



**North Wales Economic Ambition Board
30 September 2022**

TITLE: North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC)
– Part-time Secondment of the EAB Portfolio Director as interim CJC Chief Executive

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1. The report presents a request by the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC), to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (EAB), to release part of their Portfolio Director's time to fulfil the CJC Chief Executive's role, initially on a temporary basis until 31 March 2023. This proposal is supported by all six North Wales Council Chief Executives.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

2.1. That the EAB consider the following recommendations and proposed arrangements:

- That the EAB supports the CJC's request to release the Portfolio Director's time for two days per week until 31 March 2023 on a part time secondment basis to undertake the Interim Chief Executive role.
- That all associated employment and associated costs are covered by the North Wales CJC
- To delegate authority to the Portfolio Director in consultation with Chair and Vice-Chair of the EAB to agree on the re-allocation of responsibilities within the Portfolio Management Office (PMO) in order to ensure that the proposed interim arrangements support the PMO priorities and responsibility to all the EAB partner organisations.

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISION

3.1. Having regard to the in-principle decision of the Councils to transfer the functions of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to assist the North Wales region in establishing the CJC, and to ensure that the EAB's interests are safeguarded as the CJC moves forward.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

4.1. At the 17 June CJC meeting, it was agreed to extend the CJC's statutory officer appointments made at the 14 January CJC meeting, i.e. the Chief Executive Officer (Dafydd Gibbard), Chief Finance Officer (Dewi Morgan) and Monitoring Officer (Iwan Evans) being provided by Gwynedd Council, and to approve the ongoing arrangements for Gwynedd Council to provide support services for the CJC.

4.2. The 22 July CJC meeting considered an options appraisal for filling the CJC's Chief Executive Officer role. It was agreed to submit a request to the EAB to release part of their Portfolio Director's time to fulfil the CJC's Chief Executive role on a secondment basis until 31 March 2023. This way forward considers an assumption that the EAB may be incorporated as part of the CJC in the future.

- 4.3. As noted in the September CJC Update (Appendix 1), there are a number of outstanding matters to resolve, along with the work required to operationalise the powers held by the CJC. This proposal presents a way forward which enables the EAB's Portfolio Director to play a key role in leading and influencing the work which will facilitate the assumed future transition of the regional PMO (including the Growth Vision and Growth Deal) currently being delivered by the PMO for the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, into the CJC.
- 4.4. The proposed interim secondment arrangement will help determine and set out the options to resolve the CJC's Chief Executive's role on a more permanent basis from April 2023. During the secondment period, progress can be made to establish the Planning and Transport sub-committees, and identify the resources required to discharge the CJC's initial duties.
- 4.5. The CJC recognise and support the need to make appropriate budgetary and operational arrangements to ensure that the work of the Portfolio Director in leading the PMO and delivery of the Growth Deal is not impacted by this proposed interim arrangement.

Opportunities and Risks

- 4.6. The proposed way forward presents an opportunity to create cohesion between the EAB and the CJC and to ensure that the EAB's interests are represented and safeguarded as further development and implementation of the CJC moves forward. The key opportunities and risks to be managed are noted below:
 - An existing working assumption determines that the EAB and regional PMO could be incorporated within the CJC in future. The part-time secondment of the Portfolio Director would ensure that the Growth Deal and Growth Vision continue to be delivered during and after that transition, with turbulence minimised.
 - The EAB's Portfolio Director's involvement in establishing the CJC would be required with respect to co-ordinating the Economic Wellbeing function regardless, and therefore formalising this arrangement by means of the part-time secondment allows for that involvement to be focused and for duplication of resources to be avoided.
 - Releasing the Portfolio Director for two days a week to take on the interim CJC Chief Executive role will create a capacity challenge for the Portfolio Management Office that will need to be planned for and managed carefully.
 - The CJC will cover all employment costs for the proposed secondment which enables the EAB funding to be reinvested in appropriate backfill arrangements.
 - The backfill arrangements could provide development opportunities for those currently in the PMO by taking on additional responsibilities during the secondment period. Recruitment of additional short-term resource is likely to be necessary.
 - The potential capacity challenge may require the PMO to de-prioritise certain activities to focus on the core deliverables relating to the Growth Deal, however every effort will be made to avoid this.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The CJC has offered to fund the proposed back-fill required to undertake some of the Portfolio Director's duties. Hence, this proposed part-time secondment of the Portfolio Director would be net cost neutral for the EAB.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The EAB has been established pursuant to Governance Agreement 2 to act as the decision-making body for the partnership of local authorities and the education bodies to deliver the North Wales Growth Deal and the Growth Vision. It's functions and the outcomes it needs to deliver are defined by the agreement and the related Overarching Business Plan which was completed in tandem with the Growth Deal. It is also required to appoint the Portfolio Director to Lead the Portfolio Management Office.
- 6.2. Nevertheless, the advent of the Corporate Joint Committees was presaged in GA2 and is specifically referenced as a matter reserved to the Councils. There is a specific provision in the agreement which acknowledges the anticipated creation of CJC's and that a transfer of functions might occur. This is reflected in the in-principle decision of the 6 executives in December 2021 to transfer the functions of the EAB to the CJC provided that the model and the statutory framework was in place to achieve this. The CJC's have now been established and the statutory model is practically completed. However, at this point in time the work of creating the CJC as a functioning public body with appropriate governance and management arrangements is being moved forward. This work needs to reflect and prepare for the assumption of the role of the EAB into the CJC and its governing model.
- 6.3. In terms of GA2 the proposed secondment does not require that EAB resources and contributions are provided to support the CJC. There also provision in the interim for maintaining capacity for supporting the work of delivering the EAB's functions. It is also relevant that the transition of the EAB's functions to the CJC needs to be properly planned and resourced to ensure that when the functions transferred this can be achieved effectively and efficiently. Provided the EAB is assured of these matters then it can appropriately approve the secondment within GA2.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 CJC September Update

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

- i. **Monitoring Officer – Host Authority:**
“I have advised on this matter and in particular the “Legal Implications” section of the report. The report properly advises the EAB on its functions and constraints. It also properly reflects the fact that although there may an element of common membership of the BUE and the CJC they are separate bodies with differing governance resourcing and, in the case of the EAB partnership requirements which need to be considered. The EAB needs to come to a decision this matter within its own governance framework and having regard to it's functions as set out in GA2.”
- ii. **Statutory Finance Officer (the Host Authority's Section 151 Officer):**
“I can confirm the accuracy of Part 5 of the report. The Finance Service will act to ensure that this arrangement remains cost-neutral for Ambition North Wales during the current financial year.”