

The (Shadow) North Wales Growth Board

*North Wales, the economy of the future: **Smart, Resilient, Connected**,
where economic growth is powered by innovation in high value economic sectors*

Status Report on the North Wales Growth Deal,

16th March 2018

Business before the Board

The (Shadow) North Wales Growth Board met for the fourth time on the 16th March 2018.

The meeting received: -

- A presentation on “Digital North Wales” a proposed strategy to improve digital connectivity in North Wales and to ensure that the region’s digital infrastructure can enable economic growth. The strategy proposes Ultrafast broadband provision for key industrial sites and superfast provision for all other places to serve business, retail, tourism and residential. Fibre and ducts will be the focus of investment.
- A proposed governance structure where the Growth Board works with delivery bodies to deliver detailed projects in the fields of Digital Infrastructure Improvement, Transport, Skills Development, the Development of Sites and Premises for Employment and Housing and Business Innovation and Support
- Outline proposals for developing a Programme Office based on the structure of the delivery bodies and the available budget. It is hoped to fund a proportion of the costs of the delivery phase on a fee basis.
- A draft budget statement for the resources necessary to support the work of the Growth Board. For 2018/19 Councils will be contributing around £470k to support the work of the Growth Board. Council contributions will be supplemented by contributions from partners yet to be negotiated. It is therefore possible that the Growth Board will be able to draw on a budget in excess of £500k. This includes existing commitments made by Councils to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.
- A proposal to provide capacity for communications and public relations activity on behalf of Board to promote the objectives of the North Wales Growth Strategy and the North Wales Growth Bid
- A revised timetable for submitting the proposed bid to councils and the government. It remains the objective of the Growth Board to conclude a Growth Deal prior to the 2018 November Budget.
- Updates from: -
 - A meeting of Transport Cabinet Members from each Council in North Wales. They discussed forming themselves into a subcommittee of the Growth Board to implement transport proposals agreed in a Growth Deal

- The Regional Skills Council who are responsible for producing a Regional Skills Plan and could be commissioned by the Growth Board to deliver proposed projects to improve to skills

Decisions

The Board endorsed the strategy “Digital North Wales” and commissioned GreySky Consulting to produce: -

- An action plan
- A bid for resources to be submitted to the UK Government’s Department for Culture Media and Sport for investment in digital connectivity in North Wales.

Denbighshire County Council will act as the lead authority for commissioning digital work.

The Board directed that officers: -

- Publicise Digital North Wales
- Seek a step change in rural connectivity and engage the community in rural areas to secure ideas for improving in rural connectivity

The Board agreed the proposed Governance Structure whereby the Growth Board works through delivery bodies for Transport, Business Innovation and Growth, Digital Connectivity, the Regional Skills Partnership and a Development Vehicle for Housing and Employment Land. The North Wales Economic Ambition Board will be re-constituted as stakeholder Forum meeting 3 – 4 times a year with a Chair appointed via a quasi-public appointments process. The North Wales and Mersey Dee Business Council will continue to provide business representation.

The Board commissioned: -

- Terms of Reference for each Delivery Body
- The Stakeholder Body taking over from the NWEAB
- A paper on Business Representation, which may propose supplementary arrangements for representation of the Business Community.
- A paper to enable consideration of each Leader taking a role to own and lead aspects of the Growth Vision and the Growth Deal, E.g. Transport, Sites and Premises Development, Skills etc.

The Board agreed the broad principles of a Programme Office. The Programme Office will evolve over time in three phases: -

- Development to June 2018 (Staff already appointed)
- Business Case Development June 2018 – April 2019
- Implementation April 2019 onwards

The Programme Office will support the work of the Growth Board and the Delivery Bodies and the Stakeholder Forum when they are set up and functioning.

It was agreed to establish a budget of £20k within the provision for the Programme Office to undertake preparatory works for sites and premises proposals.

Gwynedd Council will retain the role of Lead/Host Authority for the Growth Board and the Programme Office until further notice.

The revised timescale was agreed: -

April 2018	Project Prioritisation
May 2018	Agree Programme Business Case and Bid Content
June – September 2018	Consultation with Councils and Partners
October 2018	Production of Heads of Terms and Consultation
End of October/Early November 2018	Formal Signing of Heads of Terms
November 2018 to April 2019	Detailed planning
April 2019	Implementation

The Board appointed Martin Williams of Radar PR to enable the Board to identify key messages for a range of audiences and to promote its work to the public and the business community on a planned basis.

It was agreed to consult Board Members by e-mail on a draft Inter Authority Agreement for the Development and Detailed Planning Stages of the Bid (April 2018 – April 2019).

Future Meetings

1. 20th April 2018

The Board will receive: -

- A Report on the proposed Inter Authority Agreement 1
- A Report on a Communications Strategy and Branding for the Board and the Bid
- A report on Project Prioritisation incorporating recommended selection criteria

2. 18th May 2018

The Board will receive: -

- The Programme Business Case (Bid Content and supporting activities)
- A Report on the role of a host authority
- Terms of References for Delivery and Stakeholder Bodies
- A Paper on Business Representation
- A paper to define “Link and Lead” roles for Leaders with delivery bodies
- Update – Budget, Project Plan etc.