



**Growing Mid Wales
Partnership Meeting Minutes
Y Siambr, Neuadd y Sir
Llandrindod Wells, Powys, LD1 5LG
Friday, 29th July, 2016
10.10am – 12.15pm**

Attendees

Councillor Barry Thomas (Chair), Powys County Council
 Councillor Ellen Ap Gwynn (Vice-Chair), Powys County Council
 Ann Elias, Ceredigion County Council
 Ann Watkin, Welsh Government
 Bernard Griffiths, Farmers Union of Wales
 Ceri Stephens, Mid Wales Manufacturing Group
 Claire Miles, Ceredigion & Powys County Council
 Councillor Alun Williams, Ceredigion County Council
 Councillor Avril York, Powys County Council
 Councillor Gareth Lloyd, Ceredigion County Council
 Geraint Pugh, Aberystwyth University
 Huw T. Morgan, Ceredigion County Council (10.10am-11.30am)
 Jacqui Weatherburn, Coleg Ceredigion
 Jenni Thomas, Powys County Council
 Kim Phelps, Welsh Government
 Mike Shaw, Powys County Council
 Nia Williams, Hywel Dda University Health Board
 Paul Griffiths, Powys County Council
 Russell Hughes-Pickering, Ceredigion County Council
 Sarah Thomas, NFU Mutual
 Sue Bolter, Powys County Council



In attendance

Mrs Terri Thomas, Deputy Director: Rural, Welsh Government
 Rob Halford, Welsh Government
 Michael Grove, Welsh Government
 Viv Collins, Welsh Government

1. Introductions and Apologies	<p>Councillor Barry Thomas, the Chair of the Growing Mid Wales (GMW) Partnership, welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made.</p> <p>Apologies were received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arwyn Watkins – Cambrian Training • Barry Liles, Coleg Sir Gâr 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carl Cooper, PAVO • Doug Hughes, Hughes Architects • Dr Rhodri Llwyd Morgan – Aberystwyth University • Dr Sue Fish – Hywel Dda Health Board • Jane Davidson, University of Wales Trinity St David • Jane Lewis, RLP • Jeremy Patterson, Powys County Council • John Jones, Welsh Government • Mared Jones – Farmers Union of Wales • Paul Evans – Venture-Automotive • Peter Howells, NFU Mutual 	
<p>2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th April 2016</p>	<p><u>Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th April 2016</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Meeting held on the 26th April, 2016, were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the Minutes.</p>	
<p>3. UK Referendum and N.A.W and P.C result: Implications</p>	<p>The Chair welcomed Mrs Terri Thomas (TT) and Mr Rob Halford (RH), Welsh Government, to the meeting to outline the current position following the Referendum held on June 23rd 2016.</p> <p>The Chair emphasised how extremely grateful the Partnership were for their attendance at the meeting today.</p> <p>RH introduced himself to the meeting and outlined the current position to members. RH explained that there is a period of uncertainty at the moment and it is difficult to know precisely what the future will be as negotiations are ongoing and the situation is continuously changing.</p> <p>RH explained that Wales are in a different position to Scotland and Northern Ireland as Wales has benefited hugely from EU funding in excess of £600 million per annum.</p> <p>RH noted that the First Minister has written to the Prime Minister recently and raised the need for the continuation of funding. There is no guarantee however that the funding will be replaced. The First Minister is continuing to endeavour to ensure that the funding will be replaced.</p> <p>RH noted that the key points to know is that:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The EU funding, that Wales is currently benefiting from, will continue for as long as the UK remains part of the EU. 2. To exit the UK, the Prime Minister will need to trigger Article 50 which is understood won't be triggered until early next year. The earliest the UK is likely to leave the EU would be late 2018/ early 2019. 3. EU funding comes in 7 year tranches. Funding may well 	

	<p>continue until the end of each EU funded programme.</p> <p>4. WEFO have taken a decision to continue to process applications and awards for EU support but on more of a risk based approach. Each proposal will now be taken through supplementary steps. RH encouraged members who are in engaged in developing proposals to continue to do so.</p> <p>The WG will continue to operate with operational programmes agreed with the EU Commission. No engagement or informal discussions on transition are allowed to commence with the EU Commission until Article 50 is triggered.</p> <p>TT provided an overview of the implications to Rural Development and the response in terms of the Agriculture Policy, the Direct payment to Farmers under Pillar 1 and the Rural Development Programme under Pillar 2.</p> <p>Again, TT reiterated that there is no certainty of the forward funding position as regards to the UK Government and, Pillar 2, which is direct from EU Commission, is of particular concern as there are no guarantees of the same level of funding.</p> <p>TT noted that some projects have been affected and have been paused due to having 5 year contracts for their funding which could take them through to post EU transition.</p> <p>An opportunity for questions followed. Discussions ensued. Key points highlighted were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due to many funds being matched centrally, would EU funding be able to be spent first and local funding secondly for any longer term project? <p>RH confirmed that this may be ok and all approaches would be looked at in spending money, however, it will be very much dependent on the individual project and will need to be looked at very carefully. WG will do all they can.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should Local Authorities be looking at developing shorter term schemes? <p>RH noted that there is a challenge around that. The WG will deliver what has been agreed and approved with projects being used as flexibly as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• With regard to funding and immediate projects in the pipeline, there are various projects in the pipeline which are being held up for process reasons. Could spending be front loaded to be more flexible?	
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	<p>RH noted that the Senior Management Team in WEFO are progressing this issue and examining all projects within the business planning stage.</p> <p>AW noted that the First Minister has responded to the outcome of the Referendum by setting out 6 key priorities. The priority is to protect jobs in Wales and to retain confidence and stability in the economy.</p> <p>The Chair thanked both Mrs Terri Thomas and Mr Rob Halford for their attendance at today's meeting and invited them to attend the next meeting of the GMW Partnership on the 6th October 2016, to provide a further update.</p> <p>Action: TT and RH to attend the GMW Partnership Meeting on the 6th October, 2016, to provide a further update.</p>	TT/RH
<p>4. Superfast Broadband and Mobile Telephony in Mid Wales</p>  <p>Superfast Progress update presentation.</p>  <p>Superfast Exploitation for Gr</p>	<p>Presentations were received from Viv Collins (VC) and Michael Groves (MG), Welsh Government on Superfast Broadband and Mobile Telephony in Mid Wales. Copies of the presentations are attached for information.</p> <p><u>Superfast Cymru – Deployment Progress Update</u></p> <p>The presentation focused on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of the Superfast Cymru roll out since 2013 • Build Progress to Date – 426 areas in Wales are now covered with Superfast Broadband • Information on Technologies used BT's Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) & Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) • The highlights and lowlights of the project • How to check the availability in your area through the Availability Checker on the WG website. • Statistical information for both Ceredigion and Powys which shows the total take up of Superfast Cymru has been 27% for Ceredigion and 22% for Powys. Take up nationally has been over 21% • A Mobile Update focusing on 4G coverage throughout Wales. <p>The Chair thanked VC for her presentation to the Partnership today. A discussion and opportunity for questions followed.</p> <p><u>Superfast Broadband Roll-out & Exploitation</u></p> <p>Michael Groves, Programme Director provided the attached presentation to the Partnership on how Superfast Broadband is extremely beneficial for businesses.</p>	

	<p>The presentation focused on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Superfast Broadband and why it is important • How businesses can benefit from exploiting Superfast Broadband • The greatest positive impact on business which showed mobile technology as the greatest positive impact on business over the next 5 years • Background on Cloud computing and how this can benefit businesses. • Details of Online Advisors and Workshops which are held to advise businesses <p>Further information for Superfast Business Wales & Superfast Cymru can be found via the following websites.</p> <p>http://business.wales.gov.uk/superfastbusinesswales/</p> <p>http://www.superfast-cymru.com/home</p> <p>An opportunity for questions followed.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed a further Workshop for Members of both Ceredigion County Council and Powys County Council to explore the opportunities for Local Authorities further.</p> <p>The Chair thanked MG for his presentation today.</p>	
5. Framework for Action	<p>JT presented the design concept for the GMW Framework for Action to the Partnership. JT explained that both English and Welsh versions in their final draft should be available by mid-August 2016. The Framework demonstrates business activity across the region showing that Mid Wales is open to Business.</p> <p>The purpose of this Framework is to have a strong, crisp and clear advocacy document for the GMW Partnership which can be used to communicate GMWs message and vision.</p> <p>SB noted that the Framework is intended to be photo heavy and text light. SB noted that the photos are currently a little bit too much lifestyle and rural and asked Members for photos that are more cutting edge / technology focused to illustrate our aspirations.</p> <p>JT requested that if any of the Partnership Members had photos that they would like to see included in the Framework, to forward these to herself or Seren Jones (seren.jones2@ceredigion.gov.uk) by a week today (Friday, 5th August 2016).</p> <p>Action: GMW Partnership Members forward any photos they would like included in the GMW Framework for Action to Jenni Thomas or Seren Jones by Friday, 5th August, 2016.</p>	All

<p>6. Strategic Transport Quarter 2 2016 Update (Appendix B & C)</p>	<p>AE provided a Strategic Transport Quarter 2 2016 update and took the Partnership through the same for their information:-</p> <p>The following was noted:-</p> <p><u>Wales and Borders Rail Franchise</u></p> <p>The Wales and Borders Franchise is picking up a pace.</p> <p>The Welsh Government has issued the “Franchise Expression” for the next Franchise Award. AE noted that it looks like 3 bidders will be coming forward which will enable better negotiations. AE’s reports notes that “Transport for Wales” will undertake the franchising process on behalf of the Welsh Government and will be accepting submissions up to the 26th August 2016. AE noted she had attended a Stakeholder Engagement Event on the 26th July 2016 in Shrewsbury which provided some details of the franchise but was a little disappointed that more information was not available at the event.</p> <p>Ken Skates AM, Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure announced was still in detailed discussions on the final details of the franchise, and <i>“Cross-border services are a significant area of focus and, in particular, which of those services should be operated under our next franchise”</i>. It was noted that this could imply that the through service to Birmingham International is not guaranteed.</p> <p>It was noted that the Minister has a desire to work in collaboration with Midland Connect to achieve better East to West connectivity.</p> <p>EAG emphasised that we must ensure transport connectivity between South and North Wales as equally important as transport connectivity across Mid Wales.</p> <p><u>West Midlands Rail Franchise</u></p> <p>AE noted that 3 bidders had been shortlisted for the West Midlands Franchise which includes services on the line between Shrewsbury and Birmingham. They are now down to 2 bidders. AE will keep a close eye on what happens and will keep GMW updated.</p> <p><u>Machynlleth Railway Station – Cambrian Line</u></p> <p>AE noted that they are still waiting for the lifts to be commissioned. There is no further news to the extension of the car parks.</p> <p><u>DfT promoting rail tourism Project funding</u></p> <p>AE reported good news from the rail bids that were undertaken</p>	
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across Wales following expressions of interest for rail tourism projects. They have confirmed three projects in Wales, one of which is the "The Great Little Trains of Wales" project which been awarded funding.

Railways Bill

UK Parliament will continue to take forward a new Railways Bill.

Intercity West Coast Rail Franchise – consultation May 2016 (12 weeks)

AE noted that our services do not currently connect with the Virgin Rail Service from Shrewsbury direct to London. AE noted that discussions are taking place to increase the frequency of that route which could provide opportunities.

Proposed re-opening of Aberystwyth to Carmarthen Line

CCC is to assist WG with Stage 1 of a WeITAG study which is hoped will be ready by the end of August.

Cross Border Engagement





AE noted that work is ongoing with the Marches LEP regarding Cross border Schemes and transport flows in and out of the Marches Region, which are important for Mid Wales.



PG noted that we must look in to how best to influence these schemes. MS agreed it would be beneficial to consider this as an Agenda item at the proposed joint meeting of the GMW Partnership and Marches LEP in November. (Please see item 9 of the Minutes for further information).

EAG noted that she and the Chair, Councillor Barry Thomas, have also sent a letter to the new Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates AM, containing background information of the GMW Partnership together with the Terms of Reference and an invitation for further discussion or indeed an invitation to attend a future GMW Partnership Meeting.

AW confirmed that the letter had been received by the Minister and is under consideration. AW was unsure if the regular meetings between the Minister and Leaders would reinstate and explained that the Cabinet Secretary's diary is extremely busy. AW noted that the Minister is very focused on cross border engagement and is also in discussion with Midland Connect.

It was noted that the GMW Framework should be revisited before finalised to ensure cross border is explicit within the document.

	<p>The Chair thanked AW for her update to the Partnership today.</p>	
<p>7. Mid Wales Regional Engagement; update (to include report on Powys' Transforming Learning and Skills Programme) (Appendix D)</p>  <p>Appendix D Regional Engagement.docx</p>	<p>MS took the Partnership through the attached Report for their information. The Working Group meetings have focused on the interactions with and feeding in to the RLSP to ensure their work reflected the needs of Mid Wales.</p> <p>The Report highlighted that on the 22nd June 2016, the Working Group had received a presentation on the Powys Transformation Learning Skills Programme and the Report contains an update of how this has been progressed and will be taken forward. It was noted that this could include the idea of a Mid Wales Youth Entrepreneurship event that the Powys Programme Board could take forward their event in parallel.</p>	
<p>8. Regional Learning and Skills Partnership – Regional Delivery Plan Employment and Skills Update / endorsement of response (Appendix E)</p>  <p>Appendix E GMW Paper - RLSP Draft Pl</p>  <p>Mid Wales - RSLP Employment an...</p>  <p>RSLP - final Working Draft ~...</p>	<p>MS noted that the final Regional Employment and Skills Plan is being submitted to WG today (29th July 2016). MS noted that the draft Regional and Employment Skills Plan for South West and Mid Wales had been circulated to members for consideration on the 8th July 2016.</p> <p>MS noted concerns at how the needs of Mid Wales are being treated within the Plan and attached Excel Spreadsheet and that he could not encourage the GMW Partnership to endorse the Plan at this current stage.</p> <p>EAG reiterated these concerns that the document does not highlight the needs of Mid Wales. EAG stated that this must be relooked to ensure the needs of Mid Wales are reflected.</p> <p>It was noted that WG have agreed with the RSLP that there could be further revisions to the document prior to a final completion in October 2017. MS noted that the Working Group would to discuss the issues and concerns during September.</p> <p>The Chair noted that if the RSLP will not take on board the comments of the GMW Partnership and the concerns raised, both he as Leader of Powys County Council and Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn, Leader of Ceredigion County Council, would arrange a meeting with the relevant Cabinet Secretary at Welsh Government to discuss the concerns.</p>	
<p>9. Review of GMW Officer & Partnership Membership</p>	<p>Discussions ensued regarding the review of GMW Officer & Partnership Membership. It was felt that there has been a reduction in private sector attendance at GMW Partnership meetings. The Partnership agreed that private sector representation at the Partnership is hugely beneficial and the Partnership should work</p>	

	<p>towards attracting representatives and to ensure that they feel valued and that they make an important contribution by attending the meetings.</p> <p>The Chair requested a Report at the next GMW Partnership Meeting (6th October 2016) containing recommendations on how the Partnership could attract more private sector members.</p> <p>The Chair also requested that in the mean-time, and prior to the next meeting, should any of the Partnership Members have recommendations or nominations for private sector representations, they should circulate these to all for consideration.</p> <p>Action: Report to be presented at the next GMW Partnership meeting on the 6th October 2016 containing recommendations on how the Partnership could attract more private sector members.</p>	
<p>10. Marches Strategic Transport Corridors Report (Appendix F)</p> <p> Appendix F - 160609 Covering Letter for S</p> <p> Appendix F - Marches Strategic Tra</p>	<p>MS made reference to the attached covering letter and Strategic Transport Corridors Report – May 2016 (attached) received from Marches LEP.</p> <p>MS explained that at the end of the covering letter from the Chairman of the Marches LEP, he requests a meeting between the Marches LEP and the GMW Partnership, for both partnerships to work closely and to secure transport investment in the Marches Region. MS explained that it is likely an Officers meeting will be held in the early Autumn prior to a joint Partnership meeting during November 2016. A suitable Agenda will be created for the meeting of areas of prioritisation for both partnerships.</p> <p>The GMW Partnership was in agreement for a suitable date to be identified in November 2016 for a joint meeting between the GMW Partnership and the Marches to take place.</p> <p>Action: MS to identify a suitable date to hold the joint partnership meeting between GMW and the Marches LEP during November 2016.</p>	<p>MS</p>
<p>11. Items to be raised at officer meeting with Marches LEP in September.</p>	<p>Discussed as part of item 9 above.</p>	
<p>12. Any Other Business</p>	<p>There were no additional items for discussion today.</p> <p>The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking all for their attendance and for the presentations provided.</p>	

13. Date of next meeting: -	Date of next meeting: - Thursday, 6th October, at 2pm in the Chamber, Neuadd Cyngor Sir Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron, Ceredigion, SA46 0PA <u>Future Date</u> Friday, 6th January, 2017, at 10am in Llandrindod Wells, Powys	
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COUNCILLOR BARRY THOMAS
CHAIR

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