office receives from the Finance Service. I have no objection to this, but of course the role of the s151 officer is to provide the appropriate support to the Ambition Board and to the Portfolio Management Office and that includes challenging and verifying the information and plans submitted by the partners. Should the Finance Service be asked to provide direct support to any partners I will steps in place to ensure that this does not create a conflict of interest or weaken governance in any way.

I believe that the responses offered in the action plan are reasonable and realistic and I support the decision sought.”