

Present: Councillor Rosemarie Harris – Leader: Powys County Council – Chair
Councillor Ellen Ap Gwynn – Leader: Ceredigion County Council – Vice-Chair

Councillor Dafydd Edwards – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Highways and Environment including Housing (Ceredigion) **(Cllr. DE)**
Councillor James Evans – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Economic Development, Housing and Regulatory Services (Powys County Council) **(Cllr. JE)**
Councillor Myfanwy Alexander – Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Adult Social Care and the Welsh Language (Powys County Council) **(Cllr. MA)**
Councillor Phyl Davies – Powys County Council **(Cllr. PhD)**
Councillor Rhodri Evans – Cabinet Member: Economic Development (Ceredigion) **(Cllr. RE)**
Ann Elias – Ceredigion County Council **(AE)**
Alison Sandford – Welsh Government **(AS)**
Arwyn Davies – Ceredigion County Council **(AD)**
Arwyn Watkins OBE – Cambrian Training **(AW)**
Caroline Turner – Chief Executive: Powys County Council **(CT)**
Carwyn Jones-Evans – Ceredigion County Council **(CJ-E)**
Ceri Stephens - Mid Wales Manufacturing Group **(CS)**
Claire Miles – Mid Wales RET **(CM)**
Eifion Evans – Chief Executive: Ceredigion Council **(EE)**
Emma Wilde – Mid Wales Chamber of Commerce **(EW)**
Gareth Jones – Powys County Council **(GJ)**
Helen Jones – Visit Wales **(HJ)**
Hywel Davies – University of Wales: Trinity Saint David (part) **(HD)**
Jane Davidson – University of Wales Trinity St David **(JD)**
Lowri Gwilym – Welsh Local Government Association **(LG)**
Marie Evans - Mid Wales RET **(ME)**
Mark Dacey – Neath Port Talbot Coleg Group of Colleges **(MD)**
Martin Cox – Natural Resources Wales **(MC)**
Nia Williams – Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care **(NW)**
Nigel Brinn – Powys County Council **(NB)**
Peter Howells – NFU **(PH)**
Peter James – Welsh Government **(PJ)**
Rhodri Llwyd Morgan – Aberystwyth University **(RLIM)**
Rowland Rees-Evans – Mid Wales Tourism **(RRE)**
Russell Hughes-Pickering – Ceredigion County Council **(RHP)**
Siwan Richards – Ceredigion County Council **(SR)**
Steve Hughson – Chief Executive: Royal Welsh Agricultural Society **(SH)**

Minutes from a meeting of the Growing Mid Wales Partnership held on Monday, 1st June 2020 via Zoom.

The meeting began by Councillor Ellen Ap Gwynn transferring the Chair of the GMW Partnership to Councillor Rosemarie Harris for the forthcoming year 2020-2021.

		Action
1.	<p>Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ann Watkin - Welsh Government • Rhodri Griffiths - Welsh Government • Cllr Gareth Thomas - Gwynedd County Council • Emyr Williams - Snowdonia National Park • Doug Hughes, Hughes Architects • Gerwyn Evans, Welsh Government • Rhian Hayward, Aberystwyth University • Rob Holt, Welsh Government • Vanessa Naughton, Welsh Government • Vivienne Lewis, Welsh Government • Carl Cooper, PAVO • Jayne Jones 	
2.	<p>MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING – 17th January 2020 The minutes from the previous meeting held on 17th January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record proposed by Councillor James Evans and seconded by Councillor Rhodri Evans. There were no matters arising from the Minutes.</p>	
3.	<p>Growth Deal Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress Update • Regional proposition document • Feedback & Next steps <p>CJE presented the final Regional proposition document which has now been formally submitted by both Leaders of Powys County Council (PCC) and Ceredigion County Council (CCC) to the offices of Ken Skates MS, Lee Waters MS, Simon Hart MS and David TC Davies MS and formal feedback is awaited.</p> <p>CJE stated that the document has been built on engagement and articulates our Strategic Economic Plan and road map for the Growth Deal. Discussions have taken place with various stakeholders and the Economic Strategy Group (ESG) to ensure that this document is still valid in the current context and, although the economy is taking a hit from the current Coronavirus pandemic, it still serves a purpose in articulating the importance of some of these sectors to the Mid Wales economy. Whilst the baseline will have changed, the priorities are still high-level, and the approach that has been set out is still relevant.</p> <p>CJE explained that conversations have been had with civil servants prior to formal submission of the document and there has been no indication that the situation has changed in terms of the Growth Deal or funding and both governments and the region still see this as a long term funding instrument that still needs to be taken forward collectively as a region.</p> <p>CJE explained that a political meeting with Ministers from both Governments will be held in mid-June to shape the next steps and the key expectations.</p> <p>CJE stated that the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) has been agreed by Members at the first formal GMW Board (Joint Committee) on the 11th May 2020 and the regional proposition document was also agreed. CJE explained that as the Joint Committee meeting is now a democratic meeting, papers will now be publically available on both CCC and PCC websites.</p> <p>EW asked if arrangements will be put in place to promote the meetings and papers via Social Media going forward and will there will be a separate website dedicated to the Growth Deal?</p>	

	<p>CJE stated that conversations are underway with the Government and at the meeting with Ministers in two weeks' time, they will indicate how much external communication can be done at this stage. In terms of the Joint Committee papers, they will be publicised by the Local Authorities as they would normally with Council business. CJE stated that a company has been commissioned for the GMW website and an inception meeting will be held imminently.</p>	
4.	<p>Wider Regional Landscape Regional Economic Recovery – All Rosemarie Harris – tourism business at home.</p> <p>The Chair stated that whilst there hasn't been regional economic recovery as such, both Local Authorities have been and are still working hard on recovery. An update was provided by the two local authorities and WG on work undertaken to date.</p> <p>NB, PCC, stated that PCC have focused on WG business grants and they have supported 3000 businesses with advice and assistance for national grant support. NB stated that a second round of Economic Resilience funding is expected to become available which should be much more local. NB stated that focus needs to be on local and regional recovery and discussions are taken place regarding this.</p> <p>AD, CCC, stated that CCCs finance service have been working through the NDR grant scheme which has been operating as part of the National Programme. Discussions have been held with businesses on accessing support the ERF operated by WG. Discussions have been had with colleagues and PCC on adjustments required when looking towards the "new normal" and how we can focus regionally to support the economy.</p> <p>HJ, Visit Wales, stated that WG have a support package of £1.7 billion to help support businesses and Visit Wales is continuing to try and get further support. HJ stated that the ERF Stage 2 eligibility tracker will be on the Business Wales website mid-June with the fund opening from 30th June. HJ believes that there is a hardship fund colleagues are working on which will help businesses that may be slipping through the net.</p> <p>The Chair stated that she and the Vice-Chair, EAG, have been in WLGA discussions with Business Wales Officers regarding bursary schemes for businesses that are sole traders, may not be VAT registered or are new businesses without accounts. The Chair stated that she and the Vice-Chair have pushed for the schemes to be dealt with by Local Authorities as Members will generally know the businesses in their areas. The Chair stated that they will keep the partnership updated on progress.</p> <p>PD, FUW, informed the Partnership that he recently wrote to the Development Bank of Wales asking for a county breakdown of their funding distribution of £25mil for Mid and West Wales. PD has forwarded the details to CCCs Chief Executive and Cllr. Rhodri Evans, Cabinet Member for Economy & Regeneration, for them to be aware of the breakdown. There was an average investment of £60,000 for Mid Wales which is quite a significant in West Wales.</p> <p>SH as Chair of the Mid Wales Tourism Forum thanked both local authorities for the amount of work undertaken in supporting the Welsh and UK Government in administering the large volumes of grant. SH stated that they have been working with WG on a weekly basis with regards to the Unlocking RAG schedule and understand that the 'amber' zone might come in the next 3 week WG review looking at outdoor attractions and self-catering. SH stated that any unlocking must be done with the communities blessing and support and that employers and staff feel confident that it</p>	

	<p>is safe to do so. SH stated that he believes a recovery plan needs to be created for agriculture, food and drink and tourism to capture the concerns of communities and how the concerns will be managed safely to encourage tourism and keep those in the tourism industry employed.</p> <p>EE stated that the tourism industry is of concern particularly for Ceredigion due to the number of caravan sites within the County and believes a different strategy is required on how elements of tourism are released. EE stated that once restricted travel is lifted that will result in an extra homes being populated in Ceredigion by second home owners. EE stressed that the reopening of tourism will need to be done in a careful manner and discussions are being had with WG on this.</p> <p>RRE stated that he understands that opening of tourism needs to be done carefully but if current restrictions remain in Wales there will be detrimental economic impact on tourism and businesses and recovery will take a long time.</p> <p>SH suggested that both authorities and the Mid Wales Tourism Forum need a plan to go forward together in a way that people will feel confident and safe.</p> <p>EAG suggested asking businesses for ideas on how they would like to re-open safely that she and the Chair can feedback to Ministers at their weekly meetings.</p> <p>SH stated that he would like to see a Communication Strategy for Mid Wales supported by Visit Wales to give various sectors the confidence to re-open in a concerted and confident way. SH stated that the Mid Wales Tourism Forum will do some work around gathering ideas to reopen safely and would like the support of both Local Authorities.</p> <p>Cllr. JE stated that it will be important for the region to focus on zero carbon holidays going forward and people will need to be encouraged to holiday at home and support local businesses during the recovery stage.</p> <p>HJ stated that Visit Wales are doing all they can to address these issues and are working with stakeholders and the tourism industry to try and get consultations and guidance in place as soon as possible.</p> <p>RH reiterated that both local authorities have recovery plans in place relating to areas such as education but there are some areas that would be suitable to bring to this partnership and suggested that it would be beneficial to discuss these at the next meeting with any relevant information in the meantime circulated via email if necessary.</p> <p>PJ stated that WG will shortly introduce the Regional Economic Framework in Mid Wales and the regional office will be looking at how to repurpose things in the short term looking at restarting our economic recovery planning.</p> <p>NB stated that the town initiative are also keen to participate where they can to help with lessening the impact on Mid Wales Towns.</p> <p>The Chair stated that work is also ongoing with the WLGA Rural forum. The forum has been looking at rural tourism, small town initiatives and food and drink production.</p> <p>ACTION: The Chair stated that Recovery will be included as an agenda item at the next GMW Partnership meeting on 21st September 2020.</p>	<p>All</p>
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5.	<p>Regional Investment In Wales After Brexit – Welsh Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing Mid Wales Consultation Response <p>AS provided Members with the background to the Regional Investment in Wales Consultation (circulated to Partnership Members). AS stated that this consultation has been co-designed with the Regional Investment for Wales Steering Group, key stakeholders and 4 individual sub groups looking at specific areas such as delivery, policy, monitoring and evaluation and cross border and international working. The consultation closes on the 5th June 2020.</p> <p>AS stated that they are working with the OECD to look at best practice internationally. The OECD have provided a challenge as to how WG can move forward with replacement funding and achieving maximum impact with better results in the future.</p> <p>AS stated that a lot is happening on the regionalisation agenda. Four consultation webinars have been held and WG want to link with regional developments including the Local Government & Elections Bill and the establishment of corporate Joint Committees. The City & Growth Deals are also important to the regionalisation agenda and WG are keen to work with regions as part of the consultation to ensure it is aligned to developments in the region.</p> <p>AS stated that WG are committed to building the future of regional investment around longer term impact with the WFGA at the heart of plans. AS stated that WG recognise they will have to respond to the current pandemic and the priorities in the document are flexible enough to accommodate plans for regional economic recovery.</p> <p>A single fund has been proposed which will be on an annual basis as this is something that stakeholders have highlighted as important in terms of planning in advance and integration with wider funding schemes in Wales and beyond.</p> <p>There is a commitment to the regionalisation agenda and WG are proposing delegation and decision making at this level.</p> <p>AS stated that WG are proposing a simplified and flexible framework and would like Members feedback on how that can be done outside of EU regulations but still maintaining accountability, audit and transparency and value for money in terms of delivering public funds.</p> <p>AS stated that WG are proposing more opportunities for cross border and international working and sub groups have been meeting to discuss those opportunities and additional feedback is welcomed on this.</p> <p>AS stated that WG also have key horizontal themes of equality and the welsh language and welcome views on how best to integrate those in to activities.</p> <p>AS stated that the consultation focuses on areas that are devolved and there is no reference to the UK Shared Priority fund as WG are committed to developing a framework for the people in Wales in line with devolved responsibilities.</p> <p>AS stated that the UK Government have been clear that funding should be no less than current levels and it is vital that we have the funding from early 2021 but no further detail has been received as yet. There are some shared priorities with the UK Government we can build on in terms of jobs, economy and employment and intergovernmental working which has now increased in response to Covid-19.</p> <p>AS explained that the socioeconomic analysis supporting the consultation was drafted before Covid-19 and needs to be updated in light of immediate implications and we</p>
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	<p>need to consider our regional investment economic framework in the wider plans around economic recovery.</p> <p>AS stated that an independent analysis of consultation responses will be undertaken so feedback can be provided to Ministers in July for them to agree the next steps over the next 6 months with a view to having the framework up and running from early 2021.</p> <p>CM stated that she has drafted a regional response for the Partnership to consider (circulated with today's agenda) and the regional Strategic Economic Document will be attached to that as well. CM stated that they have also worked closely with LA officers and officers who support Local Action Groups to share intelligence preparing the response.</p> <p>CM requested for Members to inform her of any additional amendments to the draft consultation response by close of play tomorrow (Tuesday, 2nd June 2020).</p> <p>RLIM provided a brief update in terms of Aberystwyth University's response to the consultation. RLIM stated that the University's response as an organisation will be regarding the lack of acknowledgement to research and innovation and that they see a danger due to how much more Government money goes in to research and innovation in England compared to Wales and the European structural funds has been key for research and innovation in Wales. RLIM said that the University's proposal will be to protect R&D expenditure and would like WG to listen to that message.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair stated that investment in R&D in Ceredigion is essential for the work that is being carried out by the University. The Vice-Chair referenced the announcement yesterday of the possibility that the English Government do not want English students to study in the other home countries and, until that is cleared up, things are going to be difficult. The percentage of R&D funding that comes in to Wales is not as it should be and we've been left behind.</p> <p>JD also strongly endorsed points raised. JD stated we need to be mindful of the context of how wide our border is and how important it is in terms of Welsh higher education in Mid Wales.</p> <p>ACTION: Members to provide CM with any further comments to the draft consultation response by close of play on 2nd June 2020.</p>	All
6.	<p>Regional Updates:</p> <p>i. Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme</p> <p>CJE stated that both Local Authorities are still progressing the TRI Projects. CJE explained that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the delivery timescales of some projects and discussions are underway with WG with regard to mitigating the impact.</p> <p>CJE stated that the Town Centre Property Investment fund is still open and there is still a lot of external interest from businesses. CJE requested that Members refer any businesses to this fund that they feel may benefit.</p> <p>ii. Regional Engagement Team Report</p> <p>CM informed the Partnership that there is a new member of the RET, Marie Evans, and today is her first day as support officer for RET operations. CM explained that their work recently has been centred on the Covid-19 pandemic but they have been re-engaging with ESF operations in the region to feedback to WEFO. CM stated that most infrastructure projects were in the advance stage of delivery prior to the</p>	

	<p>pandemic therefore although there have been delays in construction there is still time left in the programme for delivering the majority of projects.</p> <p>CM stated that it is important to note that apart from ESF priority 5, all other funding ERDF/ESF pots are frozen as funding is being redirected to help with the Covid-19 pandemic. Discussions are being had with WEFO with regards to if/when funding will be available again.</p> <p>CM stated that discussions have taken place regarding the establishment of two regional networks across Mid Wales, an SME Competitiveness Network and also an Employability Network to help get a better picture on what's happening in Mid Wales and regional intelligence to help inform current and future provision.</p> <p>iii. Connectivity and Infrastructure Working Group</p> <p>AE stated that at the time the Report was prepared we had just come out of many weeks of flooding and the network was substantially affected which highlighted the need to work towards strategic corridor resilience going forward.</p> <p>AE stated that WG have gone out to consultation on the Welsh Transport Strategy Scoping Report and the region will prepare a response to the TraCC Board on the 6th July which will then be circulated to the GMW Partnership for comment.</p> <p>AE stated that WG have put forward emergency funding for rail and bus support as part of Covid-19 and they have announced to Local Authorities the first stages of transport grants to deliver transport infrastructure for bus, walking and cycling. As part of Covid-19 packages, Traws Cymru have temporarily suspended weekend travel to avoid encouraging people to travel across the country at this current time.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Future Work & Meetings</u></p> <p>The Chair stated that discussion and work relating to projects in both the public and private sector are progressing. The Chair stated that hopefully the regional proposition document will be accepted and we will be able to proceed with work quite quickly</p> <p>Members agreed to consider hosting the next GMW Partnership meeting in September virtually given the success of today's meeting. Members agreed to proceed with hosting meetings virtually in future to reduce travelling whenever possible while acknowledging that it would be beneficial to meet in person from time to time and to consider meeting at different business locations across the Authority when it is safe to do so to promote the work of the Partnership and to raise the profile of businesses.</p> <p>ACTION: The Chair requested that the Secretariat ensure the Chair of the ESG is invited to future Partnership meetings.</p>	Admin
8.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting would be held on 21st September – Zoom (details tbc)</p>	

**COUNCILLOR ROSEMARIE HARRIS - LEADER
POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL
IN THE CHAIR**