



Partneriaeth Tyfu Canolbarth Cymru / Growing Mid Wales Partnership

Dydd Llun 21 Tachwedd 2022

Monday 21 November 2022

10.30am

Cyfarfod Rhith

Virtual Meeting

In Attendance

Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Leader of Powys County Council (**Chair**) (**CIlr JG-W**)
Angharad Massow, Growing Mid Wales (**AM**)
Ann Elias, Ceredigion County Council (**AE**)
Ann Watkin, Welsh Government (**AW**)
Arwyn Watkins, Cambrian Training (**ArW**)
Barbara Green, Growing Mid Wales (**BG**)
Barry Rees, Ceredigion County Council (**BR**)
Carly McCreesh, CWMPAS (**CMcC**)
Carwyn Jones-Evans, Ceredigion County Council (**CJE**)
Catherine Isik, Welsh Government (**CI**)
Catherine Mealing-Jones, Brecon Beacons National Park (**CM-J**)
Cathy Martin, Growing Mid Wales (**CMn**)
Ceri Stephens, Mid Wales Manufacturing Group (**CS**)
Claire Miles, Growing Mid Wales (**CMs**)
Councillor Jackie Charlton, Powys County Council (**JC**)
Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader, Ceredigion County Council (**CIlr BD**)
Councillor Clive Davies, Ceredigion County Council (**CIlr CD**)
Councillor Keith Henson, Ceredigion County Council (**CIlr KH**)
Councillor David Selby, Powys County Council (**DS**)
David Owen, Growing Mid Wales (**DO**)
Deralyn Mawdsley, Welsh Government (**DM**)
Gary Mitchell, PAVO (**GM**)
Hazel Lloyd-Lubran, CAVO (**HL**)
Hywel Davies, UWTSD (**HD**)
John Collingwood, Growing Mid Wales (**JC**)
Nathan Richards, Welsh Government (**NR**)
Nia Williams, Mid Wales Joint Committee (**NiaW**)
Nicola Williams, Powys County Council (**NW**)
Rebecca Rees, Visit Wales (**RR**)
Rhian Hayward, Aber Innovation (**RH**)
Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Aberystwyth University (**RLIM**)
Russell Hughes-Pickering, Ceredigion County Council (**RH-P**)
Thomas Yeo, Growing Mid Wales (**TY**)
Vanessa Cashmore, Coleg Ceredigion (**VC**)

Speakers

Iain Donnison, IBERS
David Bryar, IBERS

Simultaneous Translation of this meeting was provided by Sian Jones from Cyfaith.

The Chair, Cllr James Gibson-Watt, Leader, PCC welcomed everyone to the meeting and led the introductions to those present.

<p>1.</p>	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from:- Aggie Caesar-Homden, Growing Mid Wales (ACH) Andrew Cornish, Coleg Ceredigion (AC) Arwyn Davies, Ceredigion County Council (AD) Catherine Lewis, NPTC Group of Colleges (CL) David Madge, Cwmpas (DM) Eifion Evans, Ceredigion County Council (EE) Gavin Bown, Natural Resources Wales (GaB) Glenn Bowen, CWMPAS (GIB) Lowri Gwilym, WLGA (LG) Mark Dacey, NPTC Group of Colleges (MD) Mark Williams, Welsh Government (MW) Nigel Brinn, Powys County Council (NB) Peter Howells, NFU Cymru (PH) Peter Skitt, Hywel Dda Healthboard, NHS (PS) Rebecca Jeremy, Powys County Council (RJ)</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Minutes Cllr CD noted that the English version of the minutes of the last meeting held on 5th July 2022 contained two track change notes and it was unclear if they had been amended. Minutes were proposed by Cllr CD and seconded by Cllr KH as correct.</p> <p>ACTION: Minutes to be checked and recirculated to the group after the meeting (BG)</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund Carwyn Jones-Evans provided a verbal update and provided a brief introduction on his role and responsibilities as Growth and Major Developments Manager and sharing the lead role with Nicola Williams, PCC on the</p> <p>UKSPF will operate across both LA's. A formal update was expected from the recent UK Govt. Autumn Statement, but nothing was forthcoming. The budget for the SPF is still in place and there has been continued discussion between ministers and officers. A formal response to the regional investment plan (submitted in August) has still not been received. Both authorities have been continuing to work together to set up the necessary arrangements across the region. Mapping work has been done on the governance and the involvement of the existing local partnerships to fulfil the roles that will be needed to manage the SPF funds locally. A regional manager has been recruited at risk without any confirmed funding. Colleagues in both authorities are working together to set up as much as possible without having formal confirmation from UK Govt. A public version of the regional investment plan had been developed and the region is ready to start work as soon as formal approval has been provided.</p> <p>Timescales are now tight for the first year of funding, there will be some eligible retrospective spend, but both authorities are being cautious with spend without full confirmation of funding. Discussions with UK Gov. have focussed on working with the region, being flexible and additionally working towards confirmation of the eligibility and how the fund will work. It is important for both LA's to fully understand the financial detail for the Heads of Finance to give the go head for the processes that are in place to start. Both LA's are working on reports for the December Cabinet meetings and this will give some detail on the implementation and how the fund will work. The public version of the plan sets out how the fund will work and communicate to the local communities in the region. Ultimately timescales are critical as no formal feedback or indication on the flexibility of the plan has been received to date</p>

	<p>Catherine Isik (CI), Deputy Area Lead for South East & Mid Wales for UK Government Levelling Up fund responded. CI confirmed that the SPF work is ongoing as was announced in the recent Autumn Statement. Work is continuing with the LA although it was acknowledged that there has been little progress since August. The validation of the investment plans has taken place and this is currently being discussed with HMT and the Secretary of State of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and agreeing what the next steps will be.</p> <p>Cllr BD asked if there were any answers to the earlier questions regarding Multiply, the digital & literary skills. CI responded that they are currently live discussions with the SoS and HMT, but there is no further update.</p> <p>Cllr DS added his concerns about timescales and the use of the Year 1 funding; this will be challenging for the projects to spend by the end of the financial year. Is there assurance that monies can be carried over into subsequent years? CI was unable to confirm this, although flexibility has been raised as a significant risk in all four Welsh investment plans and is being considered at a higher level. Once information is available this will be communicated to the LA's. The Chair thanked CI for her input and attending the meeting.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Mid Wales Growth Deal – Progress Update</p> <p>Cathy Martin (CMn) provided a written report and highlighted the following areas</p> <p>Growth Deal is making good progress with time invested in assessing the business cases that were submitted for the stand alone projects from the Portfolio shortlist. These have been assessed for the first stage of the 3 stage process and presented to Management Group and the Board. Six out of seven originally received were given a mandate to proceed to the next stage and the remaining projects is resubmitting their SOC. Since the meeting noted in the report, another SOC has been received and it currently being assessed. Another project is at feasibility study stage and preparing to submit their SOC, this is expected at the beginning of 2023.</p> <p>Two programmes are in place: digital and sites and premises. Both programmes are moving ahead very well. John Collingwood has now joined the team as the Site & Premises Programme Manager. A shadow programme board is in place and a tender is out to procure a consultant to undertake detailed assessments of sites.</p> <p>The next focus for the Growth Deal is to unlock capital funding at the start of the next financial year to deliver the Portfolio. Evidence is needed to show the progress on the projects and programmes and the Portfolio business case which is being refreshed before being submitted to UK Government at the beginning of 2023. The Board is also in the process of commissioning government to take an assurance review which is to ensure that the systems and processes are in place to deliver the Growth Deal.</p> <p>The Communications Officer, Angharad Massow has made good progress with the communications since being appointed in June. Some of the work carried out includes updating the communications strategy, production of brand guidelines and the GMW Newsletter which is issued monthly as a digital publication by email and can also be found on the Growing Mid Wales website. A 12 month trial agreement is in place with Business Wales to feature Growing Mid Wales activity alongside local news on their website.</p> <p>ACTION: if colleagues wish to receive a copy of the Growing Mid Wales newsletter – please contact the team on growingmidwales@ceredigion.gov.uk</p>

	<p>The Chair wished to clarify few areas around the Growth Deal for any individuals who might not be as fully involved and up to date as LA officers and council members. The key area is item 2.4 and the process of the obtaining funding from the Growth Deal particularly the capital and revenue funding. CM clarified that the Growth Deal is capital funding to support large scale economic infrastructure. There is no revenue funding, project sponsors are not provided with any revenue funding to support the development of their business cases or ongoing operational costs. Project sponsors will need to source revenue funding through other funding streams. At this point, the Chair welcomed John Collingwood to the team.</p> <p>QUESTIONS/COMMENTS</p> <p>Cllr C D: What progress has been made with the EAG? CMn: The EAG is the Economic Advisory Group and comprises of six members from the private sector who are providing support to the Growth Deal. There has been two meetings to date, the last one in September which covered the detail of the Growth Deal and the project assessments. Workshops are currently being organised with the elected members. Project sponsors will present their projects with the aim of providing the group with a clearer understanding of their projects and how the region will benefit from them. Three workshops are planned for December (2) and January (1) with the potential for a fourth one dependent on timescales.</p> <p>Cllr B D: Have the remaining six projects have progressed onto the next stage? CMn: They are progressing now and looking at when they are able to submit their outline business cases. There is no fixed deadline on the business cases being submitted as there is work is being done with them so they submit good quality information and agreeing deadlines which are achievable. Some are indicating that they will be ready in December. A workshop is planned for Wednesday (DATE) with the project sponsors to review the areas in the business case process and what the assessments will be looking for including specific areas with the SOCs, timescales and general areas of note within the process.</p> <p>Ceri Stephens (CS): Is there an opportunity to obtain publicity about the members of the new EAG? There is currently no information available on the group. CMn: This is being looked at, the group is in its early stages with only two meetings having taken place so far. This will probably be after the workshops have taken place. The Team page on the website is currently being updated and there are plans to extend it with charts to explain the structure and who is involved. The groups details can be shared after this meeting.</p> <p>The Chair added that Terms of Reference or an explanation of what the EAG will be expected to do would also be useful if published alongside the members information. It has been a problem to obtain information on the Growth Deal in the past mainly due to the criteria set out by the UK Govt., but this process although lengthy now seems to be improving.</p> <p>ACTION: CMn to share details of the EAG members following the meeting.</p>
5.	<p>Regional Skills Partnership – Progress Update</p> <p>Nicola Williams (NW), Programme Manager for the Corporate Joint Committee and Joint Strategic Lead for GMW Growth Deal presented the update for the RSP as Aggie Caesar-Homden (AC-H) was not in attendance. A written report and supporting document were provided by AC-H.</p> <p>At the recent RSP Board meeting, Emma Thomas, Aber Instruments has been appointed the new Chair. The report outlines the activity to date, agenda items and</p>

presentations that have been received. The Employment & Skills 3 Year Action Plan has been submitted to WG for review. Engagement has taken place with businesses throughout the process and included in the action plan. Consultation work has taken place within the RSP Board to develop a separate employment and stakeholder focussed employment and skills plan which is to be launched in the Spring 2023.

RSP has appointed a Project Officer with specific responsibilities for the Young Persons Guarantee (YPG). The post will commence in December.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Arwyn Watkins (ArW): The other three regions are launching their plans this month, is there any specific reason why the Mid Wales region is not launching until March?

NW: The plan is currently with WG and the RSP are waiting on feedback. NW is not aware that the other regions are launching this month, but will discuss with AC-H.

ACTION: NW to ask AC-H why the RSP Plan is not launching in line with the other three regions and if there is a possibility that it can be brought forward. AC-H to respond directly to ArW.

ArW commented that this is important to consider when the work is pan Wales and priorities and emerging areas are being drawn out and commissioning begins for next year and Mid Wales region could be missing out. Point noted by NW to discuss with AC-H.

Cllr BD: With regards to Item 4.4 on the report, CCC have sent out a questionnaire regarding Post 16 education in the County. It will be worth feeding back the information obtained from the questionnaire to the RSP as it will have relevance to further education and apprenticeships. NW noted the point and will feed back to AC-H for discussion.

Barry Rees (BR): With reference to Cllr BD's point and the wider input across the region, the draft turnaround time with key partners to the document was tight, although it is now with WG, work is now active on responses and additions to the plan, Aggie sent out an invitation on 17th November to engage more closely with the Plan as it is going through the drafting phase and there are some areas that CCC would like to raise further.

Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, Aberystwyth University (RLIM): Is it possible to obtain some more information on the Strategy Group which is referenced in Annual Report?

NW: NW was unable to respond, but will feedback to AC-H to respond directly to RLIM. The Chair asked if anyone else present was able to respond to this question.

Vanessa Cashmore, Coleg Ceredigion (VC) informed the meeting that there had been meetings held with regards to the colleges and private training providers in the region.

ACTION: AC-H to provide more information to the Partnership Group about the proposed Strategy Group.

The Chair pointed out that there is a key issue surrounding the four regions and the fact that the Mid Wales region is not launching until March 2023. This leads to question the communication between the regions highlighting the fact that historically Montgomeryshire and Gwynedd have had strong links with both Ceredigion & Powys and also the services provided by businesses etc such as Cambrian Training are across regional boundaries. Would it be possible to confirm that there is a good level of coordination between the regions based on the above points and cross boundary working?

	<p>ACTION: AC-H to outline the communication networks that are actively in place with other regions at the next meeting.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Business Updates</p> <p>6.1 Regional Engagement Team (RET) Report Claire Miles (CM) provided a written report and supporting document for the meeting. As a result of the cancellation of the last meeting due to the national period of mourning there are several areas to be covered in this report</p> <p>Royal Welsh Show 2022 CM thanked everyone who came to see the GMW Team at the Royal Welsh Show in July, it was very much appreciated.</p> <p>The RET have been assisting the LA officers with mapping of activity and delivery in the region to inform the forward planning work for the SPF. 2023 will be the final year of the current EU operational programme in Wales. There is mapping work to clarify which projects and activities are finishing and where and where the gaps could potentially be in the future so that other funding streams e.g. SPF or others could pick up those gaps in the future.</p> <p>Two papers have been prepared for today; the RET Report and an appendix for the ESIF. The latter can be taken back into organisations and shared with colleagues for future use. It outlines the current situation of European funded projects and programmes that are still running in the Mid Wales region into 2023 and up to the end of the EU programme. Many programmes have been or are in the process of being reprofiled with WEFO for extensions to the projects and activities as far as possible into 2023. Project end dates in the appendix may change in the future but are correct to date. The report is broken down into areas of activity and structure in the current operational programme. In recent months, the focus has been on the research and innovation projects and a list on page one notes what is continuing and yet to finish here in Mid Wales. Under the Priority 2 SME Competitiveness which is the business support activity, there is an update on Business Wales service which the WG is currently out to tender for the next phase of the business support service which will run until 2025. Funding for the Business Wales will not be at the same level as previously and some parts for the service will no longer continue. LA's will need to consider this when planning for the SPF and other sources of funding. There has been engagement with the social enterprise sector such as Cwmpas via the standing steering groups that these projects have and this will continue.</p> <p>The report highlights where the region is in terms of funded European projects and CM is welcomed discussion from group members if there are any specific areas they wish to address. The RET will be keeping a close eye on the projects and work that will be closing in the next 6-9 months.</p> <p>RET work has been focussed on innovation in the past few months. A WG consultation has been out for their new integrated, cross government Innovation Strategy. It is very different strategy structured around the wellbeing goals. The Action Plan for the strategy is due out in the new year.</p> <p>Growing Mid Wales has been monitoring the situation with innovation funding as it is unclear what the future funding streams will be. We are now aware that the UK R&I, funded by UK government, has started to issue place based funding calls designed to be led by LA's or combined LA's and development administration partners. This is a new approach as funding is usually delivered by businesses or research institutions as lead bodies. Discussions have been held with counterparts in North Wales and</p>

stakeholders in Mid Wales and it has been decided to submit an expression of interest to UK R&I in terms of a launch pad for agritech activity in Mid and North Wales. The Partnership will be updated on the progress of this application. UK institutions are now channelling place based funding via local authorities and some more smaller opportunities have come forward. This information was not included in the report due to tight timescales, but thanks to Rhian Heywood and AberInnovation for flagging this opportunity for us

Priorities for the RET in the forthcoming months will be the project closure process across the region and working with WEFO on the impact of the European funding coming to an end.

The Chair thanked CM for the comprehensive paper that was submitted and it highlighted how extensive the EU funded programmes are and how important they have been regionally. It has been noted that the SPF funds will not fully replace the EU funds and the pattern of SPF expenditure will be crucial to the region. It is important that the Partnership understands what the region will be going through and the scale of change in terms of funding streams and administration.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

The Chair: Can you indicate the difference of the quantum of SPF funding compared to the annual volume of EU funding?

CM: The first SPF announcements were approximately £44m over 3 years for the region including the multiply activity. In comparison, AberInnovation were funded £44.5 million (capital & revenue) as one project in the current programme. CM did not have a full comparison, but was happy to look at that if needed.

RLIM: there is concern where this ESI funding is coming to an end and what will be the alternative with other funding streams to support the work around skills, research and innovation. The University will be working closely with the LA's, the private sector and other partners to establish the pathways for the areas mentioned above. It is a cause for concern for us and we will be looking for innovative ideas for the strengths of this region.

Cllr Clive Davies (Cllr CD): A recent document showed that there is a shortfall of £1.1bn in Wales after the end of the EU funding. It is key that the work that CM is doing and the partnerships that are formed ensures that there is no duplication across Wales and that we communicate what we are doing.

CM: It is a very complex situation as the SPF funding is not a direct replacement for EU funds. The monies will not be spent on the same areas of activity. The funding is coming to Mid Wales, but via different methods e.g. UK R&I. This just needs to be mapped where it is coming from.

ArW: Would it be possible to identify what is at risk and what the direct impact the funding changes will have on individuals and projects that are currently underway in Mid Wales?

CM: It is hard to estimate that impact now. There is a gap in knowledge based on the historical way the funds have been structures. Today the talk is around ERDF and ESIF, but there is also the RDP funding and for example Hybu Cig Cymru have received a large amount of funding under that programme.

CJ-E: The funding landscape is fragmented at present and coming from different sources. The SPF targets are different in terms of scope and scale to what has been in place before with ERDF & ESIF. LUF is also different as is other innovation funding. There is a mapping exercise currently in place with WEFO on the funding and the impacts. CJ-E is happy to pick up this up with colleagues in Welsh Government so there is no duplication. Both Leaders are on the Strategic Forum for regional

investment post Brexit. It is important that we do not miss opportunities, so the mapping exercises are very important and be clear on what the regional priorities are for local needs and what opportunities there might be. Regional governance in the future will be important with clarity in terms of what is needed on a regional and local basis within Mid Wales. Once terms and conditions are in place with the SPF, this will allow planning with WG colleagues and national provisions.

ACTION: CM to provide an update paper for the next meeting with a comprehensive overview covering EU funding to date and the successor type funding that is available, but not just SPF.

6.2 Connectivity and Infrastructure Working Group

Ann Elias (AE) provided a written report and prepared a presentation which highlighted the following:-

- Railway improvements on the Barmouth Viaduct with the third phase being approved. Sole control period 6 investment by Network Rail
- Transport for Wales Annual Report information and the funding that has been spent to date this year and the proposed business plan for 2022/23. The increase in funding takes it to £870m.
- National Transport Delivery Plan. This has gone out for consultation and the priorities cover bringing services to people to reduce the need to travel; allowing people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable and efficient transport services and infrastructure and to encourage people to make the change to more sustainable transport.
- WeITAG Consultation – sustainable transport and the hierarchical priorities. Walking and cycling, public transport, low emission vehicles and other private vehicles. This is how the programme will progress in the future.
- Welsh Senedd 20mph Legislation. Information on how this will be implemented from September 2023
- Future of Freight Plan. 5 priority areas and how these will be taken forward in the future.
- Cross Border Engagement. Midland Connect issued a business case to DfT to enhance the Shrewsbury - Black Country - Birmingham rail route and the electrification of the line. If this is funded, it would take section of our line allowing a faster service into Birmingham International.
- Midland Connect & Welsh Government – Cross Border work on the Union Connectivity following Sir Peter Hendy's report in November 2021 which identified the Welsh lines and the case for change. It identifies the cross border connectivity with the Cambrian Line, Heart of Wales line, Shrewsbury and Chester line and the Marches Line. It provides a snapshot of data to support a business case. The statistical information provided can be used for projects going forward and encourage investment.
- The Case for Change and Recommendations
 - a. Make the rail network more reliable, decrease journey times and increase frequency.
 - b. Optimising connections at Shrewsbury North and South
 - c. Rail's competitiveness is, reduced where travellers need to change trains therefore through trains to Birmingham International; London and Crewe provide the best growth opportunities.

- Next Steps. Work has been commissioned on a more technical piece of work that will start to examine the existing challenges in more detail.

Midland Connect have confirmed that a small piece of work on the evaluation is currently being undertaken by them and hopefully will be released by Christmas.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Cllr BD: There is a huge gap between Ceredigion and south Wales and there is a current piece of work looking at re-opening the railway line between Aberystwyth and Carmarthen. Is that something that is being looked at under TraCC?

AE: This particular work was undertaken by Midland Connect on the existing railway network. The opportunity to evaluate and progress the reopening old railway lines would be part of work which would need funding from UK government. TfW have been asked by WG to some tabletop analysis, which hopefully can be brought back to this meeting at some point.

Cllr Keith Henson (Cllr KH): Looking at Point 3.4.1 and the priorities enabling easier and more sustainable forms of freight travel. We need to look at travel within the area especially for learners. In Ceredigion recently there were no tenders submitted to run a bus route, this means that the main route from Lampeter to Aberystwyth will not have a service and this will provide a challenge for the authority to look at what can be done. There are several issues that are prohibitive to running the service, costs increasing, lack of drivers and low passenger numbers. It is clear that WG need to be lobbied to look how public transport can be provided appropriately in rural areas like Mid Wales.

Cllr David Selby (Cllr DS): It is good that to see that the transport network does not end in Shrewsbury and goes further. Services finish in New Street but they need to continue through to Birmingham International which will link with HS2.

Cllr Jackie Charlton (Cllr JC): we are making progress in moving public transport up the agenda. Cllr JC made an analogy with a case in Hartlepool in that they can get to London, but not anywhere else and the same applies in Mid Wales. It is an important point to make in that the bus services should connect with the train services for passengers to continue with seamless journeys. Marketing is needed to promote what is being done and Cllr JC highlighted the recent newsletter that was sent out which informed stakeholders of the work that is being done in the region to improve the transport network and active travel. In Powys, the passenger numbers are continuing to increase and this needs to be continually promoted and marketed.

Cllr KH said that looking at the roads review, there is an update expected shortly. There is a moratorium on building roads from the WG, but with the roads that we have we need to make sure that public transport is in place to ensure people can move around the region at times that are flexible to get to work or for education and this will also benefit the economy for the region.

The Chair commented that the report covered rail, but what is being done with the road link issues within the region referencing the A44 before it leaves Wales into Herefordshire from where it deteriorates badly. Road networks are poor cross border, what is being done in terms of addressing these issues? Is the report that is due on the roads infrastructure coming to the Partnership at a future meeting?

AE: Work is being done cross border with partners in Shropshire and Herefordshire. The A483 and the A458 are very much on the agenda and the National Highways for UK government have it on their strategic programme and business case work has commenced. Unfortunately, it has now stalled due to the Road Review in Wales and the lack of information on WG investment and this was a joint investment activity on the cross border roads. Until the WG roads review report is published, nothing can be progressed for 12 months but hope to re-engage once the Welsh position is known. On publicity, thanks must go to Angharad Massow, Communications Officer

	<p>for the GMW newsletter and the publicity it has generated for the messages that needed to go out. Welsh Government are starting a behavioural change programme with relation to TfW. When investing in transport and what is actually done is about changing minds. The programme is starting in SE Wales so it will be interesting to see what comes out of that before being rolled out pan Wales. Marketing and publicity should be extended as we need to get messages out, people need to be informed as to how they should use public transport and what they can get out of it. Investment in buses is needed from Welsh Government to take forward the agenda, it is a revenue funded stream which is not easy to access.</p> <p>6.3 Transforming Towns Programme Arwyn Davies (AD) gave his apologies that he could not attend the meeting. Deralyn Mawdsley (DW), WG left the meeting early, but asked that all comments and questions to be passed onto her regarding the Transforming Towns Programme. There was nothing further to add to this agenda item.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Government(s) Updates</p> <p>7.1 Welsh Government Update Ann Watkin provided the update. AW acknowledged that the meeting had been a very informative meeting. Points will be passed back to WG colleagues including transport, regional skills plan and the funding landscape post EU funding. Lee Waters MS has commissioned independent advice on the road review driven by the WG's position on decarbonisation. There will be difficult decisions to be made in the future on Welsh road building programmes and updates will be provided as soon as possible.</p> <p>Work continues with the region on the Mid Wales Growth Deal. The regions decide what projects/programmes that they want to deliver, they are not determined WG or UKG. The WG approval will be based on the assurances from the region that the projects will be correctly progressed. The WG/UKG are looking to see that the £110m is being used to support a wider programme of regional investment through leverage of private sector funding and other funding via the portfolio of business cases. This will be before the funding letter is issued. WG are keen to work with the region and the private sector investment strategy that is in place, but also acknowledge current state of the economy and how it will impact on the delivery of this investment.</p> <p>Business Wales services to date have been funded by EU and WG funding. A tender has been issued for a continuation of a service post EU funding.</p> <p>The Research and Innovation Strategy consultation meeting has been successful in Aberystwyth and work in ongoing to refine the strategy. It is a commitment under the under the cooperation agreement with Plaid Cymru. The ARFOR Programme was announced earlier in 2022, it is not relevant in Powys, but it does cover Ceredigion. It ARFOR is a joint venture by Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils to look at economic interventions which support the Welsh language and the economic development of the communities. The learning from these interventions will hopefully be extended to other areas and be of benefit.</p> <p>It was pleasing to see the Abermule Business Park press release from PCC, this has been worked on collectively with PCC and has been financially supported by WG.</p> <p>WG continues to work across the region on several areas that are of benefit to all partners.</p> <p>The Chair commented that it would be beneficial to the private sector if the WG could release information such as the road strategy which is crucial to the infrastructure of</p>

	<p>the region. The conversation regarding the road infrastructure has been ongoing for many years and it is important that these documents are published.</p> <p>7.2 UK Government Update Catherine Isik (CI) provided a brief update. The Levelling Up Fund Round 2 assessments are underway and an answer is expected at the end of the calendar year.</p> <p>QUESTIONS Cllr JC: Can you please explain the Levelling Up Fund Round 2, is that the round that the results have been expected for or is this a new round? CI: This round was commissioned over the Summer with the closing date for bids in August for capital projects. Round 1 has been allocated with results for Round 2 expected at the end of the calendar year.</p>
8.	<p>Update on activity relevant to Mid Wales</p> <p>8.1 BEACON Project – Aberystwyth University – Prof. Iain Donnison & David Bryant</p> <p>Prof. Iain Donnison gave a presentation with his colleague David Bryant from Aberystwyth University. Professor Donnison thanked the Partnership for the opportunity to present to the meeting and encourage those that have not yet visited IBERS to get in touch to see some of the work that is in progress.</p> <p>The BEACON project has been ERDF funded and there has been various other forms of EU project funding in the past. The challenge that IBERS now have is to source funding through new funding opportunities. IBERS has counterparts in the other parts of the UK and has balanced UK R&I funding with other sources from WG and EU. BEACON project has run for approximately 12 years with 4 universities in Wales. It started with West Wales & the Valleys and extended into South East Wales. It involves Aberystwyth, Bangor University, Swansea University and South Wales University working on collaborative R&D projects with industry.</p> <p>IBERS is the research institute at Aberystwyth University covering agritech areas, but also bio economy. There are nine areas within IBERS, this includes crop science and plant breeding programmes originating from the Welsh Plant Breeding Station and a range of supporting technology services including private plant breeding research companies based at IBERS. This feeds down to utilisation and impact areas such as agricultural systems and the bio economy. IBERS is part of a number of initiative and working collaborations including BioPilots UK, National Institutes of Biosciences and BBSRC and this is detailed in the presentation.</p> <p>Aberystwyth University is the only university submitted in Wales to agriculture, food and veterinary sciences and perform very well at a national level ahead of other noted universities.</p> <p>With regards to skills, in addition to the more traditional methods of teaching, IBERS also does distance learning which is focussed on CPD programmes and cover modules that can lead up to a higher degree level, but is for skills either learning new skills or updating existing skills.</p> <p>David Bryant, Senior Research Fellow covered the next part of the presentation which looked the BEACON programme and highlighted a number of projects that have been part of the programme.</p> <p>Cllr KH: Cllr KH and Cllr BD went to see the operations at IBERS and would encourage everyone to go and see the facilities and the work that is being carried out</p>

	<p>there. The economy can be regenerated through these projects and extended to other areas to benefit.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Professor Donnison and his colleagues for welcoming him and PCC colleagues to the facility recently. It was a very good day and fascinating seeing what work is in progress. He further thanked both Professor Donnison and David Bryant for their informative presentation today.</p> <p>ACTION: Presentation to be circulated to Partnership members after the meeting (BG).</p> <p>8.2 Shared Rural Network – Ant Morgan</p> <p>Ant Morgan gave his apologies that he was unable to present at the meeting due to time constraints and other meeting commitments. He has offered to present at the next meeting.</p> <p>David Owen (DO) suggested that he could offer a separate webinar for those who are interested as it is a few months before the next meeting. The Shared Rural Network is going to have a big impact across the region due to more mobile masts being erected in the next few years and it is important that Councillors and stakeholders are aware of the plans.</p> <p>ACTION: DO to circulate an invitation to Partnership members to attend a separate webinar to cover the Shared Rural Network. Date to be confirmed.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Gary Mitchell (GM), PAVO asked if it would be possible to circulate the presentation before the proposed Shared Rural Network so that there would be some information available prior to the webinar. Additionally, he asked if any of the papers that were submitted for this meeting are restricted as the information provided would be good to be circulated wider. The Chair confirmed that he was not aware of any restrictions. AE confirmed that Midlands Connect were happy to share their report wider.</p> <p>ArW wished to congratulate the team for delivering Bae Ceredigion Rally. It was a great spectacle for the region and it is back on rally championship for next year. The number of visitors it brought into the local economy was phenomenal.</p> <p>No further business, the meeting was closed.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday, 13th February 2023 • Monday, 8th May 2023 (this is subject to change due to new Bank Holiday) • Tuesday, 18th September 2023 • Monday, 6th November 2023

