

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held via Video conference on Thursday, 20 May 2021 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Joan Butterfield, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones (Chair), Hugh Irving, Melvyn Mile, Rhys Thomas, David Williams and Emrys Wynne

Observer – Councillor Meirick Lloyd Davies and Councillor Gwyneth Kensler

Also in attendance - Councillor Hugh Evans - The Leader, Lead Member for the Economy and Corporate Governance

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Economy and Public Realm (GB), Head of Planning and Public Protection (EJ), Chief Digital Officer (BE), Economic and Business Development Lead Officer – Inward Investment and High Growth (JCE), Project Manager (HV-E), Scrutiny Coordinator (RE) and Committee Administrators (SJ).

North Wales Economic Ambition Board Representatives in attendance -

Alwen Williams – Portfolio Director
Hedd Vaughan-Evans – Operations Manager

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ann Davies and Christine Marston.

Apologies for absence were also received from Corporate Director: Communities. Corporate Director: Economy and Public Realm deputised for the meeting.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the office of Committee Vice-Chair for the 2021/22 municipal year. Councillor Emrys Wynne was nominated for the role by Councillor J Chamberlain-Jones and seconded by Councillor David Williams. No other nominations were put forward.

The Committee therefore:

Resolved: that Councillor Emrys Wynne be elected Vice-Chair of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee for the 2021/22 municipal year.

The Chair thanked Councillor Wynne for his support to her during the past year and wished him well for the forthcoming year. Councillor Wynne thanked Committee

members for their support and for entrusting him with a further term as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were raised.

4 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters were raised.

5 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 April 2021 were submitted.

Members were advised that more information would be provided under business item 7 on the agenda, the Committee's Forward Work Programme, in relation to the point raised within the minutes on the holding or pre-meeting briefing sessions ahead of Committee meetings. It was:

Resolved: - that the minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 April 2021 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

6 NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

The Leader, Lead Member for the Economy and Corporate Governance introduced the report. The Leader introduced the officers in attendance for the agenda item; Alwen Williams – Portfolio Director and Hedd Vaughan- Evans – Operations Manager from the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB), along with officers from the authority. Members heard the importance of the quarterly meetings attended by officers to work with the portfolio management team to influence and understand the regional work being undertaken.

It was explained the report was an update on the Growth deal that had been agreed by Full Council. It was explained that work had commenced on the delivery phase of the programme of work. Part of the agreement had been to report to Scrutiny twice a year to update members of progress made. The Leader explained to members the level of work and detail which required to be conducted in relation to projects prior to the submission of business cases.

Alwen Williams, Portfolio Director guided members through a short presentation, providing members with background information. It was explained the aim of the Growth Deal was to provide a more vibrant, sustainable and resilient economy in North Wales. Building on existing strengths in the region to boost productivity and addressing long-term challenges and economic barriers. It was explained that in the business cases three key spending objectives had been identified. These were noted as Job creation, Gross Value Added (GVA) and Investment. Members heard the objective was to create up to 4,200 jobs.

The Growth Deal was based on the delivery of twenty-one transformational projects across five programmes (defined as either high growth or enabling programmes). Two programmes focused on enabling the region, these were digital connectivity and land and property. These programmes were funded by the growth deal. It was hoped that delivery in these sectors would allow businesses to invest in the region and the labour market to take advantage of the new employment opportunities. Emphasis on the partnership work across North Wales being cohesive and efficient was made.

The Portfolio Director provided further guidance on digital connectivity. It was explained the aim was to improve digital connectivity. The project addressed the needs of the customers and citizens. The digital programme had identified a need to balance investment, infrastructure and technology through fixed broadband at key sites and rural areas. It was explained that two main components had been included in the digital programme. The components included were digital connectivity project and an innovation project with Bangor University.

Information was provided on the Land and Property Programme. The programme identified a shortage of suitable land and properties for businesses to develop. Members heard several key projects had been agreed, including the Holyhead Gateway, Wrexham Western Gateway site, key strategic site in Bodelwyddan, Bryn Cegin Strategic Site in Bangor, former North Wales Hospital site in Denbigh and Warren Hall in Flintshire.

The other 3 programmes focused on key strengths in the high value sectors within the region. The aim of the programmes was to increase the value and impact of the high growth sector. The first programme was low carbon energy with the aim to unlock economic benefits of transformational low carbon energy projects. The projects included in the low carbon energy programme were Morlais a marine energy project, Trawsfynydd Power station, low carbon centre of excellence working with Bangor University, Smart local energy and transport decarbonisation.

The Innovation in High Value Manufacturing Programme looked at consolidating North Wales' already established position as an innovative, high value manufacturing cluster. The aim was to build on the area's well established specialisms and develop expertise to create a high value, more diverse economic base to support a move to a low carbon economy in manufacturing. Two key projects had been agreed both working with academic partners, one was the development of a Centre for Environmental Biotechnology with Bangor University. The second project was Enterprise Engineering and Optics Centre with Glyndŵr University.

The Agri-food and Tourism Programme would support and develop sustainability and optimise opportunities for employment through the environment and landscape. Members were informed that within the programme three key projects would be undertaken. These would be Glynllifon Rural Economy Club, Llysfasi Carbon Neutral Centre and Tourism TALENT Network.

The Operations Manager Hedd Vaughan-Evans guided members through information on the progression of the Growth Deal programmes and projects for

Quarter 4 2021 (Jan – March). It was confirmed that this was the first progress report presented to the Scrutiny Committee. The focus had been moving to the delivery phase, it was noted that all the projects in the North Wales Growth Deal were still in the business case development phase. It was confirmed a review of all projects had taken place to re-confirm timetables. It was explained that each project was developed in line with the Better Business Case guidance. Business cases had been developed through the use of workshops to involve as many stakeholders as possible to discuss and agree delivery models.

Every project was required to go through a gateway review, carried out by an independent panel to evaluate the project at key points in the development of the project. It was confirmed two projects had completed this phase of development. These were the Morlais project led by Menter Môn and the Enterprise Engineering and Optics Centre Project led by Wrexham Glyndŵr University.

Members heard that two projects had been identified as 'Red', those projects were the Key Strategic Site in Bodelwyddan and the Holyhead Gateway project. A number of projects were reporting as 'Amber' which was primarily due to the business development timeframe taking longer than originally estimated. The Operations Manager stated in his opinion there were no significant concerns regarding these projects.

It was noted that the most significant achievements during quarter 4, was the receipt of grant award letter from the Welsh and UK Governments and the first instalment of funding in March 2021.

Members were presented with the highlights of the annual report. The report demonstrated the progress made on the Growth Deal and the activities supported by the Portfolio Management Office. Members recognised the difficulties the Board had faced during 2020/21 during the Covid19 pandemic. It was noted that the Final Deal agreements had been signed during a virtual ceremony on the 17th December 2020 in line with the original timescales. Close working relationships had been established with local authorities and with the UK and Welsh Government and other public sector representatives to co-ordinate the regional response to economic recovery.

The Chair thanked the Board representatives for the detailed presentation and thorough account of the work of the Board to date. In response to members' questions the Lead Member, officers and Board representatives expanded on the following:

- The £16 million received from Government, was the first instalment of growth deal Capital funding allocated to the projects. The £2.9 million secured European Social Fund (ESF) funding was the revenue funding for the portfolio management office over a three-year period. The revenue funding would be matched by the partners to make the total revenue funding just under £6m for the first 3 years.
- The Morlais Project and Glyndŵr Project had been progressed through the gateways at different times. Both projects were moving forward, no concerns had been observed.

- There were four infrastructure projects in the digital portfolio office. It was confirmed two of the projects had been delayed. Two projects were being prioritised at this stage, the two delayed projects would be picked up and progressed at a later date. It was stressed there were no problems with the projects, although a delay had been observed they were still on track with the projected timescale.
- The portfolio office had created the report against the current timeline. Officers stated as the projects and programmes progressed a separate information table for work not started might have to be included, to illustrate work started separately.
- Very close contact took place with all the local authorities, to work together to support the projects of the Board to ensure that they coincided with the local expectations of each authority.
- Planning policies included a Welsh Government national planning policy, local authorities adopted a Local Development Plan (LDP) and there would soon be a requirement for a regional plan to be developed. Officers stressed the power in planning lay with Local Authorities to develop the LDPs. Members had the control to develop the LDP to address the local need. The Board wanted to develop projects that Local Authorities supported.
- A project with Coleg Cambria, Llysfasi looked at how innovation could aid in an ability to be productive in the agricultural field through the creation of a carbon neutral farm. The project would demonstrate the ability to be more innovative and productive in the agricultural field.
- Decisions in relation to the future of the Bodewyddan key strategic site were being held in abeyance, pending Denbighshire deciding on its future planning policy for the site.
- Board members thanked members for the information about the former North Wales Hospital in Denbigh and would revise the coding at the next board meeting.

Members thanked all involved in the presentation and response to questions and concerns raised.

The Committee:

Resolved: - subject to the above comments and observations to receive the Quarter 4 2020/21 Performance Report and the 2020/21 Annual Report of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB).

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Coordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking members' review of the Committee's work programme and provided an update on relevant issues.

Discussion focused on the following –

- Appendix one listed the upcoming meetings and proposed reports. A report from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) on the Capital plans for Services in Denbighshire. An application to the Chair for a deferral of the item was made, as the health officers were awaiting a response from Welsh

Government (WG) on the business plan. The item would be presented to the Committee at the earliest opportunity, once feedback had been received from the WG.

- No items had been added to the FWP following the Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group meeting.
- The Scrutiny Co-Ordinator confirmed the next meeting on the 8th July had three proposed reports, with the possibility of the BCUHB report referred to above being added.
- Members were informed on the current difficulty in administrating a pre-meeting briefing. If members felt, there was a need to hold a briefing meeting before a meeting they should contact the Chair and the Scrutiny Co-Ordinator to discuss. At present a briefing would not be arranged for all meetings.
- Members felt a pre meeting would be beneficial before receiving the Health Board reports.
- Members stressed the importance of receiving the BCUHB Capital Plans in Denbighshire report as soon as possible especially to address the project relation to the site of the former Royal Alexandra Hospital at Rhyl. It was understood that the delay with the WG response was due to the Senedd elections.

The Committee:

Resolved: - *subject to the above comments and observations to –*

- (i) confirm the Committee's forward work programme (Appendix 1); and*
- (ii) if necessary, to hold a Special meeting of the Committee to discuss Health Board capital projects in Denbighshire once Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) receive a response from the Welsh Government (WG) to its latest business case for the new North Denbighshire Community Hospital facility.*

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

The Scrutiny Co-Originator had received a report from Councillor Christine Marston following her attendance at meetings of two groups on which she represented the Committee. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator delivered the feedback to the Committee as follows.

The first meeting attended by Councillor Marston had been the Stakeholders Reference Group of BCUHB held on the 22nd March 2021. It was explained to members that the Health Board's the 3-year plan had been delayed due to Covid. It was explained that when the recovery phase commenced they would address the backlog. With regards to planned care BCUHB hoped to create capacity. Members heard the aim was to achieve a 6-8 week window for the Covid Vaccine 2nd dose with the hope to no longer need the vaccine centres after July.

The digital strategy-engagement had started but had constraints due to Covid, the aim was to implement a single digital patient record. The introduction of Targeted

Intervention Improvement Framework (TIIF) looked at improvements to how BCUHB operated with the aim to improve performance.

Councillor Marston had also attended the Children's Residential Unit Project Board meeting held on 18th May 2021. It was confirmed the name of the new unit would be Bwthyn y Ddol, and it would be situated between the Police HQ and Eirias Park Colwyn Bay. The current project spend was £2.6 million. With the on-site construction due to start during June 2021 with a completion date of May 2022. The unit had been designed to accommodate Conwy and Denbighshire children for intensive therapeutic treatment. There would be three areas within the facility: - planned inpatient care, unplanned inpatient care and assessment area.

It was confirmed that multi-disciplinary team members were already in place. Interim plans had been drawn up to accommodate children in need of care currently, with temporary accommodation in Colwyn Bay. Work was also being done on the ongoing running costs of this unit for the future

The Chair thanked the Scrutiny Co-Ordinator for the narrative from Councillor Marston's attendance at meetings.

It was:

Resolved: - to receive Councillor Marston's update reports on recent discussions at the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) and the sub-regional Children's Residential Assessment Unit (CRAU) Project Board.

The meeting concluded at 11.40am