

# north wales economic ambition board

## bwrdd uchelgais economaidd gogledd cymru

<b>Meeting:</b>	North Wales Regional Skills Partnership (Venue: Menai Science Park)	<b>Date:</b>	16-03-2018
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### Present:

Horizon Nuclear Power – Sasha Davies (Chair) NWEAB – Iwan Thomas, Ffion Jones, Katie Edwards, Welsh Government – Gwenllian Roberts; Jayne Roberts; Local Government – Sioned Williams; North Wales 14-19 – Elfed Morris; Careers Wales – Nerys Bourne; DWP – Bev Lovatt; Grwp Llandrillo Menai – Ian Rees; Coleg Cambria – Sue Price; CITB – Ceri Jones; Bangor University – Bryn Jones; FSB – Mike Learmond; Creative North Wales – Garffild Lewis; North Wales Tourism – Jim Jones; North Wales Social Care & Health Workforce Board – Jackie Drysdale; Qualifications Wales – Cassy Taylor

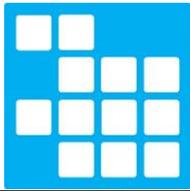
### Apologies:

GwE – Arwyn Thomas; North Wales & Mersey Dee Business Council – Ashley Rogers; West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber – Colin Brew; Open University in Wales – Kevin Pascoe; WCVA – Catherine Miller; Welsh Government – Meurig Thomas; EPC – Alice Williams; Social Care & Health Workforce Board – Alison Atkinson; NTFW – Ruth Collinge; Wrexham Glyndwr University – Julie Cowley; Airbus – Gavin Jones; NWEAB – Carwyn Jones-Evans

<b>Item No.</b>	1.
<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. The Chair also thanked our hosts at the Menai Science Park and noted how this new facility was a great asset for the region. Formal welcomes were provided to both Gwenllian Roberts from Welsh Government, and Cassy Taylor from Qualifications Wales, who would be providing presentations and leading discussions during the meeting.

<b>Item No.</b>	2.
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 January 2018</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>• Noted that some of the actions were impacted by the adverse weather and snow in February, and those meetings cancelled and postponed, were being rescheduled, and updates would be reported at the next meeting (e.g. PCET; FE Sub-Group)</li><li>• Andrew Clarke and Claire Maxwell invited to attend this meeting (16.03.18) were unavailable, and would be requested to attend the next one.</li></ul>

<b>Item No.</b>	3.
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Key Presentation – Welsh Government Chief Regional Officer for North Wales</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>The Chair welcomed Gwenllian Roberts to the meeting, who as the new Chief Regional Officer for North Wales, to proceed with a verbal overview and presentation of her new role, and opportunities for engagement with the Regional Skills Partnership to work collaboratively.</p> <p>Gwenllian began to explain her new role following her appointment in October 2017, alongside two other regional chief officers – Rhodri Griffiths in Central and South West, and David Rosser in the South East.</p> <p>The role is to primarily support the implementation of the WG Economic Action Plan ('Prosperity for All') published in December 2017, and champion therefore, working within WG, and outside with all applicable partners, a change in approach and way of working – with planning at the highest level, and to deliver inclusive prosperity for all.</p> <p>Areas of promotion will include how we help people have access to opportunities and the Economic Action Plan sets out changes in a number of areas as it concentrates on fewer sectors as we move forward regionally and nationally in a different climate with new challenges; where needs across sectors appear to more consistent.</p> <p>The Foundation Economy is a key focus for the new Plan and includes sectors such as Tourism &amp; Hospitality; Retail, and Health &amp; Social Care amongst others.</p>



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Need to look at equal and sustainable growth and how we can tie in associated planning for areas such as transport, housing and planning. Work which also we know partners are building into the North Wales Growth Bid.

Links with the UK Industrial Strategy is key, as we look to help and support businesses via development of an economic contract with social clauses – promoting decarbonisation; gender equality; and fair work. The role as Chief Regional Officer enables bringing different people together to work in different ways – so we within WG, are able to work across different departments to make colleagues aware of a sense of place regionally, with the opportunities and challenges faced within our different regions.

Gwenllian whilst working with the other two Chief Regional Officers to provide a consistency of approach, will also be very much promoting the needs of North Wales, and building on the good work already in place via the Regional Skills Partnership, and other applicable regional bodies; and hopes that we can all work together to demonstrate to Ministers that we are all working towards common aims and objectives.

The role is the voice of the Government in the region, and is here to promote joint working to direct and deliver support and interventions in the right places – working with RSP partners, as well as local government, the health boards, PSB's and others as needed.

Gwenllian in summary at the end of the presentation noted how she and her team wished to work closely with the RSP and its partners to drive and deliver on a common agenda, to help streamline processes to support employers and their workforce development, whilst also supporting individuals of all ages, develop their skills, to be retained and grown within the region.

The Chair thanked Gwenllian for her presentation and welcomed the approach outlined, and how the RSP could work collaboratively with WG colleagues on the development of an approach to investment with a social purpose promoting skills and assisting those currently economically inactive. Having one Plan for North Wales to do this would enable consistency, and ties in with the work on the North Wales Growth Deal, and our Skills Plan.

Ian Rees asked if the priorities outlined would cascade down to apprenticeships e.g. retail as part of the Foundation Economy, to which Gwenllian noted WG colleagues would be keen to look at this further as similar discussions are happening with the Food Sector in order to promote working with smaller businesses in the sector, and not just larger employers and multi-nationals.

Sioned Williams agreed that this should be a priority for North Wales in supporting smaller employers, and that we would welcome a regionally bespoke approach rather than a national blanket approach – but one that kept the process as simple and effective as possible to continue to support inclusive growth and further develop our Foundation Economy.

Mike Learmond further expanded on the retail sector as a key area of focus for the Foundation Economy and asked if the plans to support the skills and expansion of this sector also included looking at car parking, town planning, and digitalisation to support employers on our high streets?

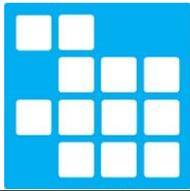
Gwenllian Roberts confirmed that moving forward in WG it was more working across different branches to enable support and more joined-up working together, with identifying the appropriate resources where available to do so.

Garfield Lewis welcomed the approach outlined, but asked how this could support and enhance the Creative & Digital sector in North Wales, to which Gwenllian replied that it would – with digital skills being increasingly critical not only in the immediate digital sector, but also cross-cutting across all sectors. We need to be working collectively to maximise opportunities within these areas of development.

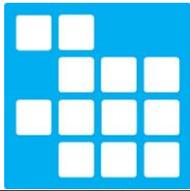
Ffion Jones noted how the challenge going forward was for individuals and organisations to get out of their silos of sectors to move to a more cross-cutting suite of themes, to which Gwenllian and many around the table agreed. The response of having transferable skills was highlighted as critical in the current and future labour market to support regional opportunities in North Wales.

**Decision:**

- **ACTION 3.1** – The RSP will continue to engage with Gwenllian Roberts and her team to help shape, inform, and support the development of a regional approach bespoke for North Wales
- **ACTION 3.2** – Gwenllian Roberts will be added to the RSP distribution list, and attend meetings as and when applicable or available to continue to work in partnership collectively.



<b>Item No.</b>	<b>4.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Building for the Future – Qualifications Wales Consultation</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>The Chair welcomed and introduced Cassy Taylor, Associate Director from Qualifications Wales, who was here at the meeting to engage with partners on the consultation of future qualifications for the Construction sector in Wales.</p> <p>Cassy explained that the consultation had been commissioned to make sure that qualifications met the needs of employers, and that they were looking at all qualifications for all ages.</p> <p>A key question was if the qualifications for the sector were still technically valued, and met the standards required by all involved?</p> <p>Another key question raised as part of the review was if learners specialised too early, as this limits progression and flexibility.</p> <p>Smaller employers fed back to the consultation that qualifications for the sector were felt to be often more geared to the larger employers, and not to them, and that skills required for repairs and maintenance of older buildings were often needed as much as those promoted on new builds.</p> <p>There is also a challenge for the industry on the provision of learning side, to attract assessors and trainers for the sector, as these posts currently are not well-paid.</p> <p>Qualifications Wales have worked closely with CITB Wales on this review as well as employers and providers across the industry to make sure that current issues around the levels and quantity of qualifications are addressed.</p> <p>One of the outcomes identified is to have a clearer single route of support and attainment of qualifications for the sector across Wales, with a much more broader understanding of the sector and its needs and skills – with better promotion in schools, FE and via apprenticeships of the broader skills on offer and required.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that work will vary across the regions depending on their own bespoke economic climate and demands, but there would be a core suite of support applicable across Wales.</p> <p>In addition to supporting the new qualifications attainment via practical skills and assessment, there would also be online and oral testing proposed for the new suite of qualifications.</p> <p>Due to time constraints, Cassy quickly ran through the remaining slides to illustrate next steps, and these slides are circulated alongside the minutes for RSP partners.</p> <p>Elfed Morris questioned the previous perception of those 14-16 year olds boys who weren't academically gifted, and possibly troublesome, who were often promoted to go into construction. Things have now changed and have moved on considerably, with the recent successes at World Skills and other competitive environments showing the depth of skills and future talent we have in North Wales for the industry. He also noted that there is provision in the Welsh language in North Wales which the presentation didn't include, and in the region there are excellent pockets of good practice despite the duplication in some areas which he acknowledges is still true.</p> <p>Sue Price further developed these points by highlighting the considerable work done with schools to support promotion into the sector; despite the contradictions about the sector.</p> <p>Sue also noted that within the sector, to be an apprentice, you need to be employed, and this is a challenge as you need an employer to help facilitate this progression for an individual. Knowing there is a huge shortfall of skills in this sector, this is really important.</p> <p>Both the Chair and Ian Rees highlighted the success of the Cwmni Prentis Menai scheme which employs apprentices, with Ian confirming that as with Cambria, they at GLLM will also provide a response to the consultation.</p> <p>Cassy promoted that they can commission a single suite of generic qualifications to be delivered in English and Welsh, and remove other qualifications which were no longer relevant.</p> <p>Both Nerys Bourne and Ffion Jones noted the issue of promoting the sector in schools to pupils and their parents, with recent Year 10 surveys showing construction decreasing in popularity.</p> <p>One possible solution noted by colleagues was to possibly look at renaming courses to make them more universally appealing, with Elfed Morris providing examples of where this has already been done in parts of the region.</p> <p>Mike Learmond asked what analysis of wage levels in the sector, particularly for new entrants that could existing to help give us a better understanding to promote the sector, to which Ceri Jones from CITB noted that this does vary, and depend on each individual company. However, CITB continue to work</p>

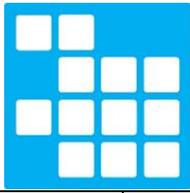


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	with employers across the industry in North Wales to support and promote opportunities re skills into employment, and that information is continually forthcoming to help build up a more accurate picture. The Chair thanked Cassy for her presentation to help inform the wide ranging discussion, and that we will be forming a regional response to the consultation, and look forward to its outcomes..
<b>Decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION 4.1</b> – partners who are individually submitting responses to the consultation from Qualifications Wales, to share these with the central team of the Regional Skills Partnership</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 4.2</b> – the central team of the Regional Skills Partnership to collate a regional response on behalf of all to the consultation, that also promotes and support individual partners responses they have sight of</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 4.3</b> – the outcomes of the consultation and recommendations for future qualifications in the sector to be shared and promoted by Qualifications Wales with the Regional Skills Partnership in North Wales.</li> </ul>

<b>Item No.</b>	5.
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Welsh Government General Update</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>Jayne Roberts provided the Welsh Government update, and firstly confirmed apologies from Meurig Thomas, who was unable to attend due to family health issues, and was noted by the Chair that the RSP and its partners wish him well,</p> <p>Jayne noted that the feedback from the recent Wales &amp; Employment Skills Board meeting held in North Wales, and hosted by the RSP, and Chaired by Sasha Davies, has been extremely well received by the Minister and those from across Wales who attended. All were considerably impressed by the depth of partnership working already within the region, and the breadth of opportunities that exist.</p> <p>Eluned Morgan, Minister for Skills, Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language, in addition to the WESB meeting, also attended visits including to Wylfa Newydd and Coleg Cambria.</p> <p>The private dinner organised by WG and RSP colleagues on the Thursday evening during the two day visit was a great success, with input and presentations from Bangor &amp; Wrexham Glyndwr Universities, and GLLM and Coleg Cambria – all on the theme of excellence.</p> <p>The Chair thanked both Jayne Roberts and Iwan Thomas for all their hard work and efforts in getting the itinerary and arrangements for the two days together, and that it all ran smoothly, and resulted in a great showcase for North Wales, to the Minister and partners from across Wales who attended.</p> <p>Jayne also noted how the review of the Governance arrangement for Regional Skills Partnerships, commissioned internally within WG, was almost complete, and thanked both Sasha and Iwan for their considerable input and support into this review led by Professor John Graystone.</p> <p>The review is an internal piece of work for WG and the results and outcomes of which, will be shared as appropriate with RSP Chairs and Managers, to work collectively to implement and deliver changes as agreed.</p> <p>Apologies were noted by Jayne from Tina Hawkins from WG, who was unable to attend to update partners on the development of Degree Apprenticeships. However, was agreed that Tina would attend and provide a full update at the next RSP meeting. WG are working in partnership on the development of these with HEFCW, and are clear that the role of RSP's collectively on this is critical to their sustainable success.</p> <p>In relation to the production of Regional Skills Plans, full guidance and confirmation of future funding will be issued shortly from WG; however, due to timescales resulting from the Cabinet Reshuffle in November, and changes to portfolios, the full guidance for Skills Plans and the accompanying spreadsheets will essentially remain unchanged this year. However, the expectations are that the spreadsheets remain the critical focus for WG in terms of data analysis regarding provision, and that the Skills Plan document itself, whilst acknowledged as essential to partners in the region, should from the WG perspective, be shorter and sharper. However WG does appreciate the primary audience for the Plan itself, are partners across the region.</p>
<b>Decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION 5.1</b> – Andrew Clarke be invited to the next RSP meeting as unable to attend this one</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 5.2</b> – Tina Hawkins to be asked to attend the next meeting on the topic of Degree Apprenticeships, and IT to share contact details with colleagues from GLLM and Coleg Cambria</li> <li>• <b>ACTION 5.3</b> – WG to share outcomes of internal RSP Governance review as appropriate to collaboratively address recommendations and next steps</li> </ul>



<b>Item No.</b>	<b>6.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>North Wales Growth Deal &amp; Regional Skills &amp; Employment Update</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>Due to time constraints to finish the meeting and the detailed discussions required on preceding items, there was only a short window of time to discuss these areas.</p> <p>Sioned Williams welcomed the suggestion to have a more detailed discussion tabled as the first agenda item at the next RSP meeting on May 3<sup>rd</sup> re the Growth Deal, which would coincide with the work currently being undertaken by colleagues in relation to Employability, the Gateway, and Centres of Excellence project proposals.</p> <p>This was supported by Bryn Jones from Bangor University who would be keen to hear more about some of the other projects being proposed, and their linkages to supporting key proposals on which the University is also currently involved.</p> <p>Iwan Thomas provided a quick brief update on a number of issues and development including the work on the “Welsh Language Skills in the North Wales Labour Market” report for which a launch event has been set for April 11<sup>th</sup> at Porth Eirias, and invites already sent out. The report has seen the support and input of over 15 employers from a variety of sectors across the region, and also received input and endorsement from the Welsh Language Commissioner and WG.</p> <p>Discussions with partners on sharing cross-border data continues to evolve, and a recent meeting of Bangor, Wrexham Glyndwr, and Chester Universities with RSP team and Mersey Dee Alliance colleagues saw the conclusions of a recent data sharing exercise on the employment progression of graduates mapped to each of the key &amp; growth sectors being discussed. An event to promote this work and initiate further discussion with employers particularly is being proposed, but the RSP has suggested that this is incorporated into the annual Regional Skills Summit – to illustrate a joined-up common agenda, that would inevitably target the same audience.</p> <p>Information from Universities Wales regarding the opportunities presented with the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund were circulated as paper copies, with the request for partners to consider and come back with further suggestions to the RSP team, who can collate and work with colleagues and Universities Wales, to promote a joined-up approach in response.</p> <p>Discussions between RSP team and colleagues at West Cheshire &amp; North Wales Chamber have seen additional skills specific questions be added to their Employers Quarterly Survey – the first results of which should become available this summer. This will further help to inform collaborative responses where necessary amongst partners via this information collated and shared between the RSP and WCNW Chamber.</p>
<b>Decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>ACTION 6.1</b> – the progress on the Growth Deal and its skills related projects to be the first main item for presentation and discussion at the next RSP meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> May</li><li>• <b>ACTION 6.2</b> – feedback from the Welsh Language Skills in the North Wales Labour Market to be presented to the next meeting</li><li>• <b>ACTION 6.3</b> – feedback from the rescheduled WG PCET meeting (20.03.18) to be provided</li><li>• <b>ACTION 6.4</b> – update on the developments for the next Regional Skills &amp; Employment Plan for 2018 to be presented and discussed</li></ul>

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>8.</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>Sasha Davies in her capacity as representing Horizon Nuclear Power, updated colleagues on the ‘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 and signed off by the NWEAB at their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March..</p>
<b>Decision:</b>	

<b>Next Meeting:</b>	<b>10:00am, Thursday 3 May 2018</b> Venue TBC
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