



Partneriaeth Tyfu Canolbarth Cymru / Growing Mid Wales Partnership

Dydd Llun 15 Tachwedd 2021

Monday 15 November 2021

10.30 am

Cyfarfod Rhith

Virtual Meeting

Attendance:-

Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn, Leader of Ceredigion County Council (Chair) **(CIlr EAG)**
Councillor Rosemarie Harris, Leader of Powys County Council (Vice-Chair) **(CIlr RH)**
Adam Evans, Welsh Government **(AE)**
Aggie Caesar-Homden, Powys County Council **(ACH)**
Andrew Cornish, Coleg Sîr Gar **(AC)**
Angharad Massow, Ceredigion County Council **(AM)**
Ann Elias, Ceredigion County Council **(AE)**
Ann Watkin, Welsh Government **(AW)**
Arwyn Davies, Ceredigion County Council **(AD)**
Arwyn Watkins OBE, Cambrian Training **(ArW)**
Carwyn Jones-Evans, Ceredigion County Council **(CJE)**
Cathy Martin, Portfolio Management Office **(CMn)**
Ceri Stephens, Mid Wales Manufacturing Group **(CS)**
Claire Miles, Ceredigion County Council **(CMs)**
Councillor Dafydd Edwards, Ceredigion County Council **(CIlr DE)**
Councillor Iain McIntosh, Powys County Council **(CIlr IM)**
Councillor Myfanwy Alexander, Powys County Council **(CIlr MA)**
Councillor Rhodri Evans, Ceredigion County Council **(CIlr RE)**
Dr. Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Aberystwyth University **(RLIM)**
Eifion Evans, Ceredigion County Council **(EE)**
Gareth Jones, Powys County Council **(GJ)**
Gary Mitchell, PAVO **(GM)**
Glenn Bowen, Wales Co-operative Centre **(GIB)**
Gwilym Jones, University of Wales Trinity St. David **(GJ)**
Hywel Davies, University of Wales Trinity St David **(HD)**
Lowri Gwilym, WLGA **(LG)**
Marie Evans, Ceredigion County Council **(ME)**
Mark Dacey, NPTC Group of Colleges **(MD)**
Nigel Brinn, Powys County Council **(NB)**
Peter Howells, NFU **(PH)**
Peter James, Welsh Government **(PJ)**
Peter Morris, Powys County Council **(PM)**
Rebecca Rees, Welsh Government **(RR)**

Rhian Hayward, AberInnovation **(RH)**
 Rowland Rees-Evans, Ceredigion County Council **(RRE)**
 Sarah Groves-Philips, Ceredigion County Council **(SGP)**
 Steve Hughson, RWAS **(SH)**
 Tom Yeo, Powys County Council **(TY)**
 Vanessa Naughton, Welsh Government **(VN)**

Simultaneous Translation of this meeting was provided by Sian Jones from Cyfaith.

<p>1.</p>	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from:- Diane Reynolds, Powys County Council Dr. Caroline Turner, Chief Executive, Powys County Council Julie Lewis, Powys County Council Peter James – Welsh Government Nick Venti – PAVO</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Minutes The minutes of the last meeting held on 16th September 2021 were agreed as a correct record.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Mid Wales Growth Deal – Progress Update</p> <p>Carwyn Jones-Evans provided an update on the Mid Wales Growth Deal. He advised that following Growing Mid Wales Board approval on 21 September 2021, the Strategic Portfolio Business Case and supporting documents were formally submitted to Welsh Government on 1 October 2021. Both Powys and Ceredigion County Council Cabinets unanimously endorsed the Strategic Portfolio Business Case at their meetings on 5 October 2021. The Strategic Portfolio Business Case and supporting documents were currently going through an Accounting Officer Review (AOR), which was part of the Government's assurance process. This would culminate in a report setting out a series of recommendations and timescales which the Portfolio Management Office would need to respond on. It was hoped that the Deal would be signed before the end of 2021.</p> <p>The Portfolio Management Office (PoMO) were currently engaging with the shortlisted programmes and projects to establish further clarity on development timescales and requirements (mapping resource/capacity, governance/management, development costs, timescales, etc.). This would be important in gauging the current position of the programmes and projects and particularly identifying risks in terms of ability to develop the business cases and what support will be required by the sponsors. Responses would be used to update risk registers and provide a clearer understanding of development timescales for the whole Portfolio. It was emphasised that further projects would be welcomed.</p> <p>CJE advised that a new private sector advisory group was being established and that a press release asking for nominations was about to be issued. Steve Hughson asked about the Economic Strategy Group and it was</p>

	<p>confirmed that it was open to members of the ESG to apply as long as they did not have an interest.</p> <p>Cllr RH reported that Powys had received £22 million from the Levelling Up Fund, £16 million of which was for a project to restore the Montgomeryshire Canal.</p> <p>Cllr EAP advised that Ceredigion had received £10.8 million for projects at Aberystwyth harbour, the promenade and the Old College. In addition, 10 projects had received funding from the Community Renewal Fund.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Regional Skills Partnership – Progress Update</p> <p>Aggie Caesar-Homden gave an update on the work of the Regional Skills Partnership. She reported that the withdrawal of the Employer Engagement Officer candidate had put pressure on the team but that an officer had now been seconded.</p> <p>Cllr EAP noted the shortage in the number of care staff and commented on the need to have suitable training courses for young people. Cllr RH emphasised the need to have a good understanding of the skills gaps that businesses wanted to see addressed. Cllr EAP asked whether there was representation on the Board from employers and was advised that there was but that there was no representation from the Agri food sector. ACH was looking to attract someone to represent this sector on the board and she asked partners to contact her if they knew of anyone suitable. Cllr RE suggested Professor Wyn Jones, formerly of Harper Evans College.</p> <p>The Growing Mid Wales Partnership considered its appointment to the RSP Board and it was</p> <p>Agreed to appoint County Councillor Myfanwy Alexander and County Councillor Rhodri Evans to the RSP Board.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Business Updates</p> <p><u>5.1 Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme</u></p> <p>Gareth Jones reported on the Transforming Towns programme. 11 projects had been approved with a total grant commitment of approximately £1M. In addition, The Market Hall, Cardigan Phase 2 scheme has been approved subject to funding being made available next financial year. It was anticipated that most of the grant funding for this financial year would be committed at the next grant panel scheduled for November/December.</p> <p>GJ also reported on strategic regeneration projects including the opening of Barcud’s Canolfan Creuddyn business centre in Lampeter on November 4th, the, Newtown Green Infrastructure Project, the Automobile Palace, Llandrindod Wells and Riverside Venue, Newtown.</p> <p>He advised that a grant of £185,000 revenue funding had been secured from Welsh Government to support complementary initiatives in town centres in Mid Wales during 2021-22. This would be used to develop and implement digital solutions and training to support increased footfall,</p>

	<p>support businesses and visitor experience and add value to already existing investment within town centres. Welsh Government had also recently approved a sum of £68,000 revenue funding to each local authority to support projects in 2021-22.</p> <p>5.2 <u>Regional Engagement Team Report</u> Claire Miles gave an update on the work of the Regional Engagement Team. Discussions had continued with WG regarding future regional investment and the leaders had attended a further meeting of the Strategic Forum for Regional Investment In Wales on the 7th October. It was hoped further details and information would be shared by Welsh and UK Governments by the end of 2021, after the budget of the 27th of October. A White Paper on the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund was also anticipated in November.</p> <p>The Mid Wales RET team was leading on the GMW Communications subgroup. All regional teams were meet on a monthly basis to ensure integrated communications activity and new processes had been established to ensure a regional pipeline of communications activity was developing in order to ensure increased visibility of the work of Growing Mid Wales.</p> <p>During the past quarter the focus for the Mid Wales RET team was on supporting WEFO with a planned week of promotional activity to promote the achievements of ESF Employability Support funding across Wales. The RET coordinated and provided a number of regional case studies for WEFO to use during the promotional week (20-24 September). Plans were now developing for similar online promotional activity towards the end of 2021, in lieu of the WEFO annual event.</p> <p>Updated figures showing the performance of ESIF funded operations in Mid Wales would be circulated following the meeting.</p> <p>5.3 <u>Connectivity and Infrastructure Working Group</u> Ann Elias gave an update on strategic transport issues affecting the region and the work of the Connectivity and Infrastructure Working Group. She advised that Welsh Government had asked for an amended application for the proposed new station at Carno. She also reported the disappointing news that the Llanbedr access road scheme in Meirionnydd was not being supported by Welsh Government.</p> <p>RH gave an update on the Global Centre for Rail Excellence project. Nigel Brinn confirmed that he would be happy to give a presentation on GCRE to a future meeting.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Government(s) Update</p> <p>6.1 <u>WG Regional Economic Frameworks and related regional matters</u> Ann Watkins reported that the Mid Wales Regional Economic Framework was being developed in collaboration across the region. It was hoped that it would be published by the end of 2021 or early 2022. The aim was to have a shared set of economic development priorities and agreed</p>

	<p>principles for working collaboratively, recognising the distinctive needs of the region. The priorities matched those of the Mid Wales Growth Deal. Rhodri Llwyd and Gareth Jones were thanked for their support in hosting the COPCymru Mid Wales regional event. A copy of the Mid Wales Regional Economic Framework would be sent to members of the partnership when it was published.</p> <p>AW also reported that the First Minister had recently opened AberInnovation and had visited the Centre for Alternative Technology prior to attending the COP26 conference in Glasgow. She also advised that Welsh Government continued to have three weekly reviews of the Cid situation including any support for business.</p> <p>6.2 Future regional investment</p> <p>Alison Sandford from Welsh Government reported that there had been little engagement from UK Government over the Community Renewal Fund bids. WG had not been happy with the process so they had not commented on the bids other than to caution on potential fraud. She noted that with the exception of Flintshire all local authorities in Wales had successful bids.</p> <p>With EU funding ending in September 2022, WG was concerned at the shortfall of funding available for schemes in Wales, £400 million in 2022, £700 million in 2023 and £1.5 billion the following year. This would have a huge impact on future schemes, for example, £30 million used to support 5,300 apprenticeships, 1,100 of which were in Mid Wales, would be lost. WG was also concerned that there would be less efficient use of resources, poor value for money and duplication of funding. The First Minister had made clear his concerns about the lack of WG involvement in the multiplier grant scheme at the Inter-Governmental Relationships Committee. Following support from the other devolved nations, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had instructed his officials to work with the devolved governments. It was hoped that there would be better collaboration as a result.</p> <p>Cllr MA noted that Powys was now having access to funds that it didn't before as it had not previously benefitted from EU funding.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Wider Regional Updates</p> <p>7.1 Business Wales</p> <p>Adam Evans from Welsh Government gave an update on Business Wales which had helped create 6,000 new businesses, encourage entrepreneurship in young people and acted as a vehicle to deliver key Welsh Government commitments on climate. Business Wales was heavily reliant on EU funding and was therefore faced with a challenge of how it would operate after September 2022. A number of options had been presented to Ministers, but the future shape of the service would not be known until after the WG spending review. AE would provide an update when the position was clearer.</p>

7.2 Energy Strategy Progress Report

Tom Yeo gave a progress report on the Mid Wales Energy Strategy. The strategy, which had been adopted by both Cabinets, set the vision for mid Wales *“To achieve a net zero-carbon energy system that delivers social and economic benefits, eliminates fuel poverty, better connects mid Wales to the rest of the UK, and contributes to wider UK decarbonisation.”*

The strategy set out 6 Key Priorities to tackle energy issues in the region. An Advisory Group had been formed to support the next phase of the work. The final action plan would be produced by March 2022 for formal sign off within the region and Welsh Government.

Cllr MA argued that without massive investment in the existing energy infrastructure the model wouldn't work. She wanted to see local energy networks developed and she felt that there enough expertise locally to develop projects to generate and use electricity without using the national grid. Glenn Bowen noted that local energy generation was an opportunity for community ownership and keeping benefits in the area. TY confirmed that the group was looking at local area energy plans with Welsh Government.

Cllr RH asked about electric vehicle charging points. AE advised that Ceredigion had formed to group to look at this and Powys had been invited to participate. Councillor Dafydd Edwards argued that hydrogen which could be generated and transported without using the grid was the only long-term solution.

7.3 Tourism

Julie Lewis, the Tourism Manager for PCC, was unable to attend to give an update. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

8. **NRW – Phosphates Levels Guidance**

Peter Morris the Lead for Professional for Planning in PCC explained the impact of the planning guidance on phosphate levels on developments. The result was an environmental constraint on any development within a river SAC catchment which generated additional phosphate. One possible solution was to have water treatment sites with phosphate stripping technology

Dr. Rhodri Llwyd Morgan offered the assistance of Aberystwyth's CHERISH project.

Sarah Groves-Phillips advised that CCC had secured £500k from the Heritage Lottery Scheme to investigate how the council could use its land holdings to mitigate phosphate levels.

9.	Consultation Response – UK Government Wireless Infrastructure Strategy Call for evidence CMs advised that the CCC and PCC digital officers would produce a response to the consultation. She asked partners to submit any comments by the end of the week.
10.	Any other business None
11.	Date of Next Meeting Friday 18 th February 2022

DRAFT