

**Growing Mid Wales
Partnership Meeting**
The Chamber, Aberaeron, Ceredigion
10.30 a.m. Friday, 3rd November 2017
10:30am- 12.55p.m.

Attendees

Ellen ap Gwynn (EaG)	Leader, Ceredigion County Council (Chair)
Rosemarie Harris (CRH)	Leader, Powys County Council (Vice-Chair)
Alun Williams (AIW)	Councillor, Ceredigion County Council
Ann Elias (AE)	Ceredigion County Council
Ann Watkin (AnW)	Welsh Government
Ceri Stephens (CS)	Mid Wales Manufacturing Group
Claire Miles (CM)	Regional Engagement Officer
Eifion Evans (EE)	Ceredigion County Council
Elwyn Vaughan (EV)	Powys County Council
Gareth Jones (GJ)	Powys County Council
Gareth Lloyd (GL)	Councillor, Ceredigion County Council
Gerwyn Evans (GE)	Welsh Government
Jane Lewis (JL)	RLSP
John Jones (JJ)	Welsh Government
Mared Jones (MJ)	FUW
Matthew Williams (MW)	FSB
Mike Shaw (MS)	Ceredigion County Council
Myfanwy Alexander (MA)	Councillor, Powys County Council
Paul Griffiths (PG)	Powys County Council
Rhian Williams (RW)	Gwynedd County Council
Rhodri Griffiths (RG)	Welsh Government
Rhodri Llwyd Morgan (RLM)	Aberystwyth University
Rob Halford (RHa)	Welsh Government
Rob Holt (RH)	Welsh Government
Rowland Rees-Evans (RRE)	Private Tourism Chair
Russell Hughes-Pickering (RHP)	Ceredigion County Council
Sandra Isaac (SI)	Coleg Ceredigion
Susan Bolter (SB)	Powys County Council
Vivienne Lewis (VL)	Welsh Government

In attendance

- Felicity Llewellyn – Powys County Council

1.	Introductions and Apologies	
	<p>The Chair welcomed the new Chief Executive of Ceredigion County Council to the meeting, along with first-time attendees.</p> <p>Apologies;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Councillor Dafydd Meurig, Gwynedd County Council ▪ Councillor Ioan Thomas, Gwynedd County Council ▪ Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick, Powys County Council ▪ Councillor Martin Weale, Powys County Council ▪ Doug Hughes, Doug Hughes Architects ▪ Hywel Davies, University of Wales Trinity St. David ▪ Jeremy Patterson, Powys County Council ▪ Paul Evans, Venture Automotive ▪ Peter Howells, NFU ▪ Peter Skitt, Hywel Dda Health Board <p>The Chair wished Jeremy a speedy recovery from his recent operation.</p>	
2.	<p>To Receive Presentations:</p> <p>a) Regional working on opportunities for tourism growth – Gerwyn Evans, Visit Wales</p>	
	<p>Gerwyn Evans, Head of Tourism Development at Visit Wales presented on Investment within the Tourism Sector; a copy of the presentation will be circulated to the Partnership following the meeting.</p> <p>On the subject of the proposed Vale of Rheidol project, the Chair declared an interest due to a family member’s involvement.</p> <p>‘The Wales Way’ ten year strategy will be launched to the media in London on 14 November 2017, followed by a Senedd event in December.</p> <p>The ‘Year of Legends’ has seen an increase in tourism, including the greatest visitor numbers ever recorded by CADW. 2018 will see the ‘Year of the Sea, followed by the ‘Year of Discovery’ in 2019.</p> <p>www.walesthebrand.com has been launched, and the branding media (including photo and video libraries) is now available for use.</p> <p>Visit Wales’s Regional Team for Mid Wales can be contacted via:</p>	MS

Helen Jones (helen.jones28@wales.gsi.gov.uk) and Gwawr Price (Gwawr.Price3@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

It was discussed that the introduction of a new campaign each year may cause visitors some confusion, and it was queried whether longer running campaigns would be an option to address this. It was noted that whilst the focus of the 'Year of...' campaign changes each year, the previous campaigns do continue on. During the next campaign review a shift to two-year campaigns may be considered.

'The Year of the Sea' campaign was discussed. As Powys has no coastline access it was queried how such a campaign benefits landlocked counties. It was highlighted that this campaign involves all bodies of water, from the sea to rivers, lakes and reservoirs.

The Chair noted that schemes to support the coastline receive contributions from the relevant local authorities.

RLM confirmed that Aberystwyth University's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £10.5million to develop the old college as a heritage and culture hub for the region, and whole of Wales, had been successful. RLM thanked Visit Wales for their support.

There will be four economic development regions, of which Growing Mid Wales will be one. The Chair endorsed Visit Wales' continuing interest in Mid Wales.

With reference to the presentation, which highlighted the grants provided to higher quality venues (i.e. those exceeding 3* rating), it was discussed that the sector's ambition was to attract high quality investment and tourism and, as such, public sector funds are prioritised to those initiatives. The Vice Chair endorsed this point.

The Vice Chair was particularly pleased to note the Wales My Way initiative, and invited the Visit Wales team for further discussion with herself and her Powys County Council colleagues; a meeting is due to be held next month.

Clarification was sought regarding the links existing between Welsh Government teams to ensure crossover initiatives were maximised. It was confirmed that Jason Thomas' remit included CADW, Sports Wales, Arts Council for Wales, Libraries and Museums, and that he would welcome the opportunity to join this partnership in future. **CM to action a standing**

	<p>invitation to Visit Wales and Jason Thomas.</p> <p>The Chair thanked GE for his presentation.</p>	CM
3.	<p>Minutes and actions from last GMW Partnership on 28th July 2017</p> <p>The Chair was authorised to approve the minutes of the 28th July 2017 on behalf of the Partnership, with an amendment to item 4a of page 3 (change ‘Llanfair’ to ‘Llanbedr’).</p> <p>The minutes will be published and presented to the Cabinet at both Ceredigion County Council and Powys County Council.</p> <p>Items Arising: Matters arising at the last meeting (item 3): JJ & CM to discuss further the possible availability of the Flexible Skills Programme in Mid Wales. Capacity is being sought within the local authority to take forward.</p>	CM
4.	<p>Update Report of RLSP (Regional Learning and Skills Partnership)</p> <p>The membership noted the report and accompanying action plan.</p> <p>JL invited questions regarding the programme of work and draft action plan. The RLSP actions for Mid Wales had not yet been allocated timescales, but the Cluster Group meeting for the Mid Wales Region at the end of November would identify the priorities within the plan, which in turn would identify and clarify the actions. JL confirmed that she has been in discussion with one college regarding the skills detailed within the plan and was anticipating an answer before the Cluster Group meeting as to where the new places will be provided for the additional requirements noted for Mid Wales.</p> <p>Concerns were raised as to the prevalence of Swansea City Region promotion within the document when compared to the GMW region. It was discussed that large scale national projects may encourage young people to leave the Mid Wales area without a rural equivalent.</p> <p>Additional concerns were highlighted regarding the limited engagement of other colleges, training providers and further and higher education institutions. The Partnership called for further input from other education providers in RLSP work for the Mid Wales Region.</p>	

<p>A new employability programme will be introduced in 2019, along with a DWP 'working health' programme. The Mid Wales Region has not yet been engaged in the development of these two initiatives due to the lack of Communities First funded projects. It was requested that the RLSP clearly inform the Partnership how it can engage with these projects using RLSP as a vehicle for feedback, particularly in relation to regional issues such as the rurality and lack of transport.</p> <p>MS requested progress on developing RLSP engagement in the Mid Wales Region. The Mid Wales Cluster Group covers all sectors; after each cluster group meeting, sector specific feedback is given to the Mid Wales Group. The Chair will be appointed at the next RLSP meeting, and JL will feedback to GMW.</p> <p>PG noted that he and MA attended the launch of the RLSP Employment and Skills Plan. It was commented that the key issue was the need for the Mid Wales Region to 'make things happen' themselves i.e. to create the opportunities and the environment. The enormous challenge was recognised, and it was queried as to how to ensure that the plans that GMW has are kept at the heart of the RLSP plans. JL noted that it was inevitable that young people would leave the region to engage with large scale projects such as the Swansea City Deal.</p> <p>Discussion took place as to how to backfill the growth industry jobs in Wales as a result of the 'draw' from rural areas to development areas out of the region, Wales and the UK etc. The need for partnership working to support all regions and industries was emphasised, with consideration to the region's aging population (and need to support retraining initiatives etc.).</p> <p>Clarification was sought as to how GMW can influence the plan to ensure that the Mid Wales Region is best served. PG noted that the region experiences difficulty in recruiting to roles, even competitive and well paid roles, and so it would be important to 'grow our own' skills and jobs. EE endorsed PG's comments.</p> <p>The Partnership generally highlighted that the RLSP should be serving this purpose for the region but, fundamentally, this was not happening.</p> <p>The Partnership again highlighted the range of training providers and educational institutions available to the region, and reiterated concerns about the lack of engagement with all stakeholders. The Chair noted that this opinion had been voiced regularly, and that she would discuss this</p>	<p>JL</p> <p>EaG</p>
--	----------------------

	<p>further with the Cabinet Secretary and her officials.</p> <p>The draft plan has been submitted to the Cabinet Secretary, and the Chair confirmed that it would be formally recorded that the GMW Partnership had raised issues and concerns about the plan.</p> <p>The Chair thanked JL for her presentation.</p>	EaG
<p>5.</p>	<p>Regional Development – Rob Halford, WEFO</p>	
	<p>Rob Halford of WEFO provided a verbal update.</p> <p>There are 17 months remaining until Article 50 takes effect.</p> <p>67% of the total ESIF funding available for the current programme period has been allocated (including 161 approved projects and a further 66 in the business planning stage).</p> <p>The fluctuating exchange rate adds challenge, as a 1cent change equates to a £17million increase or decrease in the budget.</p> <p>It is currently unclear as to how, following Brexit, replacement funding will be secured, and current funds may potentially be utilised to build capacity in preparation for Brexit.</p> <p>The WG regional development consultation document will be available in the near future, and RH will ensure that the Growing Mid Wales Partnership Board is made aware of its publication and the consultation events. Alongside the Partnership (which was invited to engage prior to the publication), individual organisations were also invited to input into the consultation.</p> <p>The Partnership identified rural poverty as an important aspect to address within the consultation. The Vice Chair highlighted that there is an existing Anti-Poverty group in Powys. It was considered that funding should be sought to make rural areas more attractive i.e. with accessible services and education options. The definition of ‘rural poverty’ would benefit from further consideration e.g. to include economic carers (those that support a family business, farm etc.), and supporting young entrepreneurs.</p> <p>The requirements will be clearly outlined and submitted for further consideration.</p>	CM / RH

	<p>RH and Sioned Evans will be invited to join the January Partnership meeting to discuss the consultation.</p> <p>The Chair thanked RH for his update.</p>	CM
6.	<p>Update – structures to support the emerging vision for Growing Mid Wales</p> <p>An informal joint Cabinet between Powys County Council and Ceredigion County Council has taken place to discuss a potential joint cabinet structure and how it will relate to this Partnership as it moves forward. Collaboration is also taking place regarding Mid Wales Health and Social Care, Schools and Waste Disposal.</p> <p>Gwynedd County Council is included within the collaborative working, and representatives have been invited to join this Partnership Board.</p> <p>The NafW EIS City Deals report has been published, and the need for a growth deal for Mid Wales supported.</p>	
7.	<p>Regional Engagement Update, including Meetings Attended</p> <p>The membership noted the report and agreed the following actions:</p> <p>A - Avenues of Commercialization for Nano and Micro Technologies (ACNM), Swansea University To ask Swansea University in developing the business plan for this proposed operation;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To fully demonstrate how the operation intends to target and engage with relevant businesses in the eligible area of Mid Wales region 2) To further explore potential linkages and similarities with other Mid Wales-based ESIF funded operations with links to the Food and Farming Sector, as identified above <p>To ask WEFO in considering the business plan for this proposed operation;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To note the GMW Partnership’s above comments and ensure they have been sufficiently addressed in any business plan <p>B - ADE3, Centre for Batch Manufacturing, UWTSD To ask UWTSD in developing the business plan for this proposed operation;</p>	

- 1) To fully demonstrate how the operation intends to target and engage with relevant businesses in the Mid Wales region
- 2) To further explore potential linkages and similarities with other ERDF Priority 1 operations, both approved and in development, in order to avoid any potential duplication

To ask WEFO in considering the business plan for this proposed operation;

- 1) To note the GMW Partnership's above comments and ensure they have been sufficiently addressed in any business plan
- 2) To share any relevant information concerning operations in development as a result of the recent ERDF 1.2 call with the lead beneficiary, to allow for full mapping of activity as so to avoid any potential duplication

C - Data Innovation Accelerator operation, Cardiff University

To ask Cardiff University in developing the business plan for this proposed operation;

- 1) To fully demonstrate how the operation intends to provide pan-Wales coverage of activity and work with businesses within all regions of Wales
- 2) To fully demonstrate and evidence engagement with other relevant operations, ERDF-funded and otherwise, and fully explain how duplication of activity will be avoided

To ask WEFO in considering the business plan for this proposed operation;

- 1) To note the GMW Partnership's above comments and ensure they have been sufficiently addressed in any business plan

D - Geographical Data & Earth Observation for Monitoring (GEOM), Aberystwyth University

To ask Aberystwyth University in developing the business plan for this proposed operation;

- 1) To fully demonstrate how the operation intends to target and engage with relevant businesses in the Mid Wales region

To ask WEFO in considering the business plan for this proposed operation;

- 1) To note the GMW Partnership's general support for the proposed operation
- 2) To note the GMW Partnership's above comments and ensure they have been sufficiently addressed in any business plan

E - Reduced Industrial Carbon Emissions (RICE), Swansea University

- 1) To fully demonstrate and evidence engagement with the BEACON+ operation led by Aberystwyth University, as so to avoid duplication
- 2) To fully explain and evidence the proposed output indicators and targets in the business planning stage

To ask WEFO in considering the business plan for this proposed operation;

- 1) To note the GMW Partnership's above comments and ensure they have been sufficiently addressed in any business plan

F - Smart Energy Storage Solutions (SESS) Hub, University of South Wales

To ask the University of South Wales in developing the business plan for this proposed operation;

- 1) To provide clarity regarding if and how the proposed operation would work with businesses in the EW part of the Mid Wales region if they were deemed relevant to the operation
- 2) To fully demonstrate and evidence engagement with other relevant operations, especially the FLEXIS operation, and fully explain how duplication of activity will be avoided

To ask WEFO in considering the business plan for this proposed operation;

- 1) To note the GMW Partnership's above comments and ensure they have been sufficiently addressed in any business plan

G - Welsh Health Innovation and Technology Accelerator (WHITA), Life Sciences Hub Wales

To ask Life Sciences Hub Wales in developing the business plan for this proposed operation;

- 1) To provide further information and clarity on how the proposed operation will impact the regional economy of Mid Wales

To ask WEFO in considering the business plan for this proposed operation;

- 1) To note the GMW Partnership's comments regarding lack of regional fit and ensure they have been sufficiently addressed in any business plan
- 2) To note the GMW Partnership's comments that, given the proportion of funds available under the open call that the proposed operation would require, the operation should truly seek to deliver activity on a pan-Wales basis

	<p>Endorsement Query It was noted that the wider Partnership may not have access to the detail relating to the items that were presented for endorsement, and it was requested that further description be provided on the benefits and impacts of each item proposed in future. CM commented that the full detail of each item is provided to the cross-working group.</p> <p>Meeting with the Rural Funding Division It was requested the Rural Funding Division be invited to attend the January Partnership Board meeting to provide an update. CM will extend an invitation to the January Partnership Board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair requested that an invitation also be extended to Lesley Griffiths, Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, to meet with GMW Partnership representatives.</p>	<p>CM</p> <p>CM</p> <p>CM</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Freight strategy launch progress and action plan</p>	
	<p>The membership noted the report, and endorsed its submission to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, taking account of the feedback received regarding the railway and technological changes...</p> <p>in order to recognise the possibilities for future infrastructure opportunities in Wales. The identification of jointly funded (UK and Welsh Government) strategic cross-border work included the need within Wales to strengthen the network throughout Ceredigion, Powys and Shropshire.</p> <p>AE submit the strategy.</p>	<p>AE</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Update Report of GMW Connectivity and Infrastructure Group</p>	
	<p>The membership noted the report.</p> <p>It was highlighted that Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) would not be bidding for the Wales and Borders franchise, but there were three others bidders. Concerns were raised regarding the large number of ATW employees in Machynlleth that would be affected, and it was confirmed that the employees would be in a TUPE situation.</p> <p>The Bow Street Station work programme is progressing.</p> <p>The Mid Wales Stations Assessment includes consideration of Carno as an</p>	

	<p>additional station/stop for Mid Wales. It was generally agreed that this would not be the best option due to the existing Caersws station (which is less than 6 miles away).</p> <p>It was clarified that the ‘calls’ for stations across the Mid Wales Region were identified and put in priority order for the region, rather than on a pan-Wales basis. The priority for stations was no guarantee that the stations would be developed – a full business case would be needed to support each proposal.</p> <p>The T1c (Aberystwyth to Cardiff) Traws Cymru route has been included within the Welsh Government budget allocation for network improvements.</p> <p>Regarding item 2.4 of the report, the Vice Chair queried the proposed re-opening of the ‘A Line’ and the process for making such a proposal. It was confirmed that this request was pursued by the local Assembly Member and a campaign group. Generally, Welsh Government issues calls for funding, and this includes a feasibility study and money to develop a proposal. It was noted that the recent work for prioritising stations was in-house funded and not Capital funded.</p> <p>A query was raised about when the funding will be available for the ‘A487 pinch points plan’, and how the funding will be accessed. It was clarified that following annual local government transport fund competition bids a list is created by filtering those bids which were not successful but were identified as addressing ‘pinch point’ concerns across the network. Welsh Government works with local authorities to address the local network ‘pinch points’ that feed into national network. There are several different funds that support this work.</p> <p>Regarding the Mott MacDonald report, no further update was available regarding the timescales for consideration of reopening the Aberystwyth to Carmarthen line.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Update Report on emerging TRIP arrangements (Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme)</p>	
	<p>The membership noted the submission made to Welsh Government - Regeneration.</p> <p>The programme has been approved and publicly launched; potential projects for the next three years are being considered as part of the Regional</p>	

	<p>Regeneration Plan (for the indicative £7million fund over three years), with the first meeting taking place next week between Welsh Government, Powys County Council and Ceredigion County Council.</p> <p>VL welcomed nominations for representatives to input into the Welsh Government discussions.</p> <p>It was queried how the decision will be made as to which priorities take a precedent in terms of regional priorities and those of the local authorities. Confirmation was provided that a joint committee would be created as a decision making body to promote the region's priorities, and the Chief Executives of Powys County Council and Ceredigion County Council would make relevant decisions in this committee. VL noted that the GMW Partnership already has a strategy, which would form the basis of discussions, and would help to identify the 'quick wins' and items of strategic importance.</p> <p>EV commented that it may be beneficial to change the entire approach of the GMW Partnership to review the vision and move forward with the programme of work. It was noted that the Partnership must first identify funding before moving forward practically i.e. secure funds, agree a programme of work, and then act upon the programme.</p> <p>AW noted that a WG Economic Action Plan is being created, and 'Prosperity for All' is already available. There is a high level strategic document in place for this Partnership; the next stage is agreement of the regional priorities and the tangible actions for delivering against the vision. This work will also help to inform the work of the RLSP (in reference to the earlier discussion).</p>	
11.	<p>To consider representation from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Snowdonia National Park Authority b) Brecon Beacons National Park 	
	<p>Additional Representation</p> <p>It was proposed and agreed to extend an invitation to the Snowdonia National Park Authority and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority to each have one representative at GMW Partnership Board.</p>	CM
12.	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
	<p>Future Meeting Dates</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 January 2018 at 10.30 am in Llandrindod Wells, Powys • 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

DRAFT