
NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD
17/11/23

Present:

Voting Members - Councillors:- Jason McLellan (Denbighshire Council), Llinos Medi Huws (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council), Ian Roberts (Flintshire Council), Charlie McCoubrey (Conwy County Borough Council) and Dyfrig Siencyn (Cyngor Gwynedd) (Chair).

Advisors – Dafydd Evans (Grŵp Llandrillo Menai), Dr Maria Hinfelaar (Glyndŵr University, Wrexham) and Professor Paul Spencer (Bangor University).

Chief Officers - Dylan Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Rhun ap Iarll (Conwy County Borough Council), Neil Cockerton (Flintshire County Council), Dafydd Gibbard (Cyngor Gwynedd), David Fitzsimon (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Graham Boase (Denbighshire County Council).

Officers in attendance -

Host Authority - Dewi A. Morgan (Statutory Finance Officer), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Sian Pugh (Assistant Head of Finance) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

Ambition North Wales - Alwen Williams (Portfolio Director), Hedd Vaughan-Evans (Head of Operations), Nia Medi Williams (Senior Operations Officer), Robyn Lovelock (Growth Deal Programme Manager) and Danial Ellis Evans (Interim Energy Project Officer).

Observers - Wendy Boddington (Welsh Government); Gareth Ashman and Michael Holden (UK Government).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:-

- Askar Sheibani (Business Delivery Board);
- Professor Edmund Burke (Bangor University) with Professor Paul Spencer deputising;
- Ian Bancroft (Wrexham County Borough Council) with David Fitzsimon deputising;

The Chairman welcomed the deputies to the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Dr Maria Hinfelaar declared a personal interest in item 6 as Wrexham University was the sponsor of the Enterprise Engineering and Optic Centre Project. She was of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and withdrew from the meeting during the entire item.

Nevertheless, Dr Maria Hinfelaar noted that she wanted an explanation on two specific matters at some point, namely:-

- The structure of the further Business Justification Cases that were to follow.

- The expenditure profile, i.e. how much money was allocated at the beginning and how much would be dependent on these Business Justification Cases?

The Chair noted that the explanation would be given under item 6 and that Dr Maria Hinfelaar would receive a separate explanation from officers following the meeting.

Graham Boase declared a personal interest in item 6 as he was Director of Glyndŵr Innovations Ltd. which sat under Wrexham University. He was of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and withdrew from the meeting during the entire item.

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent matters were raised.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 27 October 2023, as a true record.

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the discussion on the following item due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - information about the financial or business transactions of any specific person (including the authority that retains that information).

There is an acknowledged public interest in openness in relation to the use of public resources and related financial issues. It is acknowledged, however, that there are occasions, in order to protect the financial and commercial interests that matters related to such information need to be discussed without being publicised. The report deals specifically with financial and business matter and related discussions. Publication of such commercially sensitive information could adversely affect the interests of the bodies and the Councils and undermine the confidence of other Growth Deal participants in sharing sensitive information for consideration. This would be contrary to the wider public interest of securing the best overall outcome.

6. ENTERPRISE ENGINEERING AND OPTIC CENTRE FULL BUSINESS CASE

The report was submitted by Robyn Lovelock, Growth Deal Programme Manager.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Board approve the Full Business Case for the Enterprise Engineering and Optic Centre project reflecting the approved change requests at OBC stage and authorise the Portfolio Director, in consultation with the Chair, Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer to agree and enter into a funding agreement with Wrexham University for the delivery of the project, on the basis of Wrexham University addressing the outstanding issues set out in section 7 of the report.**
- 2. That the Board note that the later phases of the project will be subject to Wrexham University producing a Business Justification Case for each expenditure phase.**
- 3. That the Board delegate to the Portfolio Director, in consultation with the Chair, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer authority to approve the subsequent Business Justification Cases for the later phases of the project where**

expenditure and benefits are within the parameters of the Full Business Case presented.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To seek the Board's approval of the Full Business Case for the Enterprise Engineering and Optic Centre Project.

The Board approved the Outline Business Case for the project on the 29 April 2022 along with a change request covering a reduction in match funding for the project. The project subsequently received the approval of the assurance process from Welsh Government. This enabled Wrexham University to progress with the procurement phase and development of the Full Business Case.

Wrexham University have now completed the procurement for phase 1 of the project and are now presenting to the Board, a Full Business Case for a final investment decision.

DISCUSSION

The item was discussed.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 10:35am.

Chair