



**Growing Mid Wales
Partnership**

Present: Councillor Rosemarie Harris – Leader: Powys County Council – Chair
Councillor Ellen Ap Gwynn – Leader: Ceredigion County Council – Vice-Chair
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)**
Claire Miles – Mid Wales RET **(CM)**
Councillor Gareth Thomas, Gwynedd County Council **(GT)**
Councillor James Evans – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Economic Development, Housing and Regulatory Services (Powys County Council) **(Cllr. JE)**
Councillor Myfanwy Alexander – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Adult Social Care and the Welsh Language (Powys County Council) **(Cllr. MA)**
Councillor Rhodri Evans – Cabinet Member: Economic Development (Ceredigion) **(Cllr. RE)**
Dr. Caroline Turner – Chief Executive: Powys County Council **(CT)**
Emma Wilde – Mid Wales Chamber of Commerce **(EW)**
Gareth Jones – Powys County Council **(GJ)**
Helen Jones – Visit Wales **(HJ)**
Hywel Davies – University of Wales Trinity St. David **(HD)**
Marie Evans - Mid Wales RET **(ME)**
Mark Dacey – NPTC Group of Colleges **(MD)**
Nia Williams – Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care **(NW)**
Nigel Brinn – Powys County Council **(NB) (part)**
Peter Davies MBE – Farmers Union of Wales **(PD)**
Peter James - Welsh Government **(PJ)**
Rachel Garside-Jones, Deputy Director of Regional Investment – Welsh Government **(RG-J)**
Rhian Hayward – Aberystwyth University **(RH)**
Rhodri Llwyd Morgan – Aberystwyth University **(RLIM)**
Russell Hughes-Pickering – Ceredigion County Council **(RHP)**
Siwan Richards – Ceredigion County Council **(SR)**
Steve Hughson – Chief Executive: Royal Welsh Agricultural Society **(SH)**

In attendance:

Arthur Emyr – Welsh Government **(ArthurE)**
David Owen – Digital Development Officer – Ceredigion County Council **(DO)**
Diane Reynolds – Powys County Council **(DR)**

Minutes from a meeting of the Growing Mid Wales Partnership held on Monday, 21st September 2020 via Zoom.

		Action
1.	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceri Stephens, Mid Wales Manufacturing • Councillor Dafydd Edwards, Ceredigion County Council • Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn, Gwynedd • Councillor Phyl Davies, Powys County Council • Councillor Rowland Rees-Evans, Mid Wales Tourism • Doug Hughes, Hughes Architects • Eifion Evans, Ceredigion County Council • Emyr Williams, Snowdonia National Park • Gerwyn Evans, Welsh Government • Gillian Wells, NRW • Jane Davidson, University of Wales Trinity St. David • Jayne Jones, NPTC Group of Colleges • Lowri Gwilym, WLGA • Martin Cox, NRW • Nina Davies, Powys County Council • Peter Howells, NFU • Peter James Welsh Government • Peter Skitt, Hywel Dda Health Board • Rhodri Griffiths, Welsh Government • Rob Holt, Welsh Government • Vivienne Lewis, Welsh Government 	
2.	<p>MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING – 1st June 2020 The minutes from the previous meeting held on 1st June 2020 were confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:-</p> <p>To amend ‘NPTC Group’ to ‘NPTC Group of Colleges’.</p>	
3.	<p>Growth Deal Update And Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth Deal <p>CJE stated that the proposition document for GMW has been submitted to both Governments and officers have been working with both Governments on the detail. CJE explained that officers have been working on Project Validation Reviews with both Governments and a Report is currently being drafted. Portfolio Workshops with both Governments have been arranged for this week and in a fortnight’s time. CJE stated that it is hoped the Heads of Terms will be agreed in the next few weeks with the full Deal agreed in March 2021.</p> <p>EAG thanked officers for the work undertaken to prepare for the Project Validation Reviews and looks forward to receiving the outcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Wales RLSP <p>CJE noted that WG have offered funding for the initial set up of the RLSP for Mid Wales and officers have been working on proposals which will be submitted by the end of this month and will be discussed in more detail at the next GMW Board (Joint Committee).</p> <p>EAG stated that she is pleased to hear the progress of the RLSP for Mid Wales.</p> <p>PD asked if there has been a review of the Growth Deal Business Plan in light of the pandemic? CJE explained that the pandemic has been at the front of everyone’s minds and the shape of the economy has changed from when the document was</p>	

	<p>developed. Discussions have been had with political leaders and the private sector and the Deal will have to be flexible in terms of changing economic circumstances. CJE stated that the team are also working with WG on the economic response and the Growth Deal is about medium-longer term support there is no indication that this needs to change. CJE explained that projects haven't been agreed as yet and this phase is to set the foundations to allow the region and stakeholders to have a strong say on what the Growth Deal will support to respond to what the economy requires.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Regional Presentations</p>	
	<p>Presentation – Global Centre or Rail Excellence – Welsh Government</p> <p>Arthur Emyr, Welsh Government, attended the meeting to provide a presentation on the Global Centre of Rail Excellence. A copy of the presentation attached. The presentation focused on:-</p> <div data-bbox="323 607 376 669" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Mid Wales Growth Deal Partnership Sept</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievements and Milestones • Origin and Evolution – the journey • Objectives, drivers/ trends and benefits • The proposal <p>An opportunity for questions followed.</p> <p>MD asked if there is any indication of timescales for this work as there will be a need to raise the skill level for employment opportunities to help and assist.</p> <p>ArthurE stated that the current programme indicates (subject to caveats) that they should be able to deliver phase 1 and be operational in revenue in 2023 and phases two and three in 2024 and 2025. ArthurE stated that there have been positive discussions about opportunities and the need for a dynamic environment for skills.</p> <p>MD stated that the Rail Academy is under their work based learning contract and there are good opportunities to have specialists in this work and to use more enhanced engineering programmes to prepare people for the work.</p> <p>AE asked if other opportunities for the passenger line has been considered? ArthurE stated that the line is there and is in good condition and has been part of similar discussions and similar questions raised over the last 18 months as to what else might materialise in the future in terms of usage.</p> <p>RH stated that it is important to note that there will be extra economic development and tourism opportunities attached to this facility as people will travel and stay in the area to use the facility. ArthurE stated that accommodation will need to be considered as when the site is operational, there will be engineers, academics and researches engaged on the site on a day to day basis, and there are not many alternative accommodation options in the area.</p> <p>ArthurE stated that he will continue to keep the Partnership updated on progress.</p> <p>The Chair thanked ArthurE for his presentation to partnership members today.</p>	
	<p>Presentation – Digital Connectivity in Mid Wales – Ceredigion and Powys Councils</p>	

	<p>Diane Reynolds, Gareth Jones (Powys County Council) and David Owen (Ceredigion County Council) provided a presentation to the Partnership on Digital Connectivity in Mid Wales. A copy of the presentation is attached. The presentation focused on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current connectivity • Regional vision for digital connectivity • Current activity • Connectivity mapping • The Broadband Upgrade fund • Town Wi-Fi • LoRaWAN and how it works • Community Broadband • Opportunities for regional collaboration <p>An opportunity for questions followed.</p> <p>RLIM asked if the team have been in contact with the Aberystwyth University's Centre of Excellence as part of this work. DO stated that discussions have been held.</p> <p>NW asked if the team have been in discussion with the Health Board as more outpatient appointments are taking place online. DO stated that there is a joint Health & Social Care Strategy under the RPB in Powys and an element of that is Digital First and the team have worked closely with the digital lead to ensure plans are aligned. EW asked how the team are going to target members of the community who do not have access to resources to find more information and apply for the Broadband Upgrade Fund? DO stated that they will work with local schemes and have officers on the ground.</p> <p>EAG stated that difficulties were encountered in the past when the Glandyfi exchange wasn't recognised as being in Ceredigion when it was. EAG stated that there is a problem with the definition of a county boundary. GJ confirmed that this is an issue the team are aware of and they are working with Local Government on the issue at present.</p>	
5.	<p>Wider Regional Landscape</p> <p>Regional Economic Planning – Welsh Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Economic Recovery In Response To Covid 19 <p>AW provided an update to Members on WG's response to business support in light of the pandemic, the recovery work that is ongoing and the work to develop the Regional Economic Framework.</p> <p>AW stated that WG made over £1.7billion available to support businesses in Wales to compliment the other UK Gov. schemes. AW stated that work has shown that the package of support has reached businesses who need it to the most. 34% of businesses in Wales have benefited from the support compared to 14% in England and 21% in Scotland. AW stated that business rate grants worth over £758mil have been provided by Local Authorities to eligible businesses in Wales. AW stated that 13,000 businesses have also benefited from the Economic Resilience Fund which has been able to safeguard over 100k jobs. Xxx has offered to support micro and larger businesses. AW stated that work is ongoing with regard to another package of support. AW stated that WG have been responsive to feedback received from businesses and stakeholders to plug gaps that have been left in support. AW stated that xxx businesses has been identified as an area facing difficulty and AW stated that a £5mil package of support will launch from April 2019 to March 2020. A £40mil</p>	

package has also been made available for employers to take on and train new workers to include apprenticeships.

AW informed Members that Counsel General, Jeremy Miles MS, is leading on much of this work for WG. In addition, Ken Skates MS, is also looking at economic recovery in light of the pandemic and the Cabinet have agreed that they are looking at a programme of activities on the principles of social justice, fair worth and environmental sustainability which is embedded in to the Cabinet commitments of People, Place, Green and Digital.

AW informed the Partnership that that they are moving into a phase of engagement on the Regional Economic Framework and this will be co-designed with the region and stakeholders. AW stated that details will be sent to members which will include a number of interactive events throughout the autumn which will help identify common shared priorities that the public, private and voluntary can sign up to.

SH thanked AW for the update and noted that while businesses have been extremely grateful to WG for the business support that has been made available, there is also a need to look at support for the iconic annual Mid Wales events that are going to struggle through any phased opening.

AW stated that she will convey SH's comments back to colleagues in Welsh Government.

- **Update on RIIW work programme and OECD events**

RG-J provided an update to Members. RG-J explained that she is the Deputy Director for Regional Investment at WG and is working on post-Brexit future regional investment in Wales. RG-J explained that CJE and CM are members of the sub group and a number of Councillors are part of the external steering group chaired by Huw Irranca-Davies MS.

In addition to the steering group, RG-J stated that they are working closely with a Ministerial Group comprising the Counsel General, Minister for Economy & Transport, Minister for Housing & Local Government and the Minister for Finance. RG-J explained that meetings have been held during August and September and detailed proposals for future regional investment will be presented to Cabinet members. RG-J stated that analysis from a consultation held with stakeholders from February to June will be published in the coming weeks. RG-J stated that it was a fantastic consultation response and the proposals will need to take account of the economic recovery due to the pandemic.

RG-J explained that the Counsel General will be meeting with the Secretary of State for Wales and the Minister for Housing and Local Government tomorrow afternoon to discuss the UK Gov. position and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and what that will mean in terms of the relationship between WG, UK. Gov and stakeholders.

RG-J stated that the aim is to work closely as the four regions of Wales to have investment as best we can in Wales.

RG-J stated the OECD Report was launched last week. RG-J mentioned that CJE spoke at an OECD event last week which went well. RG-J explained that the OECD worked closely with stakeholders on the Report. RG-J stated that they will be having more detailed discussions with each region and the Mid Wales event will be held on Tuesday, 29th September (details shared by CM) to discuss the regional needs and priorities and what will be needed from the OECD and WG to deliver those.

	<p>RG-J it is hoped there will be more clarity on the UK Shared Prosperity fund at the meeting tomorrow which will help the planning for regional investment.</p> <p>Both Leaders shared their frustration that there has been no confirmation in writing regarding the Growth Deal funding as yet. RG-J stated that it is hoped more information will become available in the Ministerial meeting tomorrow and the point will be made that this information is required in order to continue to work collaboratively. EAG stated that it is likely that we may have to wait until the Spending Review in November for any information.</p>	
6.	<p>Regional Response – Welsh Government Sustainable Farming and Our Land Consultation</p> <p>CM stated that we are in the next stage of the WG Sustainable Farming and Our Land Consultation which will close on the 23rd October and is about the management and administration of future funds in Wales’s post-Brexit and is broken down in to two parts, Pillar 1 and Pillar 2.</p> <p>CJE explained that within the consultation, it is very much proposed that the role and powers in terms of allocating funds around any future RDP programme is very much strengthened.</p> <p>CM explained that in terms of managing funds, there is a Programme Monitoring Committee mechanism in place which provides key stakeholders and partners the chance to scrutinise decisions and amendments to the programme.</p> <p>CM stated that on the 8th September, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs announced a revised spending package for the remainder of the current RDP funding in Wales which was welcomed. A package of £160mil was announced for rural economy however only £2mil is going towards the global business investment scheme and the remainder will be towards agriculture and environment.</p> <p>CM stated that the RET will draft a response to the consultation by Members and will circulate a draft response to Members for comment w/c 5th October 2020.</p> <p>EAG stated that she would like to make the point that they haven’t included one of the main recovery themes of the fair work element of social justice in to this at the moment.</p>	
7.	<p>Regional Updates:</p> <p>i. Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme</p> <p>CJE provided an update from the pre-circulated Report to update Members on progress in relation to the TRI programme in Mid Wales, and on proposals for future funding for Regeneration and to seek endorsement on principles for programme modification so that officers can manage the current programme to minimise any potential underspends, and proposed arrangements for programme administration for future funding years.</p> <p>Following discussion the partnership agreed to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the proposed request to Welsh Government to carry over £12k of management fees into yr 4 (2021/22) to allow for monitoring of completion, outputs and sign off of project activity for Canolfan Dulais. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the proposed request to Welsh Government to carry over £18k of management fees into yr 4 (2021/22) to allow for monitoring of completion, outputs and sign off of project activity for Newtown Riverside Venue. • Endorse the principle of increasing the budget of the Town Centre Property Investment Fund (TCPIF) in 2020/21 to mitigate programme underspends, should they occur. • Endorse the proposal for Powys County Council to lead the next round of the proposed thematic property investment fund for the region, according to the principles set out in the report. • Endorse the indicative sum of £1.5m proposed to the next round of the thematic fund. <p>EAG stated that the way that WG define the needs of town centres is not allowing development in the wider area of the towns and stated that the smaller market towns need to be looked at in a slightly different way. CW, WG, responded noting that WG are looking to allow Local Authorities to have more flexibility. CW stated that it is hoped the new thematic will hopefully open a lot more opportunities.</p> <p>ii. Regional Engagement Team Report</p> <p>CM provided an update from a pre-circulated report to Members. CM informed members that the team are in the first stages of having a regional website for GMW by the end of the month. CM stated that the first meeting of the Regional Enterprise Network was held a few weeks ago to share intelligence and positive feedback.</p> <p>iii. Connectivity and Infrastructure Working Group</p> <p>AE provided an update to Members. AE explained that the pandemic has affected the transport network substantially. AE stated that the UK Gov. has announced that they are ending the rail franchise after 24 years and are to replace it with emergency recovery management arrangements. The Chair stated that future planning of the rail network can be updated at the next GMW Partnership meeting on 3rd December 2020.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>GJ stated that the Mid Wales Energy Strategy will be shared with Members in the coming weeks. GJ stated that a workshop will then be arranged for Members to discuss the Strategy.</p> <p>HJ Visit Wales informed Members of the Cultural Recovery Fund which will be available to organisations in the culture and heritage sectors. The closing date for applications is the 2nd October 2020. Further details will be circulated via email.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting would be held on 4th December – Zoom (details tbc)</p>	

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