

# north wales economic ambition board

## bwrdd uchelgais economaidd gogledd cymru

<b>Meeting:</b>	North Wales Regional Skills Partnership	<b>Date:</b>	18-01-2018
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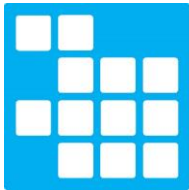
<b>Present:</b>
Horizon Nuclear Power – Sasha Davies (Chair) NWEAB – Iwan Thomas, Carwyn Jones-Evans, Ffion Jones, Katie Edwards, Welsh Government – Jayne Roberts, Edwyn Williams ; Gwynedd Council – Sioned Williams; North Wales EPC's – Alice Williams; North Wales 14-19 – Christine Wynne; Careers Wales – Rhian Thomas; DWP – Bev Lovatt; Grwp Llandrillo Menai – Dafydd Evans; Glyndwr University – Julie Cowley; CITB – Ceri Jones; Coleg Cambria – Sue Price; Bangor University – Bryn Jones; FSB – Mike Learmond; North Wales Social Care & Health Workforce Board – Alison Atkinson; NTFW – Sue Scott; Airbus – Gavin Jones; WCVA – Gail Dervish; EESW – Graham Nutt (Observer)

<b>Apologies:</b>
GwE – Arwyn Thomas; North Wales & Mersey Dee Business Council – Ashley Rogers; West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber – Colin Brew; Cllr Garffild Lewis – Creative North Wales; Open University in Wales – Kevin Pascoe; North Wales Tourism – Jim Jones; WCVA – Catherine Miller; Careers Wales – Nerys Bourne; Welsh Government – Meurig Thomas

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>1.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received as noted above with noted alternates and substitutes being present at this meeting. Also a welcome to Graham Nutt from EESW who was present as an observer, and will be a part of the forthcoming STEM sub-group.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>2.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 November 2017</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	No issues were raised, and was noted that actions highlighted would be addressed during the agenda items to follow
<b>Decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The minutes were accepted</li><li>• Recommended that following a presentation at the previous meeting on the Growth Bid, a further update be presented as part of the agenda at the March 16 2018 meeting</li></ul>

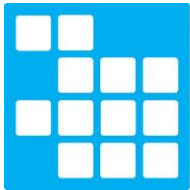
<b>Item No.</b>	<b>4.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Employer Economic Data (for information)</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>This item was moved up the agenda and was introduced by Iwan Thomas on behalf of Colin Brew – Chief Executive Officer, West Cheshire &amp; North Wales Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>It was explained that this latest quarterly report from the Chamber and its members would be the topic of more detailed presentation by Colin Brew when he is able to attend to the March meeting of the RSP, as he had to give apologies today, but kindly agreed to supply this report for information only.</p> <p>The report for Q4 in 2017 shows employer confidence increased in North Wales compared to North West England, and that recruitment amongst employers in this area, also showed an increase. The report also shows in summary broader contextual economic data and feedback in relation to investment, pricing and sales.</p> <p>Requested that as part of the March presentation, data on the number of North Wales employers who took part and contributed to the survey, also be included.</p>
<b>Decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>ACTION 4.1</b> - At the March meeting of the RSP, Colin Brew will present a detailed overview and analysis of the Quarterly Economic Survey, with further analysis on employer feedback and insight to be provided.</li><li>• <b>ACTION 4.2</b> - The Federation of Small Businesses also undertakes broad surveys amongst its members, and this analysis titled as a 'Business Confidence Report', will be presented to a future meeting of the RSP in North Wales to provide further insight into employer demands and opportunities for providers to engage.</li></ul>



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<b>Item No.</b>	<b>5.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Welsh Government Presentation &amp; Discussion – National Employability Proposals</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>The Chair welcomed and introduced Edwyn Williams from Welsh Government who began his presentation on the proposals for Employability, which is identified by the Government as one of their key priority areas.</p> <p>The theme of skills and employment as promoted by Regional Skills Partnerships is key to the employability agenda, with outcomes around securing fair and rewarding work for individuals being critical as part of this cross-departmental approach.</p> <p>Economic inactivity is still high, and low skills still a problem, with pockets of deprivation existing across North Wales, and the rest of Wales – all needing a greater joined-up approach to address underlying issues.</p> <p>WG see local government, the third sector, DWP, and employers working collectively via the RSP's as really important to support this agenda.</p> <p>The new Employability Plan will deliver a seamless offer to individuals, and WG are aware that funds are tight, and timing around Brexit will have an impact.</p> <p>The new programme will support and link to the government agenda published within the "Taking Wales Forward" document, and the recently published "Prosperity for All" economic vision document (the RSP provided an analysis of this on the day of publication circulated to all).</p> <p>The focus will be inclusive, from entry level to high level skills.</p> <p>Businesses will in future be expected to agree to growth, promote health, and deliver on up-skilling within the workplace – particularly supporting the digitalisation and automation agenda.</p> <p>Key to the success of the employability agenda and WG proposals, will be a place based approach and response to delivery and support – again RSP's will be critical to informing this collectively through its applicable representation.</p> <p>Within WG Eluned Morgan is driving this agenda, and there is also a Ministerial Sub-Group beneath Cabinet, to support the promotion of this agenda across departments and portfolios.</p> <p>Key outlets to support the common agenda will be – Employment Advice Gateway; Working Wales; and Communities for Work Plus.</p> <p>Current Ministerial focus at the moment includes 'Skills for Inclusive Growth'; 'Employability'; and 'Skills for the Future'.</p> <p>'Working Wales' (as explained within the slides) will include the setting up of a Fair Work Board, which will further support and promote bringing existing programmes together into one. Working Wales will have three strands – Youth / Training / Adults – all recognising the different types of support needed and required, and reshaping employability support from those closest to, and furthest removed from the labour market.</p> <p>For the Employment Advice Gateway, WG are seeking RSP input and support on how this will develop, but acknowledge that data sharing protocols will be critical, The tool will help all advisors with clients and promote co-location of services to support a joined-up approach.</p> <p>Working Wales is expected to start in April 2019, with the Employability Delivery Plan made available around April 2018.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Edwyn for the presentation and confirmed that co-location of services was going to be critical to the success of this initiative, and asked what the timings were?</p> <p>Edwyn replied that from 2019 the Gateway needs to be in place, so should be live from Jan/Feb 2019 and that Careers Wales are leading this agenda on behalf of WG, and all of this will complement the Work &amp; Health programme, co-designed by DWP and WG.</p> <p>Dafydd Evans raised the issue of rural support and access as similar schemes haven't had great success in rural areas around places such as Dolgellau. Need to guarantee that the same level of support is available in rural areas as much as in urban areas, to which Edwyn agreed and that this requirement will be integral to the specification that will be going out for procurement.</p> <p>The Chair reiterated this point, and said that all partners around the table would want to make sure that rural communities in North Wales had the same support and accessibility as urban ones.</p> <p>Gail Dervish attending for WCVA asked about consultation and existing programmes who work with grass root levels, and how not to add to confusion – supported by Bev Lovatt who emphasised importance of engagement and communication.</p> <p>The Chair noted this as an action in that we need to consider how as a region, we engage collectively and appropriately on behalf of the region.</p>

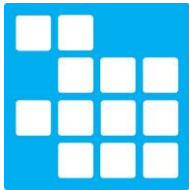


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	<p>Mike Learmond noted that it does feel as if there are too many projects and we need to re-balance how we support people; including those who are in-work and underpaid.</p> <p>Edwyn in response noted that in-work progression is not currently a part of 'Working Wales', but are looking at this in another area of delivery connected to the Economic Action Plan, and would be discussed by the Fair Work Board.</p> <p>Julie Cowley also evidenced the potential duplication with recent work led by Glyndwr in NE Wales which showed over 400 projects currently operational in that geography – and the challenges of signposting people to the right project.</p> <p>This was supported by Ffion Jones who promoted the previous 2016 study delivered by the RSP on the amount of provision across all of North Wales for 16-24 year olds. The question was also asked on what engagement is there with education departments to support young people and employability at an early age.</p> <p>Sioned Williams noted that all six local authorities currently are committed to co-planning and have agreed in principle to work to a common system.</p>
<b>Decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION 5.1</b> – to work collectively as partners to promote a regional response to the engagement and consultation, highlighting our concerns on areas including duplication with other provision, and the promotion of parity of support for rural communities with those in urban areas.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 5.2</b> – the data from the NE Wales study of provision and support led by Glyndwr, to be combined with an updated version of the 2016 RSP led 16-24 provision analysis, to provide a new regional overview report of provision, to support and inform future direction on employability</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 5.3</b> – the RSP to continue to work with WG colleagues and share all partners views during the consultation process to represent North Wales specific and general views prior to launch in 2019.</li> </ul>

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>3.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Employer Presentation – Regional STEM Development Centre</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>Gavin Jones, Head of Early Careers Programmes for Airbus UK, as an existing member of the RSP in North Wales, proceeded with a presentation on a STEM proposal that has been to date, over 18 months in development of the concept.</p> <p>Gavin made clear that as a result of this presentation, he is looking for interaction and support from partners to move this forward within the region.</p> <p>It was highlighted that we are all facing similar challenges with an increasing struggle to attract and recruit the numbers needed with the appropriate qualifications and awareness in STEM, and therefore this concept proposed, would help put us forward into the next decade.</p> <p>Currently we see a scatter gun approach for STEM, and possibly not having resources directed into the right areas.</p> <p>We need to get to get the right advice and guidance to get the right people into the right roles and pathways.</p> <p>It is also about recruiting graduates, but many currently have the quality of qualification present, but not a clear direction.</p> <p>The concept of a Regional STEM Development Centre has already worked in a similar model championed by Nissan in Sunderland, and Airbus can relate to the similar challenges faced within a comparable geography. Within the Nissan model, they currently have 8,000 young people going through the centre annually.</p> <p>The proposal is therefore to create a similar facility with a joined-up way of working between employers, education providers, and other applicable partners, who can all then come in and use the facility as needed – and therefore focus on inreach, and not outreach provision through the centre.</p> <p>The major plus for this project proposal is that schools will be assisted with funding to transport pupils and students to the facility – the finance of transport for schools being identified currently as a major barrier.</p> <p>In addition to the premises currently identified initially, any college in North Wales and cross-border can be a HUB – it is about how we effectively use the assets already there which may not be used to</p>

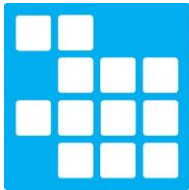


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	<p>full capacity – ‘Sweat the Assets’ – therefore using them in evenings, holidays etc., and help as facilities to deliver programmes often already in existence, but needing appropriate venues to help do this.</p> <p>Toyota, Magellan, JCB, and other employers in the region are already interested and keen to support.</p> <p>The major barrier to this proposal progressing is operational expenditure, and running costs of upto £500,000 per annum have been identified as required, to support employment of a dynamic programme/centre manager; subsidise transport for schools; and maintain and promote equipment, facilities, and education programmes – for both pupils and teachers, with the latter being supported in their professional and curriculum delivery management.</p> <p>The proposed concept is therefore almost a virtual centre, with Hubs being promoted and utilised across the region, under one common regional banner.</p> <p>The current concept plans for 5,000 young people going through the centre per annum, and would deliver a range of specific employer supported activities applicable to all ages and all capabilities.</p> <p>The concept has the potential to become an all-Wales model, led by North Wales taking the lead in the first instance, with a request for support from the RSP to go to WG and request backing centrally for this innovative, and needed model.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Gavin for the passionate and thorough presentation, and agreed that for the region, the development and implementation of a joined-up approach such as this, which would also support and promote our existing RSP, ‘ACT ON STEM’ programme in the region, as a “no-brainer”.</p> <p>Dafydd Evans agreed that we should be more joined-up, and that GLLM has already had some money to fund a similar type of programme in north west Wales. He agreed that a common broader regional branding and marketing to support this pan-North Wales, would be a good start and utilising facilities collectively, would demonstrate and support progression. Working as a partnership via the RSP to achieve this in collaboration with industry was key.</p> <p>This point was agreed by Sioned Williams and Sue Price, who both highlighted than on-going pan-regional support was critical to this moving forward, with Gavin again highlighting that the assets are already there across the region – it is how we use them more effectively that is key.</p> <p>Alison Atkinson asked about the focus on students – and would those who are currently “middle of the road” also be able to benefit to which the response was yes as its applicable to all capabilities and ages – helping direct people to sectors of provision related to industry and interest.</p> <p>Gavin welcomed the support shown by partners around the table, and highlighted that in addition to the support and request to WG, getting the right person to lead this on a full-time basis was critical to its success.</p>
<b>Decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION 3.1</b> – The Chair of the RSP to send a letter of support to Welsh Government for this proposal on behalf of all partners – requesting they consider funding &amp; supporting a 3 year pilot here in North Wales based on the considerable development of the concept already undertaken by Airbus colleagues.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 3.2</b> – Current regional initiatives and programmes such as the already deployed, ‘Act on Stem’, and shortly to be green-lit by WEFO – ‘STEM Gogledd’, also, as both need to see how can all be linked up with, and support this proposal for each-others mutual benefit.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 3.3</b> – Need to further promote how this proposal and project will help support delivery of the WG target for 100,000 apprenticeships.</li> </ul>

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>6.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Welsh Government General Update</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>Jayne Roberts from WG presented an update on national developments to help inform and support regional and local working, including further clarity on the recent Cabinet reshuffle and updates to Ministerial portfolios.</p> <p>The new Minister for Lifelong Learning &amp; Welsh Language, Eluned Morgan AM, is increasingly settled in the role, and being clear on priorities across her portfolio. She is hoping to finalise a date to meet with all RSP Chairs and their Programme Managers collectively in February.</p>

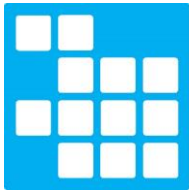


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	<p>Good news for North Wales in that the Wales Employment &amp; Skills Board is scheduled to be held in North Wales in March – the first the new Minister will be attending, and grateful to Iwan Thomas to assisting with the arrangements.</p> <p>RSP's are now firmly presented in an increasing number of Welsh Government documents – including "Prosperity for All" – the new Economic Action Plan published in December. Grateful to the North Wales RSP and Iwan Thomas for providing a useful summary of RSP references throughout this national key document on the day it was published. This has now been shared and promoted with the other RSP's and key officials for reference.</p> <p>Gwenllian Roberts is now the Chief Regional Officer for North Wales on behalf of Welsh Government, and has counterparts in the other two regions as well.</p> <p>Both Gwen and the Minister are keen to further promote the rural economy, and North Wales is key to that as a region.</p> <p>An internal 3 year review of RSP's has been undertaken by Welsh Government, and thanks to partners here in the region who contributed to that. Outcomes include further strengthening the role and remit of RSP's to influence funding, policy, and delivery, and that the previous annual Skills &amp; Employment Plans, should now move to be a 3 year visionary document, backed up by annual data submissions.</p> <p>Dafydd Evans highlighted that with increasing emphasis on RSP's to inform, support and direct FE partners, is there scope for a sub-group to be established just to focus in depth on the sector in North Wales. This is particularly relevant with current WG requests and consultations with FEI's on future delivery and curriculum developments.</p> <p>The Chair and Programme Manager both agreed this would be beneficial to allow more detailed discussion and support for our FEI's and their direct partners, and would look to be established by the spring.</p> <p>In response to a question from Bryn Jones on whether existing documents from WG are still relevant in light of new publications such as 'Prosperity for All', both Edwyn and Jayne confirmed that they don't replace them, but support and updates the current &amp; future direction.</p> <p>Jayne also confirmed that a piece of work on the future governance of RSP's across Wales was shortly to be undertaken. Currently out to tender, the work is expected to be a couple of weeks, and has been commissioned by the SMT within SHELL in WG.</p>
<b>Decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION 6.1</b> – A regional FE group to be established as a sub-group of the RSP to discuss and focus on issues directly affecting and influencing the sector, which would not allow sufficient time at full RSP meetings. Membership to be flexible as per issues to be discussed, but should also include Welsh Government as required to support and input as necessary. Outcomes and recommendations from the FE sub-group, can then be fed into the RSP for information and/or action.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 6.2</b> – WG colleagues Andrew Clarke, or Claire Maxwell, be invited to attend the RSP meeting in March or May, to discuss and share their intentions for greater collaboration directly with RSP's to support the FE and related sectors; and also their support for ACTION 6.1 above.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 6.3</b> – Request an update on PCET from WG at the next RSP meeting in March</li> </ul>

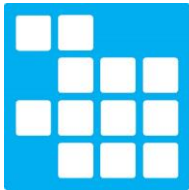
<b>Item No.</b>	<b>7.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Regional Skills &amp; Employment Update</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>Iwan Thomas presented a verbal summary overview of recent activities by the RSP team in supporting partners and the wider regional skills and employment agenda.</p> <p>Partners were thanked for those nominations to date for the Regional STEM sub-group discussed and agreed at the 17 Nov meeting. A call for final nominations now required, so that a first meeting of this group can be called for the spring.</p> <p>Funding for the continuation and development of the ACT ON STEM programme, to now focus on secondary and Years 7&amp;8, has already been secured in part from some employers. Working with GwE colleagues to now align completion alongside the new national curriculum, the timetable for the development of this programme extension, has been lengthened.</p> <p>This will allow greater integration of the programme as it develops, to the work on the Donaldson inspired curriculum review across all pilot schools in the region.</p>



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	<p>The RSP will also be able to consult and promote the development of ACT ON STEM 2 with curriculum leads across the region, and then test and challenge all content appropriately in line with emerging developments prior to adoption and implementation.</p> <p>Working with GwE and curriculum leads regionally and nationally, we will also build on the existing work undertaken by Ffion Jones, to be able to promote the resources within professional development training days for teachers across the region, to embed ACT ON STEM within the classroom as a regional resource to support and enhance the new national curriculum – linking to employability, economic opportunities, and industry led demands.</p> <p>Discussions continue with cross-border partners in the MDA and Cheshire to support greater collaboration. This includes the further updates of cross-border data on our existing Regional Economic Observatory, as well as sharing information from the cross-border HE work of Bangor, Glyndwr and Chester Universities to help further inform analysis and actions.</p> <p>Engagement with employers from our key and growth sectors continues to be undertaken, with recent examples including attending the November meeting of the North Wales Business Council to update members on developments with the Skills Plan, and receive direct feedback to inform future activities and support.</p> <p>Further engagement also with the Chamber of Commerce and meetings between RSP and Chamber colleagues has been set up for February.</p> <p>Iwan Thomas has also worked with national partners having been the only RSP invited to be part of the planning of Adult Learners Week across Wales in 2018, as well once again to represent the RSP to attend a meeting of partners in the Cardiff City Region to learn from our best practice around skills and linking education and business.</p> <p>Also noted in the update was that NTfW would shortly be recruiting for three Regional Apprenticeship Programme Development Managers across Wales; the interviews for which would be in early March. Interaction and dialogue with the North Wales Apprenticeship officer will be key for future work.</p> <p>Iwan noted how many partners had attended the Post-Brexit WG &amp; WEFO Consultation event in Llanrwst earlier in the week as WG launches its consultation.</p> <p>Carwyn Jones-Evans RET Manager with the NWEAB also commented and supported the view that a regional response was going to be prepared by 7 March, in order to be presented to the Regional Joint Committee on 16 March. Therefore, all individual and organisational views were welcomed, so that in addition to potential individual responses, a regional response collating key points from the majority, could also be submitted.</p> <p>Partners leading on, and involved in some of the regional skills based ESF funded projects had raised concerns about parameters set for some of the projects, and that a greater flexibility was needed between projects in North Wales to increase participant numbers on some but not all projects. One such issue was around participants who may have a Level 3 in one subject, but would have to enter another subject at Level 1 entry level. Also greater flexibility needed on which participants could be counted, and what interactions may count as participating etc.</p> <p>Agreed that a meeting be held between projects, Iwan Thomas, and Carwyn Jones-Evans initially to discuss what flexibility already exists, best practice, and opportunities for change &amp; development; in order to have a consensus of requests, prior to then requesting a meeting with WEFO to discuss.</p>
<b>Decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION 7.1</b> – all outstanding partner nominations for the STEM sub-group to be sent through to Iwan Thomas by no later than 2<sup>nd</sup> February</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 7.2</b> – RSP partners to submit responses and comments on the WG/WEFO “Regional Investment after BREXIT” paper to Iwan Thomas and Carwyn Jones-Evans to help formulate a single response by March 7<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 7.3</b> – Confirmation with Gwenllian Roberts at Welsh Government to attend and present at the next RSP meeting on March 16.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 7.4</b> – Arrange meeting for applicable partners, RET and RSP Programme Managers, to discuss how to improve performance and flexibility for some ESF skills projects in North Wales.</li> </ul>
<b>Item No.</b>	<b>8.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>



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<b>Comments:</b>	<p>Mike Learmond promoted the FSB having an apprenticeship breakfast event in Northop on the 27<sup>th</sup> February in the new Business School from 08:00-09:30. Further details and how to register are here in the link: <a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/skills-means-excellence-a-guide-to-apprenticeships-and-funding-for-smes-tickets-42034670832?aff=es2">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/skills-means-excellence-a-guide-to-apprenticeships-and-funding-for-smes-tickets-42034670832?aff=es2</a></p> <p>Sasha Davies in her capacity as representing Horizon Nuclear Power, updated colleagues on the Development Consent Order submission for Wylfa Newydd is progressing in readiness for the end of March, and that they are working with partners across the region on the development of a suite of individual 'Statements of Common Ground'; one of which with the NWEAB clearly notes in detail the importance of skills and jobs. This can be shared with partners once completed at the meeting on 16 March</p>
<b>Decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>ACTION 8.1</b> – Details of the FSB Apprenticeship Breakfast on 27 March to be shared with colleagues (link above)</li><li>• <b>ACTION 8.2</b> – The Statement of Common Ground between Horizon Nuclear Power and the NWEAB highlighting importance of skills and jobs, to be shared once completed at next RSP meeting on 16 March.</li></ul>

<b>Next Meeting:</b>	10:00am, Friday 16 March 2018 Venue TBC
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