



north wales economic ambition board
bwrdd uchelgais economaidd gogledd cymru

REPORT TO TRANSPORT DELIVERY SUB-GROUP

DATE: 14 May 2021

Title: Chair's Update on the Work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) and the Regional Transport Group

Author: Councillor David A Bithell

1. Purpose of the Report

To update Members on the work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) and the Regional Transport Group.

2. Decision Sought

Members are invited to note the update and actions from the meeting with Alwen Williams, Portfolio Director of the NWEAB and Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer, Gwynedd County Council.

3. Reasons supporting the need for a decision.

The report is largely for information and no formal decision is required as a result of the report.

4. Background and Relevant Considerations

Update meeting requested by Chair of the NWEAB.

5. Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications from this report.

6. Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications from this report.

7. Staffing Implications

There are no specific staffing implications from this report.

8. Impact on Equalities

There are no specific equalities implications at this stage.

9. Consultations undertaken

There are no specific consultations required at this stage.

10. Appendix

Appendix 1 - Notes of the meeting with Alwen Williams, Portfolio Director of the NWEAB and Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer, Gwynedd County Council.

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer – responsible body:

I welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Chairman to discuss aspects of the work and constitution of the Sub Board. Having adopted the GA2 agreement which incorporates its terms of reference and the advent of Corporate Joint Committees with quite specific functions it's timely to consider where the Sub Board sits within this new framework.

ii. Head of Finance – responsible body:

I understand that this progress report is submitted for information, hence I have nothing to add from a financial propriety perspective.

Regional Transport - summary notes from meeting held Thursday 15 April

Summary of the meeting

Alwen outlined that:

- Focus has been placed on programmes funded by the Growth Deal over the last 12 months. These programmes are Digital, Land and Property, Low Carbon Energy, Innovation in High Value Manufacturing and Agri-food and Tourism. The Growth Deal was signed on the 17th December 2021.
- Two strategic programmes identified by the Economic Ambition Board, but are not funded by the Growth Deal are Regional Transport and Skills and Employment. These are two important programmes and the Portfolio Management Office are eager to work with regional stakeholders to map the way forward. This meeting facilitates the first discussion with Cllr Bithell as chair of the Transport Sub-Board.

Cllr Bithell summarised the sub-boards activity over the last twelve months:

- The sub-board has met 4 times in the last year. It has matured greatly as a sub-board since its establishment and has been supported with good input to the board from Iwan Prys Jones
- Consideration given to various reports and presentations during the year with the sub-group feeding back to relevant bodies and making recommendations as necessary, for example, the sub-board recommended to Transport for Wales that they prepare a Memorandum of Understanding about how the bus network operates. A suggestion was made directly to their Chief Executive, James Price, that this MoU should be shared with cabinet members across North Wales.
- As well as consideration to North Wales, the sub-board have maintained the relationship with Growth Track 360 and the broader cross-border agenda for transport.
- Minister Ken Skates AS has attended two of the meetings where the national transport strategy has been discussed.
- Transport decarbonisation and the regional approach for electric vehicle charging is a growing theme being considered by the sub-board and reports have been received on Hydrogen and Low Carbon Energy.

Corporate Joint Committee

When established, the CJC will hold the responsibility for strategic transport planning. Work is underway in the region to explore how the structure and power held by the CJC will work across the local authority areas. It was noted during the meeting that discussions should continue as and when the approach to establishing the CJC has developed in more detail.

Actions agreed

- Alwen to arrange a further meeting towards the middle/end June to re-engage post establishment of the new Welsh Government
- It was suggested that in the interim we all revisit the Terms of Reference for the Transport sub-board and consider the appropriateness/fit
- The transport sub-board to be invited to present an update of their work to the Economic Ambition Board. (suggested twice a year)

In addition to the above brief notes, I have included below a few paragraphs of content, prepared by Iwan Prys Jones for input into the annual report that we are currently producing. This report summarises the work done in the past 12 months by the Portfolio Management Office and partners on behalf of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.

Transport Programme

Having effective and reliable transport networks that link North Wales with key markets and destinations, is essential to support a thriving economy. The NWEAB established a Transport Sub-Board to support and prioritise investment in our transport networks and to work across the region to deliver improvements. The growing focus on safeguarding our environment has increased the need to provide genuine alternatives to road-based transport, including better passenger transport networks that properly integrate.

The NWEAB has supported Welsh Government and Transport for Wales with developing an integrated transport package branded as the North Wales Metro. There are some exciting projects currently under development that will see transformational improvement to the regions rail and bus networks over the years ahead. These include new rail stations and more capacity on our rail network, proposals to integrate bus and rail along with active travel are under development, along with quality programmes to achieve better branding, information, and

ticketing arrangements. The aim is to ensure that viable alternatives to car-based travel are available for all residents and visitors.

Alongside improvements to transport networks, the decarbonisation of transport networks is an increasing priority. Preparing the region for accelerated roll-out of zero emission electric vehicles, with adequate charging infrastructure is a priority. The NWEAB has also led on the development of a hydrogen hub at Deeside, to complement another being developed at Holyhead, that aims to put the region at the forefront of the roll out of hydrogen fuelling and fuel cell vehicle technologies. Business cases for implementation will be completed over the next year.

The publication of Llwybr Newydd - the updated Wales Transport Strategy, sets an ambitious programme of improvements to transport networks, decarbonisation proposals and a challenging agenda for change. Over the next year, work will commence on updating the North Wales Regional Transport Plan, in response to the agenda set by Llwybr Newydd.