

**Growing Mid Wales
Partnership Meeting**

The Chamber, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 5LG

10.30 a.m. Friday, 12 January 2018

10:30 - 13:12

Attendees

Ellen ap Gwynn (EaG)	Leader, Ceredigion County Council (Chair)
Rosemarie Harris (RH)	Leader, Powys County Council (Vice-Chair)
Ann Elias (AE)	Ceredigion County Council
Ann Watkin (AnW)	Welsh Government
Arwyn Watkins (AW)	NTfW
Ceri Stephens (CS)	Mid Wales Manufacturing Group
Claire Miles (CM)	Regional Engagement Officer
Dafydd Meurig (DM)	Councillor, Gwynedd County Council
Emyr Williams (EW)	Snowdonia National Park Authority
Gareth Jones (GJ)	Powys County Council
Gareth Lloyd (GL)	Councillor, Ceredigion County Council
John Cook (JC)	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
John Jones (JJ)	Welsh Government
Keith Henson (KH)	Coleg Ceredigion
Liam Fitzpatrick (LF)	Councillor, Powys County Council
Lisa Griffiths (LG)	Powys County Council
Mared Jones (MJ)	FUW
Martin Weale (MW)	Councillor, Powys County Council
Mike Shaw (MS)	Ceredigion County Council
Nigel Brinn (NB)	Powys County Council
Paul Griffiths (PG)	Powys County Council
Rhianne Jones (RJ)	CLA (Observer)
Rhodri Griffiths (RG)	Welsh Government
Rhodri Llwyd Morgan (RLM)	Aberystwyth University
Rob Halford (RHa)	Welsh Government
Rowland Rees-Evans (RRE)	Private Tourism Chair
Vanessa Naughton (VN)	Welsh Government
Vivienne Lewis (VL)	Welsh Government

In attendance

- Felicity Llewellyn – Powys County Council

	Introductions and Apologies	
	<p>Apologies were received from: Eleanor Marks, Welsh Government Alun Williams, Ceredigion County Council Eifion Evans, Ceredigion County Council Hywel Davies, University of Wales Trinity St. David Ioan Thomas, Gwynedd County Council Jane Lewis, RLSP Jeremy Patterson, Powys County Council David Powell, Powys County Council Mared Jones, FUW Myfanwy Alexander, Powys County Council Russell Hughes-Pickering, Ceredigion County Council Sandra Isaac, Coleg Ceredigion</p> <p>The Chair welcomed new members – Emyr Williams from Snowdonia National Park Authority, John Cook from Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and Councillor Dafydd Meurig from Gwynedd County Council.</p> <p>The Chair expressed congratulations to Arwyn Watkins, on behalf of the Partnership, for his recent OBE.</p>	
1.	Minutes and actions from last GMW Partnership on 03 November 2017	
	<p>The Chair was authorised to approve the minutes of the 03 November 2017 on behalf of the Partnership; the minutes will be published and presented to the Cabinet at both Ceredigion County Council and Powys County Council.</p> <p>Matters Arising Page 6 re: RLSP, the Chair has made arrangements to meet Huw Morris, Director of Skills (WG).</p>	
2.	<p>To Receive Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Rhodri Griffiths (Welsh Government Economic Action Plan) b) Rob Halford (Regional Investment in Wales after Brexit) 	
	(Please see overleaf)	

Rhodri Griffiths (Welsh Government Economic Action Plan (EAP))

The document (Prosperity for All: Economic Action Plan) is the economic arm of the Welsh Government ‘Prosperity for All’ strategy and is also an engagement piece, which is both externally and internally focused. A copy of RG’s presentation is embedded for reference:



There are now three thematic sectors: Tradable Services, High Value Manufacturing, and Enablers; support will also be provided to, and will enable plans to be developed for, four Foundation Sectors in Tourism, Food, Retail and Care.

Questions / Comments:

It is important to ‘keep it simple’ so that businesses aren’t overwhelmed with complex information; RG emphasised that WG are in ‘listening mode’ and are working to ensure information is accessible.

It was queried whether support will be provided to businesses to complete the forms and so on. RG confirmed that support and simplified information will be implicit in the process, and toolkits have been considered.

The Apprenticeship element of Social Responsibility clauses within contracts can be difficult to fulfil by businesses, as the Apprentices are not always available to fill the vacancy. There is a link with FE/HE that will help to drive the support mechanism for Apprentices.

In terms of the finance proposal, if the principle of economies of scale is applied, this will make accessing funding difficult for rural areas and will require mitigation. It is challenging to package procurement opportunities in such a way that enables SME’s to become involved.

The Chair queried where Growing Mid Wales fits into the current map of regions; RG recognised the different priorities in different regions, but it was not appropriate for him to comment on the regional footprint; **RG** would feedback the queries to WG.

RG

11.04am – Cllr. Rosemarie Harris, Leader of PCC joined the meeting.

The priorities for the region need to be reflected in the programmes and plans going forward; the Welsh Government regional business plans have not yet been confirmed, and WG welcome engagement and regional input into the national plans. AW highlighted the importance of avoiding a duplication of

effort.

On page 29 of the EAP it discusses working with developers; JC highlighted that business rates are having a significant negative impact at a community level, including competitiveness.

EW queried how many action plans sit under the Prosperity for All, and RG noted that, in addition to the Economic Action Plan, other action plans may come forward in the future, including the Employability Delivery Plan.

The Chair noted that the presentation of the four Foundation Sectors may look like they are reducing scope. RLW queried the calls to action, and RG confirmed that the calls to action will look at a wide piece of funding for development.

The Chair thanked RG for his presentation.

Rob Halford (Regional Investment in Wales after Brexit)

Sioned Evans, Chief Executive of WEFO, hopes to join a future Partnership meeting.

The Welsh Government consultation paper 'Regional Investment in Wales After Brexit' was published on 14 December 2017. RH highlighted the two upcoming engagement meetings in Llanrwst and Nantgarw, and welcomed engagement from the region before the end of the consultation period on 23 March 2018.

RH highlighted key items within the consultation document.

EU Brexit negotiations are moving towards a transitional approach, and there is a possibility that current programmes may continue to work to original timescales.

In the current programme arrangements EU funds can be used to build the capacity needed to deliver programmes; if this were no longer a prospect, this could severely curtail the ability to deliver programmes in a broader context.

The Partnership held a broad discussion on the relative funding arrangements of the UK Government, Welsh Government and European Union. AnW noted that some WG projects such as Business Wales are match funded, but appear as 'one pot' of money to the end users.

	<p>The alignment of policy and strategy was considered and PG queried how the Welsh Government Economic Action Plan aligns with the UK Industrial Strategy, and emphasised the need to make sure the differing policies and interventions aligned for the benefit of both Wales and the region.</p> <p>RH recommended that Partners access the OECD toolkit (http://www.oecd.org/regional/).</p> <p>EW noted the importance of identifying what has worked well and what hasn't as this information will impact on the future, and queried how this information was captured. RH noted that all investments are evaluated, and lessons learned are considered via audit.</p> <p>CM highlighted that the Mid Wales Regional Engagement team are hoping to hold an event in February to capture the region's feedback, and that the consultation document includes the CAP Pillar 2 programmes such as LEADER.</p> <p>The Chair thanked RH for his presentation.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Regional Engagement Update, including Meetings Attended</p>	
	<p>The Regional Engagement Update report had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme (TRIP) The Partnership considered the report, which had been circulated with the agenda, which proposed strategic regeneration areas and areas of activity for a Mid Wales Regional Regeneration plan; this is required to access funding for the region under the WG Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme.</p> <p>AW queried: How far do you envision the Severn Valley covering in terms of geographical spread? GJ responded that the focus is on Newtown in terms of prioritisation, but it is recognised that there are potential investment opportunities in the area surrounding the town in addition to the town centre.</p> <p>RLW requested clarification as to why Aberystwyth was not included in this. CM noted that Aberystwyth has received, and continues to receive, investment already and it was not possible to evidence the 'need' as part of this plan at a strategic regional level. It was explained that the WG criteria was applied to major settlements throughout Powys and Ceredigion, and one</p>	

	<p>key criterion with a high rating was in relation to ‘spreading prosperity’ and concentrating on areas which had not received recent investment, and Aberystwyth scored lower than other settlements in this context.</p> <p>RLW noted a concern that this may set a precedent which excludes Aberystwyth in the future. The Chair noted that £10million had been invested in Aberystwyth previously; it was felt that this £7million fund to cover Powys and Ceredigion was best focused on other, lesser funded, areas.</p> <p>GM noted that in terms of Gwynedd, the North West may not receive sufficient opportunity, and that there is a focus towards the East. The Chair highlighted that South Gwynedd was not included within the fund allocation to Powys and Ceredigion.</p> <p>CS requested further information about rural entrepreneurship. CM noted that there are no specific details as yet, but rural entrepreneurship will be capital funding so there will be some aspect of build involved.</p> <p>RH highlighted that Llandrindod and Brecon are not specifically ‘rural’ in the context of the Powys and Ceredigion demographic. VL commented that the three themes are sound (specific project information isn’t available to comment upon); the biggest issue is the disparity of settlements in Mid Wales and in terms of the boundaries it needs to be clear that the activities in the Towns effect the surrounding areas. There is a requirement to match fund 30% of non-Welsh Government funding for the projects.</p> <p>The following recommendations were agreed by the Partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To welcome the work done so far in preparing the plan and note that the Mid Wales Regional Regeneration Plan is at a formative stage; • To agree the proposed approach for the Mid Wales Regional Regeneration Plan. 	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Update Report of GMW Connectivity and Infrastructure Group</p>	
	<p>The update report had been circulated prior to the meeting, and the Partnership noted the report.</p> <p>CS queried whether Ken Skates had commented on Llanymynech Bypass, and AW and RG agreed to follow-up and respond after the meeting.</p> <p>NB noted that there is scope, particularly working with TRIP, to work on and complement a range of projects and take advantage of in-year funding as it</p>	

	<p>becomes available.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Progress and Action Plan for the Year Ahead</p>	
	<p>MS presented the Recent Progress and Action Plan document, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Reference was made to the UK Industrial Strategy, published in November 2017; it includes GVA figures by County.</p> <p>CM / MS will contact the offices of Ken Skates AM and Jake Berry AM to request a meeting re: Growing Mid Wales, at which Ceredigion and Powys are represented.</p> <p>AW queried the governance arrangements for the Growth Deal. MS responded that the Growing Mid Wales Partnership is a vehicle to discuss issues in the region, but it is not a decision-making/contracting Partnership. The region’s local authorities aim to instigate a Joint Committee, which would be able to act in its own right in accordance with local authority legislation, and would therefore be able to ‘sign up’ to contracts such as the Growth Deal. In terms of the boundaries, no final decision has been made but early discussions have included the local authorities of South Gwynedd, Powys and Ceredigion. It was noted that the Joint Committee will be considered further at the Joint Cabinet meeting (between Ceredigion County Council and Powys County Council) on 09 February 2019.</p> <p>RH noted that Assembly Members have previously suggested the creation of a Joint Committee and further work with regions in bordering Counties.</p> <p>RG noted that a key ethos is that work is locality driven, so the region will make its proposals to the Government; governance arrangements can be negotiated afterwards, and private sector partnerships discussions will also follow. RG offered his assistance in linking into Welsh Government.</p> <p>PG highlighted the importance of engaging businesses and working in an agile way. It is critical that the Partnership’s work aligns to both Welsh Government and UK Government policies and strategies, and that Welsh Ministers are engaged in the Partnership.</p> <p>AnW noted the need to continue to focus on influencing the spend and identification of priorities and opportunities to influence the main stream spend</p>	<p>CM/ MS</p>

	as well as working on the Growth Deal. The Chair expressed her thanks to Officers and Partners.	
6.	Any Other Business	
	<p>Terms of Reference (TOR) It was agreed that the TOR, including Membership of the Partnership, will be considered in conjunction with related discussions at the Joint Committee in February and feedback brought back to the Partnership.</p> <p>The Vice Chair expressed the Partnership's best wishes to John Cook, who will be leaving the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority shortly; Julian Atkin will represent BBNPA in future.</p>	
7.	Future Meeting Dates	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 April 2018 at 10.30am in Aberaeron, Ceredigion • 13 July 2018 at 10.30 am in Llandrindod Wells, Powys • 05 October 2018 at 10.30am in Aberaeron, Ceredigion 	

Leader of Ceredigion County Council, Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn, Chair