

Report to	Cabinet
Date of meeting	25 March 2025
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Jason McLellan, Leader of the Council
Report author	Gary Williams, Corporate Director: Governance and Business
Title	Transfer of the North Wales Growth Deal to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

1. What is the report about?

1.1. The report is about the proposed transfer of the implementation of the North Wales Growth Deal to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (NWCJC) in accordance with the in-principle decision made by the previous Cabinet in December 2021.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. Following the in-principle decisions of the executives of Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Flintshire County Borough Council, Cyngor Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey County Council, and Wrexham County Borough Council (the “Constituent Councils”); to transfer the implementation of the North Wales Growth Deal to the NWCJC the report makes recommendations for decisions to implement and facilitate the proposed transfer on or before 31 March 2025.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. Agree to enter into a Partnering and Funding Agreement (Appendix 2) whereby the role of Accountable body, responsibility for the delivery of the North Wales

- Growth Deal and funding arrangements for the Growth Deal are transferred to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee on or before the 31st of March 2025.
- 3.2. Agree to novate and assign as required the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal and rights and obligations in all incoming funding agreement held by Cyngor Gwynedd as Accountable Body on behalf of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (“NWEAB”) transfer to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (“NWCJC”);
 - 3.3. Agree to transfer and novate and or assign all interests in the portfolio of projects funded by the North Wales Growth Deal together with any ancillary agreements, charges and leases from Cyngor Gwynedd as Accountable Body on behalf of NWEAB to the NWCJC.
 - 3.4. Agree to the transfer and /or assignment of all financial balances, monies due and assets as held on behalf of the North Economic Ambition Board by Cyngor Gwynedd to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee
 - 3.5. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, to agree and execute the final form agreements, deeds and all other legal documents necessary to implement the transfers referred to at paragraphs (1) (2) and (3) above
 - 3.6. On completion of the Partnering and Funding Agreement agree to the termination of the GA2 agreement and the winding up of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board Joint Committee
 - 3.7. Agree to the transfer of accountability to the NWCJC and that the NWCJC accept responsibility for decision making for the implementation of the North Wales Growth Deal subject to novation of the Growth Deal and approval of additional Standing Orders incorporating the key terms of the Joint Working Agreement (“GA2”) between the 6 Constituent Councils and 4 Education parties;
 - 3.8. Agree that the decisions set out above be implemented immediately without call-in, in accordance with section 7.25 Council Constitution in order that the transfer may take place on or before 31st March 2025

4. Report details

- 4.1. On the 17th of December 2020, the six North Wales local authorities (the Constituent Councils) together with Bangor and Wrexham Universities, Coleg Cambria and Grŵp Llandrillo Menai entered into a Joint Working Agreement (“GA2”) which established a Joint Committee, the NWEAB, responsible for

overseeing and coordinating the discharge of the Councils' obligations in relation to the North Wales Growth Deal and delivering the North Wales Growth Vision. As part of those arrangements, Cyngor Gwynedd was appointed to act as Host Authority for the partnership and is the Accountable Body.

- 4.2. Regulations made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 established the NWCJC with the aim of strengthening regional collaboration between authorities. The NWCJC is a public body with broadly similar powers and duties to local authorities. One of its statutory functions is to do anything it considers likely to promote or improve the economic wellbeing of its area. The NWCJC is a corporate body in its own right, able to directly employ staff, hold assets and manage funding, without the requirement to act via an Accountable Body.
- 4.3. Membership of the NWCJC consists of the Executive Leaders of the Constituent Councils together with the Chairman of Eryri National Park Authority. The NWCJC was formally established in April 2021 and its functions were brought into force in June 2022.
- 4.4. The Constituent Councils resolved in-principle in 21/22 to transfer the Growth Deal to the NWCJC. Denbighshire's Cabinet made this decision on 14th December 2021. The overall strategic impetus to transfer stemmed from the correlation in membership between the NWEAB and the membership of the NWCJC, the wish to avoid a multiplicity of regional bodies with similar functions, and the various legal and operational advantages and efficiencies of the NWCJC being its own corporate entity.
- 4.5. The original decision was an in-principle decision as the legislation relating to CJs was continuing to develop. The final set of initial Regulations came into force on 1 April 2023.
- 4.6. To facilitate the transfer, a number of decisions need to be made by the executives of each of the Constituent Councils. In summary these are to:
 - agree to enter into a new partnering and funding agreement, terminate GA2 and dissolve the NWEAB.

- consent to the transfer of the existing funding agreements in respect of the Growth Deal from the NWEAB to the NWCJC,
- consent to the transfer of the financial obligations and responsibilities from Cyngor Gwynedd as Accountable Body to the NWCJC, including all assets and liabilities as well as the portfolio of projects.
- delegate authority to the appropriate officers to complete the necessary legal documentation

4.7. Cyngor Gwynedd, as the current host authority and accountable body, have prepared a fuller draft report for consideration by the executive of each of the Constituent Councils which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.8. The proposed Partnering and Funding Agreement to be entered into by the respective parties is attached as Appendix 2.

4.9. The NWCJC will, following transfer, create an Economic Well-Being Sub-Committee which will sit within the governance structure of the NWCJC as illustrated in the structure diagram contained in Appendix 1. The Sub-Committee's membership will consist of the six leaders of the Constituent Councils each of whom will be able to vote. In addition, there will be non-voting co-opted members from the Colleges and Universities, the Business Delivery Board. The Regional Skills Partnership and Parc Genedlaethol Eryri.

4.10. Under the current arrangements, scrutiny of the work of the NWEAB is done through the local scrutiny committees of the Constituent Councils. Members will recall that Council agreed on 28th January 2025 to create the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee whilst retaining the powers of local scrutiny committees to consider matters of local significance.

4.11. In order that the transfer can take place on or before the 31st March 2025, it will be necessary to implement the decisions made as a result of this report immediately without call-in pursuant to section 7.25 of the Council's Constitution.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. The implementation of the Growth Deal supports the Corporate Plan Theme of 'A Prosperous Denbighshire'

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. Under the arrangements provided for by GA2, each of the Constituent Councils and the education partners pays a contribution to the cost of the staff that support the work of the NWEAB. This sum is paid to Cyngor Gwynedd as host authority. Under the Partnering and Funding Agreement, the funding currently paid to Cyngor Gwynedd will instead be paid to the NWCJC. Each of the Constituent Councils pays an Annual Growth Deal Contribution of £57,880 and a Council Supplementary Payment of £40,000. Any increase in these contributions would require the written agreement of all the parties.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. There is no requirement for an assessment for this report as the transfer of functionality from the NWEAB, assignment and novation of legal entities and rights to the NWCJC is a contractual and constitutional matter. This report sets out the governance arrangements required for the Growth Deal and all matters to facilitate that to be transferred to the NWCJC.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. The Cabinet made an in principle decision in December 2021 to agree to the transfer. A Council Workshop was held on 11th March 2025.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. The funding arrangements of the North Wales Growth Deal are set out within the report. There is no change to the funding arrangements other than payment to North Wales Corporate Joint Committee following novation of delivery of Growth Deal from North Wales Economic Ambition Board.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. In essence this is a transfer of responsibility from NWEAB to NWCJC for implementation of the Growth Deal. There are no additional risks to the implementation of the Growth Deal. The membership of NWCJC remains the same as that of the NWEAB. The staff who support the NWEAB will transfer to NWCJC. The legal agreements relating to the Growth Deal with Government will be novated on the same terms and the Council's financial contributions will stay the same.

10.2. The creation of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the establishment of the NWCJC's own Governance and Audit Committee creates a robust means by which to hold the NWCJC to account.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. s111 Local Government Act 1972