
REPORT TO THE ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD

14th February, 2024

TITLE: Appointment of Growth Deal SRO and Lead Members

AUTHOR: Alwen Williams, Portfolio Director

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to present a proposed amendments to the Growth Deal governance structures including the appointment of a new Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for the Growth Deal.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. That the Board agree to the principle that the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) and Portfolio Director roles should be separated (subject to HR advice) and undertaken by different individuals and note the proposed split of duties and responsibilities as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. That the Board request a nomination from one of the six local authority Chief Executives to act as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for the North Wales Growth Deal with a view to confirming this appointment at the next meeting.
- 2.3. That the Board agree the changes to Lead Member responsibilities across the Growth Deal as set out in section 6.

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. To seek the Economic Ambition Board's approval to separate the role of SRO and Portfolio Director in response to the new requirement from government.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1. The North Wales Growth Deal is an agreement between the UK Government, Welsh Government and the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to deliver a transformational £1billion investment in the North Wales economy. The aim of the Growth Deal is to build a more vibrant, sustainable and resilient economy in North Wales, building on our strengths to boost productivity while tackling long-term challenges and economic barriers to delivering inclusive growth.
- 4.2. As per the Final Deal agreement, a portfolio, programme and project management governance structure has been put in place to oversee the delivery of the Growth Deal. This includes having a Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for the Growth Deal and Lead Members across the programmes.

- 4.3. The Economic Ambition Board (or Corporate Joint Committee post transfer) is ultimately accountable for the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal objectives, delivering the projected outcomes and realising the required benefits. The SRO is accountable to the Economic Ambition Board for the delivery of the agreed portfolio scope and objectives.

5. SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNER

- 5.1. The role of SRO has been undertaken by Alwen Williams since the start of the Growth Deal alongside her Portfolio Director responsibilities. New requirements set out by Welsh Government and UK Government as funders of the Growth Deal now require these roles to be separated and undertaken by different individuals to increase accountability and provide additional leadership capacity.
- 5.2. The proposal is to appoint one of the six local authority Chief Executives to act as Senior Responsible Owner (SR) for the North Wales Growth Deal. This proposal is seen as a natural extension of the current informal Lead Chief Executive role that Dylan Williams, Chief Executive of Isle of Anglesey County Council has been undertaking to support the Portfolio Director.
- 5.3. The SRO and Portfolio Director are accountable to the Economic Ambition Board for the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal with the specific accountability split set out in Appendix 1. This also includes some responsibilities that remain with the Chief Executive of the host authority (or the CJC upon transfer of the Growth Deal) as these are statutory responsibilities of the Chief Executive.
- 5.4. A draft appointment letter for the SRO is set out at Appendix 2.

6. LEAD ROLES

- 6.1. Since the establishment of the Growth Deal, five of the Council leaders have taken on Lead Roles for each of the Growth Deal programme areas to provide a link between the Board and the Programme Boards. The sixth Leader sat on the Transport sub-committee.
- 6.2. With the establishment of the Strategic Transport Sub-Committee within the CJC there is no longer a requirement for this role within the EAB, providing an opportunity to review this arrangement.
- 6.3. The revised proposal is that Chair of the Economic Ambition Board no longer takes up a Lead Role to allow the Chair to focus on strategic matters and overall delivery of the Growth Deal with the Lead Roles split between the five other Leaders. The proposed allocation is set out below and represents a mixture of new appointments and continued arrangement:

Programme	Lead Member
Agri-food and Tourism	Councillor Charlie McCoubrey
Innovation in High Value Manufacturing	Councillor Dave Hughes
Land and Property	Councillor Jason McLellan
Low Carbon Energy	Councillor Gary Pritchard
Digital	Councillor Nia Jeffreys

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no financial implications relating to this paper.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The proposal responds to a clear government requirement to have a separate SRO and Portfolio Director. The role of SRO is well established as best practice and is a key part of the Growth Deal governance requirement. Separating the roles allows for greater accountability, resilience, and support for the delivery of the Growth Deal.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1	SRO – PD – CEX Responsibilities
Appendix 2	Draft appointment letter for the SRO

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. **Monitoring Officer:**

“This is an initial decision for the Economic Ambition Board to come to decision on the separation of the roles. The report provides a clear model for separating the role of the SRO from the Portfolio Director and the nature of the respective duties and accountabilities are set out in the appendix. There is sufficient information in the report for the Board to come to a view and determination in relation to the Growth Deal. The role of the CJC Chief Executive is a matter for the CJC to establish but this proposal gives a clear indication and guide as to how this role would be involved in the Growth Deal delivery post transfer.”

ii. **Statutory Finance Officer:**

“The budget of the Corporate Joint Committee that was adopted on 17 January, and the budget for the Growth Deal that appears as a separate item on this meeting’s agenda, reflect the structure that is required by the governments; the contents of this report give further details on the different roles. I have no further comments from the perspective of financial propriety.”