



north wales economic ambition board

bwrdd uchelgais economaidd gogledd cymru

*North Wales, the economy of the future: Smart, Resilient, Connected,
where economic growth is powered by innovation in high value economic sectors*

North Wales Growth Deal - Business Delivery Group (BDG) Meeting 15 July 2019

Attendees:

Members:

Askar Sheibani (Intrim Chair)	Comtek	AS
Geoff Ellison	Dragon Drilling	GE
Mark Evans	Pebble Hill Property	ME
Huw Jones	Jones Brothers	HJ
Steve Lyons	AirBus	SL
Steve Thomas	AirBus	STh
Chris Owen	Alpine Travel	CO
Stephen Wade	Legat Owen	SW

Officers:

Iwan Trefor Jones	Corporate Director, Gwynedd County Council	ITJ
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Apologies:

Andrew Bowden	Cartrefi Conwy	AB
Nick Davies	Ipsen	ND
Liz McGuinness	Llangollen Railway	LMc
Menna Jones	Antur Waun Fawr	MJ
Sara Overson	Toyota	SO
Capt Wyn Parry	Stena	WP
Sean Taylor	Zip World	ST
Huw Watkins	BIC Innovation	HW
Mary Wimbury	Care Forum Wales	MW

Clerk:

Gerry Beer	Glyndŵr University	GB
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In Attendance:

Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn	Chair of NWEAB	DS
Jane Richardson	Representative of NWEAB Executive Group	JR

1. WELCOME

AS welcomed Members, noted the apologies and thanked DS and JR for attending the meeting. Introductions were made round the table.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – 18 JUNE 2019 AND MATTERS ARISING

Minutes accepted as a true and accurate record.

3. RESPONSE TO BDG LETTER TO THE NWEAB MEMBERS

AS invited DS to formally respond to the letter that had been sent to him as Chair of the NWEAB and stated that Members would be invited to also raise questions once DS had responded. AS reiterated that Members were concerned that their time and energy volunteering on the BDG was not adding value as it was felt that their contribution to any discussions or decisions had not been taken into consideration.

DS apologised for not formally responding on receipt of the letter but stressed the importance of the BDG in sharing and realising the NW Economic Vision and how the Group was vital for the successful delivery of the Growth bids. The NWEAB was seen to be a body of strength as it worked in partnership across all six local authorities, the HE and FE sector and the private sector and this was essential for the success of the NW Economic Vision.

3.1 Advisory / Sector Body Relationship Chart for North Wales

Although an advisory / sector body relationship chart was still outstanding DS assured Members that the concept of a Private Sector Reference Group, set up by Ministers, had not be formally reported. Ministers, however, had received feedback that such a Group would not be necessary and appeared to have received the feedback positively.

3.2 Skills Statistics

A short synopsis of the statistics that would demonstrate where the private sector thought the skills gaps were, remained a request as it was thought it would be a useful tool for Members.

3.3 Regional Business Support Proposal

Members reiterated the need for the Business Support proposal to be more ambitious as opposed to a system imposed on them. JR provided the background and reported that originally a proposal had been submitted into the NWGD bids, however, as the NWGD framework did not allow for revenue projects the original proposal had been pulled and it was agreed that an alternative provision would be provided. As the proposal had no political mandate the aim was to provide a support infrastructure that would be branded as a 'one stop shop' but the structure behind would be about using the individual expertise across the region to support business, no matter where they were based. JR agreed that ideally it would have been better to provide something along the lines of what was the WDA but without the political support this proposal was a means of trying to achieve the same ends.

The six LEAs and the WG Business Wales were actively talking as to how the Regional Business Support could operate and a proposal was set to be presented to the NWEAB in September. The idea was to use a central CRM system to capture the information with shared KPIs.

Members reiterated that they were supportive in principle, however, they stressed that the proposal did not go far enough to meet the needs of the private sector. JR urged Members to support the development of the Regional Business Support Framework to demonstrate to WG that there was a real need for such a body.

3.4 Role of the BDG and the Challenge Process

AS reported that there was a wide perception that the Group was set up purely as a 'rubber stamping exercise' to satisfy Ministers that the NWEAB had taken cognisance of their requirements. The Group needed to have the evidence that this was not the case and their

role was contributing to the development of the region and that their views and minutes of meetings had been considered at the NWEAB meetings.

DS reported that the focus of the NWEAB had been to progress the North Wales Growth Deal bids and reach Heads of Terms and therefore the broader discussions and direction of travel had not had the focus that they could have had. However, as the projects progressed to the next stage the NWEAB would have the space to broaden its field of discussion to encapsulate the wider discussion of the North Wales Growth Deal projects.

ITJ reassured Members that the feedback the Group had given on each of the Outline Business Cases, presented to them at an earlier meeting, had been taken into account when further designing them. In addition the previous Chair of the Group had fed back comments at the NWEAB meetings ensuring that the views of the Group were communicated.

In terms of the challenge sessions for which the BDG Members had not had an opportunity to contribute to, it was reported that they had been set up by both WG and the UK Gov with little consultation with the NWEAB.

Members remained unconvinced by the assurances given and felt there remained a disconnect between the two Boards. Members reflected on how Enterprise Boards operated and how they communicated direct to Ministers with a response being reported back on how policy would be moulded based on the perspective of the private sector. This indicated that the Enterprise Boards were effective and impacted the development of the Region, something that Members felt was not the case for the BDG.

DS took on board the comments made and agreed that they needed to be discussed at the NWEAB to ensure that a relationship was forged between the two Boards.

JR reported that there were no formal guidelines or structures to follow when forming the Growth Deal and its support structures and that a better definition of roles and responsibilities needed to take place to provide clarity and clear understanding of all parties. It was noted, however, that once the Heads of Terms were signed and the projects moved into the pump prime funding stage the BDG members could contribute to each project, depending on specialisms, to help shape and guide the projects.

DS reported that it had proven to be difficult to assert its authority to plan and create structures locally and that this remained the governance of WG, however, it was suggested that the BDG may prove to have more influence as the voice of the private sector and push for more regionalisation and the associated funding. ITJ concurred and reiterated the role of the Group as a critical friend, in place to advise and challenge the NWEAB ensuring that key messages were reported, that barriers were communicated and that they had the opportunity to expand their role to lobby for the region.

3.5 Outcomes of Discussion

It was agreed that there needed to be more connectivity between the two bodies and therefore the following was agreed as a way forward:

1. That the minutes of the BDG would be presented to the NWEAB at each meeting.
2. That the Chair of the BDG, or a representative, would have the opportunity to talk to the minutes at each meeting.
3. That the NWEAB and BDG would come together twice a year to provide a more formal reporting mechanism.
4. That two of the projects in Phase One would be presented at each meeting over a 3 month period for scrutiny and challenge: September to December 2019.

5. That the projects in Phase Two would then be scrutinised at each meeting: January to March 2020.
6. That Members of the BDG would be asked to contribute to the sub-groups of the NWEAB in developing the Five Case Business Models based on individual specialisms.
7. That the BDG invite Ministers to their meetings in order to engage in direct discussion.

4. PROGRESS UPDATE – NWEAB AND NWGD

It was reported that both Governments were keen to sign the Heads of Terms and it was anticipated that this would take place by the end of July when funds would then become available for the projects within the Heads of Terms. Five Case Business Models would then be developed for each of the projects. A meeting in London scheduled for the 17 July 2019 would set the conditions and highlight a realistic timeline to take the projects forward.

ITJ stressed that the Outline Business Cases that would be developed into Five Case Business Models were not prescriptive and that feedback from the NWBDG remained a critical part of the next stage of development as specialists in their field. It was agreed that a summary of the NWGD Bids would be provided to Members to remind them of the projects under consideration.

First phase of projects that would commence with the development of the Five Case Business Models once the Heads of Terms were signed were:

- Land and Property
- Digital Connectivity
- Holyhead Gateway
- Transfynydd
- Smart Energy
- Nuclear Centre of Excellence

Work on developing the Five Case Business Models for the second phase of projects could continue but they would not be progressed until October or November 2019.

It would be the Director of the newly formed Programme Office that would take responsibility for driving the development of the projects.

Members commented that there needed to be more transparency in decision making as there had been no contribution from the Group in terms of the phasing process nor any evidence that comments fed back had been taken into consideration.

5. DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

AS reminded Members of the Digital Connectivity Steering Group that had been pulled together from individuals of high standing in their field. It was noted, however, that the formalisation of the group had been deferred as the NWEAB had not approved its standing. It was agreed however that the Steering Group would be able to feed into the Digital Connectivity Sub-Group of the NWEAB as their expertise would be critical to the development of the Five Case Business Model.

6. BANGOR UNIVERSITY AND WGU GROWTH DEAL PROJECTS – REGIONAL ECONOMY CONTRIBUTION

AS proposed that the VCs of Bangor University and WGU be invited to the next meeting to provide the opportunity for them to give an outline of the projects on the table, how they contributed to the regional economy and provide the opportunity to debate the proposals. JR

reminded Members that each of the projects presented would be at different stages of development: BU in Phase One for its Nuclear project and WGU in Phase two for its Optic and Engineering Project

7. NORTH WALES BUSINESS DELIVERY BOARD (BDB) – PROGRESS ON APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

ITJ reported that the appointment of a Chair for the BDB would be advertised by the end of July with a view to appoint by mid-September. The appointment would be made by the NWEAB.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed that the next meeting would be on the 2 September 2019 @ 08:30am and that GB and JR would discuss the schedule of projects to be presented to the three BDB's meetings between September and December 2019 outside of the meeting.