
EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21.06.18

Present: Councillor Beth Lawton (Chair).

Councillors: Menna Baines, Freya Bentham, Steve Collings, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Judith Humphreys, Elwyn Jones, Huw G.Wyn Jones, Cai Larsen, Dewi Owen, Elfed Roberts, Paul Rowlinson and Gareth Williams.

Co-opted Member: Rita Price (Catholic Church).

Officers present:

Vera Jones (Members' Manager - Democratic Services) and Eirian Roberts (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Present for item 7 below:

Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn (Council Leader)

Iwan Trefor Jones (Corporate Director)

Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department)

Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Beth Lawton as Chair of this committee for 2018/19.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Paul Rowlinson as Chair of this committee for 2018/19.

3. APOLOGIES

Councillors Aled Evans, Keith Jones, Mair Rowlands and Cemlyn Williams; Anest Gray Frazer (Church in Wales) and David Healey (Teachers Unions).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

None to note.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 17 April, 2018 as a true record.

7. NORTH WALES GROWTH DEAL BID - PROGRESS REPORT

Submitted - the report of the Council Leader presenting an update on the North Wales Growth Deal, together with information about the proposed governance arrangements.

The Committee's observations and views about the Governance Agreement were invited.

The Leader and the Corporate Director expanded on the content of the report, and also responded to questions / observations from the members.

The Chair summarised the main conclusions of the discussion as follows:-

Members were grateful for the update by the Leader regarding the North Wales Economic Growth arrangements. Committee members had expressed their support for the direction of the deal from the beginning, and remained supportive. However, the main messages on the day focused more on the risks which needed to be considered as the deal evolved.

FINANCIAL RISKS

As a result of the report and discussions on the day, the members identified the potential risks and financial implications for the Council as a result of the deal.

Assurances were needed:-

- That the benefits of the deal outweighed the financial risks.
- That all Gwynedd members were satisfied that every possible step had been taken to minimise the financial risks.
- That the business plans and project plans were resilient, and were managed carefully in order to minimise risks of partners withdrawing from projects and the associated financial risk that would fall on the authority.
- That members needed to be able to scrutinise the projects often to ensure that business risks (financial and delivery) would be managed.

GOVERNANCE RISKS

Again, as a result of the information to hand and the discussions on the day, the following messages and risks were noted regarding the proposed governance arrangements:

- There was support to scrutinising the Growth Deal in each individual authority.
- Concern was expressed regarding delegating rights to the Leader, while also accepting that this was necessary. However, it must be ensured that the Leader regularly feeds information to Gwynedd Members and was accountable to the members about the direction of the deal, progress on projects and how the risks would be managed.

OTHER RISKS

Some other risks that should be considered were also noted:-

- Political risks, such as a change of direction from Welsh Government, and the need to be awake to this.
- Continue to note the political risks of collaborating across North Wales authorities.

However, crucially, it was noted that one of the main risks would be not working Regionally. By collaborating Regionally, Gwynedd Council could ensure a strong voice to insist that developments materialised as a result of the deal for Gwynedd as a whole. A request was also made to consider the benefits and implications of Gwynedd becoming the host authority for the Deal.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.25am