NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD
26.7.19

Present:

Voting Members - Councillors:- Hugh Evans (Denbighshire Council), Llinos Medi Huws (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council), Ian Roberts (Flintshire Council), Sam Rowlands (Conwy County Borough Council) and Dyfrig L. Siencyn (Gwynedd Council).

Advisors – Claire Taylor (Glyndŵr University), Prof. Graham Upton (Bangor University), Sue Price (Coleg Cambria), Ashley Rogers (North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council) and Askar Sheibani (Business Delivery Board).

Chief Officers - Dr Gwynne Jones (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Iwan Davies (Conwy County Borough Council), Colin Everett (Flintshire Council), Gary Williams (Denbighshire Council), Ian Bancroft (Wrexham Council) and Dilwyn Williams (Gwynedd Council).

Officers in attendance – Dafydd L. Edwards (Section 151 Officer), Iwan Trefor Jones (The Board's Lead Director), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer) and Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

David Jones (Coleg Cambria), Dafydd Evans (Grŵp Llandrillo Menai), Maria Hinfelaar (Glyndŵr University), Judith Greenhalgh (Denbighshire Council) and Sasha Davies (Business Delivery Board)

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meetings, held on 21 June 2019 and 28 June 2019, as a true record.

4. UPDATE ON THE NWEAB WORK PROGRAMME AND RISK REGISTER

The report was presented by Iwan Trefor Jones, Lead Director.

RESOLVED

- **Review and approve the RAG status of each task within the Work Programme, subject to updating those actions that are slipping to red.**
- **Review the content of the Risk Register and approve the assessment criteria for each task.**
- **Agree that 'Programme Office' should be added to the register.**

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Update the progress of the tasks on the Work Programme along with the submission of the latest version of the Risk Register

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and attention was drawn to those matters in the work programme which had been completed as well as those requiring attention over the coming months. It was explained that tasks and timescales had been allocated to specific officers as well as a RAG status. Reference was made to the risk register which had been appended to the report and members were reminded that the document was reviewed on a monthly basis by the Executive Officers Group.

Business Deliver Board
Askar Sheibani (Vice-chair of the Business Delivery Board) gave an update on his vision for the Board to strengthen its relationship with the NWEAB so that it could take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of the Private Sector to attract wealth, target more contributions and generate business for North Wales. He reiterated the need to work together and to seek the best deal.

Observations arising from the discussion:
- That the private sector was a fundamental part of the deal
- That the board's minutes should be a standing item on the NWEAB's agenda
- That the NWEAB's work would be scrutinised with clear messages and direct recommendations
- That members of the Board be invited to attend / speak at meetings
- That joint meetings be held in order to build on the feeling of a team
- That the Board be consulted prior to advertising for Project Managers
- That the private sector and public sector culture needed to be integrated
- That an open dialogue, clear communication and effective information sharing were needed

In response to a question regarding adapting the terms of reference of the Business Delivery Board to reflect the above-mentioned observations, the Monitoring Officer suggested that the terms of reference could be adapted so that a procedure which would work for all could be established.

Appointment of Business Delivery Board Chair
It was reported that the appointments process was in place together with a (draft) job description for the Chair of the Business Delivery Board. The need to consult with both governments regarding the appointment was highlighted.

Observations arising from the discussion
- That the Chair would have an independent role
- That the person needed to be passionate about the area, well-known, a leader and have good connections

In response to a comment that the appointment would be a 'public appointment', the need to ensure an understanding of the financial limitations in the discussions was suggested, and that the local government appointments evaluation procedure had been followed.

Programme Office
Dilwyn Williams explained that some posts within the Programme Office would be advertised over the summer. It was reported that the post of Programme Director would be re-advertised on 29 July with a closing date of 23 August. An extraordinary meeting would have to be organised to draw up a short list on 6 September and interviews would be held on 20 September. He added that all Partners would receive a copy of the advert. It was also confirmed that the Digital Programme Manager post would be re-advertised after the Heads

of Terms were accepted - and it was also noted that the post would be advertised as a permanent post. A request was made for market supplement to be considered.

Observations arising from the discussion

- That applications for the Programme Director post from the private sector would be considered, as well as secondments if appropriate.
- That consideration be given to individuals 'stepping up' from the Directors Group
- That consideration needed to be given to interim arrangements - office management during a crucial time needed to be ensured. It was resolved that CE, IE and DOW would consider an interim plan and report to the next meeting in September.
- That salary levels were a part of office management discussions and arrangements

Risk Register
It was noted that matters that were slipping needed to be highlighted in red and that the Programme Office should be included on the register

5. 2019/20 REVENUE BUDGET - FIRST QUARTER REVIEW (June 2019)

The report was submitted by Dafydd Edwards, Section 151 Officer

RESOLVED

To note and accept the First Quarter Review of the Joint-Committee for 2019/20.

To obtain the Joint Committee's confirmation to use the Earmarked Reserve (set aside for this purpose) to fund any income deficit in 2019/20

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To note forecast expenditure on project planning (externally sourced and staff) in 2019/20, while capitalisation of those project costs would not be possible until 2020/21, and the forecast overspend on recruitment costs.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted in order to provide the details of the actual expenditure and income for the first quarter of the 2019/20 financial year together with a projected full year out-turn against the annual budget.

The Section 151 Officer noted that the financial procedure had been challenging and that the budget for this year had been prepared with the information available at the time. He added that there were still assumptions as no confirmation had been received of the ESF grant therefore money was being moved between budgets to reflect the staffing decisions. Nevertheless, he did not anticipate any obvious concerns on the horizon.

Reference was made to the programme office structure report which had been approved at the NWEAB meeting in June 2019 on grounds that the structure was affordable within the core financial contributions. It was explained that this could be implemented by using the agreed core contributions together with reserves carried forward. It was added that affordability for 20/21 would be dependent on a successful deal and capitalisation of projects' staffing costs.

In response to an observation regarding a reserve fund for redundancies, it was noted that discussions had been held and that the matter would be considered in full when forward-planning and setting a three year budget

Observations arising from the discussion
- That there was a need to build reserves
- That Councils needed to be invoiced for contributions
- That, when setting the budget, it must be outlined that the contributions remained the same
- Gratitude was expressed for the work

6. ESF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING APPLICATION

The report was presented by Iwan Trefor Jones, Lead Director

RESOLVED that the Executive Officers Group would,
- **continue to develop a Business Plan to WEFO (Welsh European Funding Office) to support its bid for funding from the European Social Fund**
- **establish a Task and Finish Group to lead on the development of the Business Plan**
- **provide quarterly progress updates to the NWEAB**

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Money from the fund would contribute towards funding posts within the Programme Office up to June 2023, back-dated to June 2018

DISCUSSION

A report was submitted detailing the work of the Executive Officers Group on the European Social Fund application to design and build the necessary capacity to deliver the North Wales Growth Deal. It was intended to receive £3m which would allow the funding of posts within the Programme Office until June 2023. This would lead to a self-funding programme office.

In response to a question regarding the details of funding the programme office posts, it was noted that estimates had been provided in the report and that full details would be provided in the business plan.

In response to a question regarding the timeframe of submitting the application, it was noted that it was intended to submit an application by the end of October 2019.

It was confirmed that, should Britain leave the European Union at the end of October, UK Government would provide the funding.

7. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting as the report relates to draft Heads of Terms for the North Wales Growth Deal which has been designated as confidential information by a Government Department for the purposes of Section 100 (A)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972. As a consequence it is a requirement that the report is excluded from publication as this would disclose the confidential information.

8. HEADS OF TERMS

The report was presented by Iwan Trefor Jones, Lead Director

RESOLVED
That the Economic Ambition Board welcomes the Draft Heads of Terms as a positive sign of the commitment of the UK Government and Welsh Government to the North Wales Growth Deal, with a view to closing the Heads of Terms before 6.9.19.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To approve the Heads of terms for the North Wales Growth Deal

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm and concluded at 2.50pm.