



NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD

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TITLE: Functions of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board – Transfer to the Corporate Joint Committee

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to present an update on progress to establish the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC), respond to its statutory functions and undertake the proposed transfer of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board's functions into the CJC.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. To note the progress update on work to establish the North Wales CJC and respond to the tasks required by its statutory functions.
- 2.2. To note the proposed plan and provisional timetable for the transfer of the North Wales Growth Deal to the North Wales CJC.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1 In December 2021/January 2022, the Cabinet and Executives in each of the six Local Authorities agreed, in principle, that the functions of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board should be transferred by way of a delegation agreement to the CJC. The statutory framework and the establishment of the CJC means that the proposed transfer needs to be progressed.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. Establishment of the CJC is a legal requirement and timetables to discharge the statutory duties prescribed in the legislation – to produce a Regional Transport Plan and a regional Strategic Development Plan are pressing.
- 4.2. Progress to date has been achieved by means of an interim part-time Chief Executive Officer with legal and financial service provided by Cyngor Gwynedd to fulfil the statutory officer responsibilities for the CJC. It is intended that these arrangements will be continued to support the transfer process.
- 4.3. The CJC is subject to the more general duties of local authorities, such as the Equalities Act, Future Generations Act, language standards under the Welsh Language Measure 2011, and other legislation, in the same way as local authorities.

Proposed Plan and Timetable

- 4.4. The functions and partnership arrangement of the Economic Ambition Board are currently set out in the Governance Agreement 2 (“GA2”). This also includes the long-term arrangements for financially supporting the Growth Deal and Portfolio Management Office. Transfer of these functions, and in particular the Growth Deal, was specifically reserved to the local authorities for decision. It is anticipated that the Growth Deal would be transferred to the CJC but maintaining the financial arrangements to support the Growth Deal. The CJC has a statutory power to provide for the economic well-being of the region. This function co-exists with the economic development powers of the Councils and how as part of the development of the CJC these functions work regionally will need to be developed. It also needs to be recognised that the original in principal decisions were made when the CJC concept was still being developed. So, the precise model for the arrangements for transfer will also be developed as part of this work.
- 4.5. To transfer the functions of the Economic Ambition Board, including the Growth Deal and the Portfolio Management Office into the CJC, four independent workstreams will be established. Each workstream will have a programme of work and an agreed timescale to achieve the transfer of Economic Ambition Board functions to the CJC. A North Wales CJC Implementation Project Board will oversee the workstreams to provide oversight and to ensure key milestones are achieved with key risks identified and managed. Key officers from the Portfolio Management Office and Cyngor Gwynedd will sit on the project board.
- 4.6. The following table provides an outline of the 4 key workstreams and their purpose:

Workstream	Purpose	Key Milestones
Agreement on Transfer Legal / Governance	<p>To ensure that the necessary agreements and consents needed to achieve the transfer are secured and agreed.</p> <p>To ensure the necessary governance arrangements and agreements are put in place within the CJC for the delivery of the Growth Deal, including the role of advisors within the Economic Ambition Board.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing agreement of the 6 Constituent Authority Executives and GA2 parties to transfer. • Agreement of both governments to novation of the Growth Deal to the CJC that the Growth Deal delivery and draw down of the funding can be transferred to the CJC. • Agreement on the continuation of the current funding model for the Growth Deal. • Agreement on the post transfer inter-relationship between the CJC and the Constituent Councils. • Agreement on the role of existing EAB advisors within the CJC. • Agreement on how the CJC’s regional wider economic

		development role will be shaped and co-exist with the concurrent functions of the Local Authorities in this area.
People and HR	Take forward TUPE process including consultation with staff, ensure that staff policies and protocols are in place to ensure a successful transition to the CJC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant policies and processes adopted by CJC. • TUPE consultation undertaken. • Staff successfully transferred into the CJC.
Finance, Processes and Systems	To enable the transfer of Growth Deal funding and project funding arrangements as well as ensuring that all operational processes and systems are in place for the transfer of the PMO to the CJC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval from government for transfer of Growth Deal funding. • Necessary processes and systems in place prior to transfer of Growth Deal funding and PMO staff.
Communications and Engagement	Ensure staff and key stakeholders are communicated with and engaged throughout the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications and Engagement Plan agreed. • Regular communications pre and post transfer. • TUPE consultation completed.

4.7. Resources to meet the volume of activity required to implement a comprehensive set of transition arrangements, to maintain business as usual and the increase in the CJC's compliance activities, is managed through a secondee from Welsh Government and apportioned time from the interim CJC Chief Executive. Support is also being provided through Cyngor Gwynedd's 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer and the Legal and Finance Teams.

4.8. The 1st of July has been identified as the provisional target date for the transfer of functions from the Economic Ambition Board into the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee. However, this date may be impacted by a number of factors including the need for partner and government agreement to the transfer of the Growth Deal; decision making requirements and timescales; internal capacity constraints and TUPE considerations. There are key decisions which need to be in place to achieve the transfer that may result in some areas of transfer being undertaken in the Autumn period 2024.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Costs associated with the transfer of functions to the CJC will be primarily related to officer time, legal and financial expenditure. Funding will be drawn from existing CJC and Economic Ambition Board budgets. Legal, HR, Finance, IT and Democratic Services support will be provided through Cyngor Gwynedd resources.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. The report sets out at a high level what is proposed.

- 6.2. The Growth Deal is a formal partnership between the UK and Welsh Governments and the 6 constituent authorities. It is portfolio based and funding is drawn down by a formal annual funding letter which is a grant agreement made by the host authority on behalf of the 10 GA2 partners, but primarily the 6 Constituent Councils. The release of funding for any period is subject to the performance of the implementation of the Growth Deal and may be held back by the Governments.
- 6.3. There are a number of governance and legal matters at the core of this project. These are highlighted in the table above. There are also risks which will need to be managed and resolved, as well as key consents, in order to active both transfer and timetable. There are dependencies built into the programme which means that whilst an element of concurrency can be achieved to facilitate progress there will be key decisions or approvals which will be needed to allow for progress.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- 7.1. Equality Act 2010.
- 7.2. The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

APPENDICES:

None

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer:

“The transfer of the Growth Deal to the CBC is a matter which is reserved to the Councils for decision. As the report outlines there are key decisions which are needed to enable this process to go forward. These will involve both the Council, Education partners and both Governments. Although there is agreement in principle this will require a lot of detailed work across a number of areas. In terms of the CJC it, in parallel will need to contribute to this process and set up the necessary internal governance and administrative arrangements to facilitate the transfer in. The discussion s on the proposed scrutiny model will also need to be brought to maturity as part of this element.

I welcome the intention to create a multidisciplinary project to team to lead on this matter. It will require close legal support, drawing on both internal and external resources. Given that the Ambition North Wales is based on a partnership structure the work will involve close liaison with all partners to reach agreement on key aspects of the proposed model. The initial work around this process is already in train and the key elements identified in this report are based on this input and advice.”

ii. Statutory Finance Officer:

“I support the decision sought, and I will assist with the work of implementing this project as required. I have no further comment to add from the perspective of financial propriety.”