



Growing Mid Wales Partnership

Present: Councillor Rosemarie Harris – Leader: Powys County Council – **Chair (RH)**
Councillor Ellen Ap Gwynn – Leader: Ceredigion County Council – **Vice-Chair (EAG)**
Ann Elias – Ceredigion County Council (**AE**)
Ann Watkin – Welsh Government (**AW**)
Arwyn Davies – Ceredigion County Council (**AD**)
Arwyn Watkins OBE – Cambrian Training (**ArwynW**)
Carole Weller – Welsh Government (**CW**)
Carwyn Jones-Evans – Ceredigion County Council (**CJ-E**)
Ceri Stephens, Mid Wales Manufacturing Group (**CS**)
Claire Miles – Mid Wales RET (**CM**)
Councillor Dafydd Edwards, Ceredigion County Council (**DE**)
Councillor Phyl Davies, Powys County Council (**PhD**)
Councillor Rhodri Evans – Cabinet Member: Economic Development (Ceredigion) (**Cllr. RE**)
Councillor Rowland Rees-Evans, Mid Wales Tourism (**RRE**)
Dr. Rhodri Llwyd Morgan – Aberystwyth University (**RLIM**)
Eifion Evans – Chief Executive: Ceredigion County Council (**EE**)
Emma Wilde – Mid Wales Chamber of Commerce (**EW**)
Gareth Jones – Powys County Council (**GJ**)
Gareth Rowlands – Ceredigion County Council (**GR**)
Geraint Rees, Powys County Council (**GRees**)
Gwilym Jones, University of Wales Trinity St. David (**GJ**)
Helen Jones – Visit Wales (**HJ**)
Hywel Davies – University of Wales Trinity St. David (**HD**)
Lowri Gwilym, WLGA (**LG**)
Marie Evans - Mid Wales RET (**ME**)
Martin Cox, Natural Resources Wales (**MC**)
Nia Williams – Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care (**NW**)
Nick Venti, PAVO (**NV**)
Nigel Brinn – Powys County Council (**NB**)
Peter Howells – NFU (**PH**)
Rachel Garside-Jones, Deputy Director of Regional Investment – Welsh Government (**RG-J**)
Rhian Hayward – Aberystwyth University (**RhH**)
Russell Hughes-Pickering – Ceredigion County Council (**RHP**)
Steve Hughson – Chief Executive: Royal Welsh Agricultural Society (**SH**)

In attendance:

Chris Pirson, Aberystwyth University
Professor Karl Hoffman, Aberystwyth University
Claire Parsons, Montgomery Canal Partnership
David Morgan, Montgomery Canal Partnership
John Dodwell, Montgomery Canal Partnership
Michael Limbrey, Montgomery Canal Partnership
Carly McCreech, Wales Cooperative Centre

1.	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn, Gwynedd County Council • Councillor Gareth Thomas, Gwynedd County Council • Derek Walker - Wales Cooperative Centre • Glenn Bowen- Wales Cooperative Centre • Gwilym Davies, Powys County Council • Jane Lewis, Regional Engagement Team & Regional Learning and Skills Partnership • Jayne Jones - NPTC Group of Colleges • Mark Dacey – NPTC Group of Colleges • Nina Davies, Powys County Council • Peter Davies MBE – Farmers Union of Wales (PD) • Peter James, Welsh Government • Peter Skitt - Hywel Dda Health Board • Rob Holt, Welsh Government • Vivienne Lewis, Welsh Government 	
2.	<p>MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING – 21st September 2020 The minutes from the previous meeting held on 21st September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record subject to the following minor amendments:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To note EAG as Chair of the meeting • To include Gwilym Jones, University of Wales Trinity St. David's on the list of attendees 	
3.	<p>Mid Wales Growth Deal – Progress Update</p> <p>CJE reported that we now have the final draft of the Heads of Terms with both the UK and Welsh Government (WG). CJE stated that GMW Board (Joint Committee) will consider the draft Heads of Terms at their meeting tomorrow (4th December 2020) and it will also be presented to the Government's Intergovernmental Board on the 9th December 2020.</p> <p>CJE stated that the document is still subject to negotiation and is not a public document at this stage. CJE explained that no detail has been included at this stage on any programmes or projects as the Growth Deal is being developed on a portfolio business case basis.</p> <p>CJE stated that the £55mil for the Mid Wales Growth Deal was reaffirmed by both Governments in the recent Spending Review.</p> <p>CJE stated that provided the GMW Board agree the draft Heads of Terms document tomorrow, it is hoped that the Heads of Terms can be signed before Christmas.</p> <p>EAG wished to thank CJE for the work undertaken to achieve the draft Heads of Terms and stated that both Governments officers are happy with the standard of the draft document. EAG stated that she and RH will be sending a letter to both Ministers to ask that the Heads of Terms can be signed before Christmas.</p> <p>The Chair wished to endorse EAG's thanks to CJE and also thanked PG for his input.</p> <p>AW stated that officers from both WG and UK Government have been working closely with officers from the region to help develop the Heads of Terms at pace. AW stated that officers should take credit for the work that has been achieved. AW stated that there are now internal processes for both Governments to follow to have the Heads of Terms signed off internally. AW stated that the document was presented to the WG Board recently and it was endorsed with minor comments and will be presented to the Joint Intergovernmental Board on the 9th December and will then be presented with</p>	

	<p>advice to the respective Ministers in both Governments for formal sign off. AW stated that they will do all they can to have the Heads of Terms signed before Christmas however this is subject to the diaries and the schedule of required meetings.</p> <p>RLIM also thanked CJE and team for the work undertaken and was pleased to hear work is progressing. RLIM asked if CJE could provide further information on the work that is ongoing within some of the groups/ themes.</p> <p>CJE provided an update on when projects can come forward and when we can start looking at the detail. CJE stated that progress is being made in a much more constrained timescale compared to other deals and the second milestone will be the full deal agreement and the funding offer letter. CJE stated that work is ongoing on the sectors and themes set out in the strategy document and SQW Consultants have been appointed and a steering group established with Aberystwyth University and Aberinnovation to undertake a feasibility and scoping exercise in terms of investment required. CJE stated that work is also underway on digital connectivity and work is progressing with the sites and premises to determine required interventions.</p> <p>CJE stated that Ceredigion and Powys County Councils have agreed to resource a Programme Office which will hopefully be established in the new year which will hopefully be funded by EU revenue funding. CJE stated that clarity is requested from both Governments on what level of detail is required to have portfolio business cases and the final deal agreement in the New Year. CJE stated that both governments have reiterated that despite the current economic crisis, the Growth Deal will remain as a 15 year investment and the funding will be leased annually. CJE stated that the ongoing portfolio work is looking at the high level objectives and what broader discussions will be had with WG Economists over the next few weeks to set the criteria in terms of a critical success factor.</p> <p>CJE stated that he welcomes discussion on any potential project at any time.</p> <p>The Chair stated that reports from the working groups will be presented to future partnership meetings.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Regional Learning and Skills Partnership – Progress Update</p> <p>The Chair explained that historically Ceredigion and Powys were part of a wider RLSP which included the South & West and it was felt that it would be more beneficial if there was one Partnership for the two areas alongside the Growth Deal. The Chair stated that Reports regarding the establishment of a Mid Wales RLSP will be presented to both Cabinets shortly. The Chair stated that authorities would like to hear from businesses with regards to the skills they need.</p> <p>NB stated that they are looking to appoint an RLSP manager as soon as possible. NB stated that a Report will be presented to Powys County Council Cabinet on the 15th December following an agreed recommendation by the GMW Board regarding an amendment to the Terms of Reference on the IAA which included the RLSP. It was noted that this has already been agreed by Ceredigion’s Cabinet. NB stated that work will now focus on operationalising the activity and to seek nominations for various aspects of the work.</p> <p>NB stated that he will update the Partnership on further progress in the New Year.</p> <p>CJE reminded all that GMW Board (Joint Committee) Agenda and papers are included on both Ceredigion and Powys websites.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Business Updates</p> <p>i. Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme</p> <p>GR provided a verbal update to the Partnership. GR stated that the majority of decisions made previously by the Partnership have been implemented. GR stated</p>	

that the annual TRIP allocation has been confirmed by WG as £2.52mil. GR stated that the amount of slippage in the Auto Palace project in next year is now forecasted to be £1.16 million. This is an unavoidable slippage which has been caused by a change in ownership of a property holding company delaying the purchase by Powys County Council. This has now been resolved and will take place towards the end of December. GR stated that the GMW management group are having discussions on a pragmatic approach to leave the year over budgeted on the assumption that either further regeneration money from WG will top up next year's budget or to spread the spend over 2 years. GR stated that if this isn't possible for this year, then the new thematic scheme budget may need to be reduced for next year.

GR reported on a new national scheme that will be in place in April 2021 called the Transforming Towns Grant Scheme which will see a range of activity in the region's towns and stated that officers are in the process of preparing an application to WG for Mid Wales allocation up to £1.5mil.

GR stated that the current Mid Wales Regeneration Strategy written for the TRIP expires in March 2021 however the GMW Management Officers recommended that a new Strategy is not required at this time.

ii. Regional Engagement Team Report

CM provided an update to the Partnership to accompany the pre-circulated Report. CM stated that a GMW website is now live (link within Report). CM stated that a soft launch of the website was undertaken and welcomes any further feedback from Members. CM stated that the team are also working towards a promotional booklet.

CM stated that there have been many policy developments since the last meeting as listed in the Report. CM stated that the Regional Economic Framework has now been published (link within the Report). CM stated that since drafting the report, further announcements have been received from the Spending Review which the RET are currently considering.

CM informed members that the RET Manager will now be leading on the Growth Deal for a period of time. The staffing and capacity of the RET is currently being reviewed and a further update on staffing will be provided at the next Partnership meeting.

The Chair thanked CM for the update and stated that there needs to be officer who has the time to look at the different funding announcements to identify whether any would benefit the region.

iii. Connectivity and Infrastructure Working Group

AE provided an update to the Partnership to accompany the pre-circulated Report. AE stated that WG are currently out to consultation on the Llwybr Newydd: a new Wales Transport Strategy which requires comments by the 25th January 2021. A regional response will be prepared and circulated to the Partnership for approval. AE stated that the UK Government's Department of Transport are also calling for evidence on union connectivity and cross border work across the Mid Wales region.

AE reported on new pieces of work coming forward and stated that WG are undertaking a WelTAG study on the A44 between Llangurig and Aberystwyth. Highways England have stated that WelTAG studies will be undertaken on the 483 and 485 corridors.

The Chair thanked all for the updates provided today and for all the work undertaken.

6.	<p>Welsh Government Update</p> <p>RGJ provided an update to the Partnership following the spending review last week and noted that further information is awaited on replacement funds. RGJ stated that £220mil was announced for the whole of the UK for a Community Investment Fund pilot which is a lot less than was requested. There is a commitment to ramp that up to an annual target following an initial target and that will be monitored closely.</p> <p>RGJ stated that the internal market bill is going through the Parliamentary stages. The RIW steering group have been updated on WG's position and RGJ is happy to cascade that information to Partnership Members.</p> <p>RGJ stated that the National Framework was published on the 18th November and thanked all that had provided input. RGJ stated that with regard to the pilot, the prospectus will be published in early January. RCJ stated that a UK Gov Investment Framework will be published in Spring. RGJ will keep Partnership members updated.</p> <p>RGJ stated that the Council General will meet with the DCLG and DPW Minister with the Secretary of State for Wales in the New Year.</p> <p>RGJ stated that a Ministerial Working Group is being held today to discuss the Spending Review. An additional steering group will be held on the 16th December and the Chair would like to receive stakeholder views at that meeting.</p> <p>The Chair stated that it would be beneficial to have an overview of rural investment in future.</p> <p>LG stated that discussions are taking place with the LGA to ensure Welsh Local Authorities and organisations will be able to access the £220mil for piloting approaches from April 2021 onwards. A meeting of the LGA Executive is being held later today and LG will share any further intelligence received from that meeting. LG has also asked for a meeting with the Minister for Housing Communities and Local Government before Christmas.</p> <p>LG stated that in terms of rural development funding mentioned in the Spending Review, WG analysis has stated that there is a shortfall of £137mil for agricultural and rural development for the next financial year which covers pillar 1 and pillar 2 and is a big concern. A further breakdown and analysis of the figures has been requested from Officials.</p> <p>LG stated that there is a mixture of funding remaining in the current programmes which we can still spend and deliver until 2023 however there is a big concern that there is not enough funding for rural development.</p> <p>EAG reported following a meeting with the Secretary of State for Wales with all Leaders. EAG stated that the message at that meeting was that the money was being kept centrally and that the UK Government will be taking the lead and there is no indication that it will be devolved to Local Government or regions. EAG stated that she understands from that meeting that there is money still left in EU funding until 2023 to match the level of funding that will come through from UK Government.</p> <p>RGJ responded noting that it will depend on the passage of the internal market bill. If the internal market bill is successful, it will be a different situation. RGJ stated that they have responded to the Secretary of State to say that replacement funding cannot be confused with current EU receipt.</p>	
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	<p>AW provided an update to all on the REF which sets out a common set of shared priorities agreed with the private, public and voluntary sectors in the region. AW stated they have secured the services of the coproduction network for Wales to engage with a broad cross section of community stakeholders to coproduce the document. AW stated that a number of sessions and thematic focus sessions were held across the region. AW stated they also engaged with young people in the region and have held sessions with schools. AW stated that work is now ongoing to draft the document and engagement will be had with colleagues and officials in the New Year. AW stated that it is hoped a draft document will be presented to the next Partnership meeting.</p> <p>AW stated that Ken Skates MS has made available an enhanced package of support for businesses and AM will forward the Statement to CM to circulate with members.</p> <p>AW stated that WG are also reminding businesses of the EU transition process and a letter has been issued from the Minister for Business in Wales encouraging them to do all they can to prepare.</p> <p>AW advised the partnership that regional budgets have been secured and they are working with a number of partners on projects.</p> <p>LG stated that the UK Internal Market Bill is scheduled to go back to the House of Commons early next week with the UK Government expecting to put the North Ireland Clauses voted down by the Lords back in which then be re-presented to the Lords. LG stated that the UK Finance Bill is also expected next week.</p> <p>SH reported following a meeting with the Secretary of State and the Secretary for DEFRA, that 52% of businesses are not ready for Brexit due to businesses being busy dealing with the impact of Covid. AW stated that a number of webinars have been held jointly with the UK Government on EU preparedness and the WG are trying to circulate and promote those to businesses as much as possible. AW reminded all members that there is a dedicated website on the Business Wales site which has a lot of advice and information for businesses. CM stated that this website can also be promoted via the regional twitter account.</p> <p>PH, NFU, shared his frustration on the shortfall within the agricultural budget. PH stated that this is a big blow for welsh agriculture and at such an uncertain time. PH stated that during the build up to the EU referendum, welsh farming was consistently told that funding would be maintained and protected. PH stated that there seems to be conflicting figures and either a deal or no deal will result in disruptions for agriculture which will lead to disruption to the food chain.</p> <p>LG stated that both farming unions have identified a £95mil shortfall which is why LG has asked for analysis of the figures. WG analysis has identified a £137mil shortfall which takes in project spend on RDP and the 15% pillar transfer between pillar 1 and 2.</p> <p>PAVO asked regarding any assistance for businesses and the status of community halls. The Chair stated that she will ask an officer of Powys County Council to contact NV to discuss further.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Wider Regional Updates</p> <p>i. VetHub1</p> <p>Professor Karl Hoffman, Academic Lead for VethHub¹ attended the meeting to present the attached presentation regarding the VetHub¹ Laboratory which is a £4.2m EU-Backed Innovation Cluster to provide Animal Health/ Bio Secure Facilities set in the heart of the Aberystwyth University campus with access to world leading academic expertise and state of the art laboratory equipment. A copy of the presentation is attached.</p>	

	 <p>MWPM_Hoffmann. pptx</p> <p>The presentation focused on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CL3/CL2 labs and office space available • The potential economic impact of the VetHub¹ • The VetHub¹ Team • The AU Animal Health/ Public Health Strategy <p>An opportunity for discussion and questions followed.</p> <p>EAG stated that the work undertaken by the team to develop new streams of work is fantastic. EAG stated that the work the team will do on TB is extremely important to the dairy industry and developing agricultural work going forward post-Brexit and will help to develop high-end jobs. EAG stated that the investment will be of benefit to the region.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Professor Karl Hoffman and team for their presentation to the Partnership today.</p> <p>ii. Montgomery Canal Partnership</p> <p>John Dodwell and Michael Limbrey of the Montgomery Canal Partnership attended the Partnership to provide a presentation to Members on the Montgomery Canal Partnership. A copy of the presentation is attached.</p>  <p>Presentation to Growing Mid Wales</p> <p>The presentation focused on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Montgomery Canal Map • National Waterways Map • The Montgomery Canal today • Support from County & Town Councils • The Montgomery Canal Partnership • Benefits from other Canal restorations • The benefits of restorations in Powys • The restoration strategy • The Strategic fit with the GMWP Agenda <p>RH thanked John Dodwell and Michael Limbrey for their presentation to the Partnership today.</p> <p>JD stated that they would appreciate discussing the Growth Deal further with officers once it is further developed. CJE stated that the GMW Partnership is not the forum for prospective Growth Deal funding opportunities and stated that other funding sources may also be available and further discussions would take place offline.</p>	
8.	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>There were no additional matters to discuss.</p>	
9.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting would be held on Monday, 15th February at 10.30am via Zoom (details tbc)</p>	

Thursday, 3rd December 2020

**COUNCILLOR ROSEMARIE HARRIS - LEADER
POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL
IN THE CHAIR**