



Gwynedd Economic Partnership Steering Group

Date: 25 January 2008
Time: 10:00 (refreshments available from 09:45)
Location: Craflwyn Hall, Nantgwynant, Beddgelert

Attendees:

Members of the Steering Group or nominated alternates

Observers

Partnership Secretariat

Guests:

Gary Draisey

Consultant
Interfleet Technology Ltd



Ariennir a hwylusir Gweithredu dros Gymunedau Gwledig gan Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Rural Community Action is funded and facilitated by the Welsh Assembly Government



Gwynedd Economic Partnership Steering Group – 25 January 2008

PART ONE: BUSINESS MATTERS

01. Apologies
02. Expressions of personal interest
03. Minutes of 23 November 2007 Steering Group (enclosed – *blue paper*):
 - Correct and confirm
 - Any matter not appearing on the programme
04. Partnership Sub-Groups - report (enclosed – *yellow paper*):
 - Llwyddo'n Lleol
 - Business Support
 - Skills
 - Rural Development
 - Community Development
05. Annual review of Gwynedd Economic Partnership Steering Group Membership – verbal item
06. 2008 work programme for Gwynedd Economic Partnership Steering Group (paper to be presented on the day)

PART TWO: STRATEGIC MATTERS

06. Update on the Nuclear Decommissioning Authorities Social Economic Policy – John Idris Jones, Head of Social Economic Development North Wales, Magnox North
07. Spatial Matters - report (paper to follow in light of North West Wales Spatial Plan Officers Group on 18 January)
08. Wales European Programmes:
 - activity update (enclosed – *orange paper*)
 - update from Welsh European Funding Office and Assembly Government
09. Outline of project to re-develop Blaenau Ffestiniog-Trawsfynydd railway - Gary Draisey, Consultant, Interfleet Technology Ltd
10. Any other matter
11. Date and location of next meeting

Lunch will be provided after the meeting

Minutes of 23 November 2007 Steering Group

Gwynedd Economic Partnership Steering Group

Date: 23 November 2007
Time: 10:00 - 13:00
Location: Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog

Present:

Private Sector Representatives

Dewi Lewis	<i>Chair</i>	Siop Dewi
Tim Knight		Nuclear Skills Academy
Rhys Davies		Camre Cymru
Geraint Wyn Parry		Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru
Gwynedd Watkin		Undeb Amaethwyr Cymru
Anne Lloyd Jones		Twristiaeth Canolbarth Cymru
Sian M Williams	<i>(Substitute)</i>	Griffith Williams a'i Gwmni
Robert O'Regan	<i>(Substitute)</i>	Parker, O'Regan, Tann &Co
Evie Wyn Jones	<i>(Substitute)</i>	Busnes Eryri Cyf.
John A Morris	<i>(Substitute)</i>	J Morris

Voluntary Sector Representatives

Bethan Russell Owen		Mantell Gwynedd
Catrin Lloyd Perry		Coleg Harlech / WEA
Alex Badley		Sustainable Gwynedd
Menna Jones	<i>Vice-chair</i>	Antur Waunfawr

Community Sector Representatives

Llŷr Huws Gruffydd		Menter a Busnes
Tad Deiniol		Yn Ein Blaenau
Merfyn Williams		Cyngor Cymuned Llanfrothen
		(on behalf of Gwynedd Town and Community Councils)
Keneuoe Morgan	<i>(Substitute)</i>	Deudraeth Cyf.

Public Sector Representatives

David Joyner		Bangor University
Emyr Williams		Snowdonia National Park

Observers

None

Secretariat Officers (Gwynedd Council)

Sioned Williams	Head of Economy and Regeneration
Dylan Griffiths	Strategic Planning and Funding Manager
Rhys Evans	Principal European Officer
Colin Morris	Business Support Manager
Nia Swann	Swyddog Datblygu Llwyddo'n Lleol

Guests

Janet Roberts	Health, Care and Wellbeing Strategy Co-ordinator Cyngor Gwynedd
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BUSINESS MATTERS

01 Apologies

Apologies were noted from Peter Clarke (TUC Wales), Ann Rubji (Welsh Assembly Government), Trefor Jones (Welsh Assembly Government), Fiona Williams (Careers Wales), Dyfed Edwards (Antur Nantlle), Ieuan Ellis (Welsh Assembly Government), Sian Hope (Bangor University), Wendy Crisp (Yr Hwylfan), Janet Jones (Welsh Assembly Government), Dorothy Hughes (Unllais Cymru), Godfrey Northam (Bethesda Community Council), Vivienne Pritchard (Gwynedd Council) and Sian Lloyd Roberts (Gwynedd Council)

02. Expressions of personal interest

NONE

03. Minutes of the 11 October 2007 Meeting

Discussion:

- i). Add Ann Lloyd Jones and Sian M Williams to the list of apologies.

Conclusions:

- ii) Minutes of 11 October 2007 meeting were **agreed**

Tasks:

NONE

04. Partnership Sub-Groups

Discussion: Llwyddo'n Lleol

- i) Update presented by Nia Swann. Specific reference made to concern about the falling numbers attending the sub-group and the intention to host a workshop with its members to scope the reasons. Members attention drawn to the projects results to the end of the second quarter of 2007/2008.
- ii) Sub-group congratulated on the achievements of the project.

Discussion: Business Support

- iii) Steering Group Members updated by Colin Morris. It was noted that no meeting of the Sub-group had been held since the last meeting of the Partnership Steering Group, but an update for Members on the results of the Gwynedd Business Package and to inform them that some additional funds had been received was presented.
- iv) It was reported that a working group of the Sub-group had met to consider arrangements for Gwynedd Business Week and the Gwynedd Business Awards. It is intended to concentrate and focus on the Business Week further and to continue to host it on annual basis. The Gwynedd Business Awards would change to a bi-annual arrangement.
- v) It was noted that the Welsh Assembly Government intends to restructure their provision of business support funding, with a view to establishing one national scheme.

Discussion:

- vi) Father Deiniol updated members of the Steering Group regarding the Conwy Valley railway upgrading project. It was noted that the project was dependent on the availability of the route but a contradicting message regarding it's future were being received by different stakeholders, including comments based on incorrect facts (in relation to the line's weight capacity and width of the tunnels) received from the Department of Economy and Transport of the Welsh Assembly. This was undermining confidence in the project and affecting decisions on the "Freight Facilities Grant". It was also reported that the sidings in Blaenau Ffestiniog had been disposed of and that sale could prevent the implementation of the project.
- vii) Members of the Steering Group were also informed of a scheme to re-develop the railway between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Trawsfynydd by Father Deiniol. It was reported that research was undertaken into the cost of restoring the line and returning it to use. It was noted that the consultant's (Interfleet Technology) report stated a cost of £300,000 to implement a project to develop the line as a visitor attraction. Father Deiniol noted that a response to the project had been received which suggested that the Welsh Assembly Government and Gwynedd Council would not regard the development as a priority, as development would be focused on the Menai area.
- viii) It was also noted that the former railway station at Felinheli, including the former 'trackbed' were on sale in contradiction to the stated policy. The importance of maintaining the corridor's of former railways for future re-development was emphasised.
- ix) Sioned Williams responded noting that the Ffestiniog area continued to be a priority for the Economy and Regeneration Service and that the scheme to upgrade the Conwy Valley Railway taking advantage of the opportunity to re-use slate continued to be considered an important development. It was noted that the difficulties in it's development had been reported to the Deputy First Minister in a recent meeting.
- x) It was also noted that Gwynedd Council share the members concerns and was working constantly to draw attention to the needs of every part of the County and to reverse the Welsh Assembly Government's focus on the development of the Menai area – commitment was made to research the source of the message expressing a contradictory opinion.
- xi) Further development of the Spatial Plan in Central and North West Wales was discussed. Concerns were noted in particular regarding the development of the Central Wales Key Settlement Study and the adaption of the North West Wales Spatial Development Strategy in relation to the proposed spatial approach.
- xii) The importance of Strategic Transport Planning for the County to facilitate development across Gwynedd was discussed.

Conclusions:

- xiii) **Receive** the report
- xiv) **Press** representatives of the Welsh Assembly Government to be present at meetings of the Steering Group.

Tasks:

- a) **Invite the Welsh Assembly Government to brief members on their provision of funding to businesses**
Secretariat to be programmed
- b) **Invite the representatives of Interfleet Technology Ltd. To inform members of the conclusions of the research into the development of the Blaenau Ffestiniog – Trawsfynydd railway**
Secretariat asap
- c) **Invite the Welsh Assembly Government to update members on the development of the Spatial Plan**
Secretariat asap
- d) **Circulate minutes of the consultation workshop for the North West Wales Spatial Development Strategy**
Secretariat asap
- e) **Convey members concerns regarding the development of the Wales Spatial Plan**
Secretariat asap
- f) **Invite the Strategic Director – Environment, Gwynedd Council to update the Steering Group on the development of the transport infrastructure in Gwynedd**
Secretariat to be programmed

STRATEGIC MATTERS

05. Gwynedd Health, Social Care and Welfare Strategy

Discussion:

- i) Janet Roberts was welcomed to the Steering Group meeting.
- ii) It was noted that this is the second Health, Social Care and Welfare Strategy for Gwynedd and the consultation period was being held until the beginning of January 2008. The Partnership Members and organisations were invited to offer their comments on the draft document.
- iii) It was reported that the strategy was based on 9 principles attempting to pay heed to factors such as the economy, which influences on Gwynedd's residents, and has developed a preventative agenda for encouraging healthy living.
- iv) The strategy was discussed by the members, noting the following points:
 - the recognition of the link between health and the economy was welcomed
 - the importance of promoting fitness amongst young people
 - the significance an size of the drug problem in communities in Gwynedd and the need for research to scope the problem and the required response

- that the changes in the benefits system was encouraging more individuals to work
 - the importance of maintaining health in the ageing population
 - the opportunities to utilise the planning regime (planning gain) to promote investment to target economic inactivity
 - that opportunities exist with the Universities to develop structures to collate data to monitor the health of the population and trends for the future
- v) It was noted that there were links between the economic development and health agendas in relation to the outdoor activities sector, the community regeneration field, and efforts to target the economically inactive

Conclusions:

- vi) **Agreed** to consider having a joint meeting with the Health, Social Care and Welfare Partnership in the future

Tasks:

NONE

06. Welsh European Programmes

Discussion:

- i) A report was presented to the members on the development and implementation of Welsh European Programmes.
- ii) It was noted that concerns remain in relation to the establishment and implementation of practical arrangements for the Convergence Programme in relation to the application process, the use of project information forms placed on WEFO's website and the need to comply with the programmes expenditure profile.

Conclusions:

NONE

Tasks:

- g) **To receive a comprehensive presentation on the Convergence Programme's working arrangements from the Wales European Funding Office**

Secretariat

to be programmed

07. Rural Development Plan for Wales

Discussion:

- i) The item was introduced by the Chairman who emphasised the significance and importance of the Rural Development Plan's role to Gwynedd and the future of the Partnership.
- ii) A report was presented to the Members on the project applications and the proposed business plan for the Partnership to the Rural Development Plan

for the period 2007 – 2010 by the chair of the Rural Development Sub-Group, Emyr Williams, a presentation was provided on the contents.

- iii) It was noted that there is a common purpose across the projects to ensure access throughout the period to individuals and organisations in Gwynedd. The Partnership members expressed their desire to be ambitious with their applications to the Rural Development Plan, but the limitations on match funding and the need for balance with practicality of implementation was accepted.

Conclusions:

- iv) That Members of the Steering Group **approve** the individual projects to be presented to the Welsh Assembly Government by 30 November 2007.
- v) That Members of the Steering Group **deputise** the right for officers of the Secretariat to continue to develop the applications until they are presented.
- vi) That Members of the Steering Group **approve** the intentions of the business plan and deputise the right to Secretariat officers to continue to develop the plan until it is presented.

Tasks:

- h) **Present Gwynedd's applications to the Rural Development Plan for the period 2007 - 2010**

Secretariat

30 November 2007

C R Y N O D E B T A S G A U

- a) **Invite the Welsh Assembly Government to brief members on their provision of funding to businesses**

Secretariat

to be programmed

- b) **Invite the representatives of Interfleet Technology Ltd. To inform Members of the conclusions of the research into the development of the Blaenau Ffestiniog – Trawsfynydd railway**

Secretariat

asap

- c) **Invite the Welsh Assembly Government to update Members on the development of the Spatial Plan**

Secretariat

asap

- d) **Circulate minutes of the consultation workshop for the North West Wales Spatial Development Strategy**

Secretariat

asap

- e) **Convey Members concerns regarding the development of the Wales Spatial Plan**

Secretariat

asap

- f) **Invite the Strategic Director – Environment, Gwynedd Council, to update the Steering Group on the development of the transport infrastructure in Gwynedd**

Secretariat

to be programmed

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- g) **To receive a comprehensive presentation on the Convergence Programme's working arrangements from the Wales European Funding Office**

Secretariat

to be programmed

- h) **Present Gwynedd's applications to the Rural Development Plan for the period 2007 - 2010**

Secretariat

30 November 2007

Partnership Sub-Groups

Partnership Sub-Groups

MEETING:	Gwynedd Economic Partnership Steering Group
DATE:	25 January 2008
PURPOSE:	To update Members on the activities of the Partnership's Sub-Groups.
RECOMMENDATION:	Note the contents of the report
AUTHOR:	Sioned E. Williams Head of Economy and Regeneration Service

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Five sub-groups have been designated by the members of the Steering Group to assist them in their activities. The purpose of this report is to update the members on the activities of the Sub-Groups in the period since the last meeting of the Steering Group.

2. Llwyddo'n Lleol Operational Sub-group

- 2.1 The work programme for Llwyddo'n Lleol for 2007/2008, financed by the Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Community Action Programme, continues to go from strength to strength. The operational Sub-Group which manages the Partnership's activities under the theme met last on the 5th of December; a report is enclosed as Annex 1. You will note that the report includes information on a recommendation to change the Structure of the Llwyddo'n Lleol Sub-Group as well as news on the submission of an Application for Funding from the Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Community Action Fund – 2008/09

3. Rural Development Sub-group

- 3.1 The Rural Development Sub-Group continues to lead on the development of the Partnership's proposals. It can be confirmed that the Business Plan and Gwynedd's Proposed Projects has been submitted to the Welsh Assembly on the 30th of November. Officers from the Assembly are now in the process of assessing eligibility of individual projects before considering the Business Plan. No feedback has been received as yet.

4. Business Support Sub-group

- 4.1 The Business Support Sub-group met on the 26 of November, 2007, a report for the attention of the Steering group members is attached as Annex2.

5. Skills Sub-group

- 5.1 The Skills sub-group has not met since the last Steering Group meeting.

6. Community Regeneration Activities

- 6.1 A report outlining the Community Regeneration Activities is attached as Annex 3.

7. Recommendation

7.1 Partnership Members to support the contents of the report



BULLETIN (January 2008)

Name of Partnership:

Gwynedd Economic Partnership (Llwyddo'n Lleol Sub Group)

Date of Meeting:

5th December, 2007

Main Action Points from meeting:

- The sub-group's annual workshop was held, where the group suggested changing its structure to make better use of the expertise of the different members, and allow the implementation team to concentrate on day-to-day matters.

Matters for the attention of the steering group:

- 1 Changing the Structure of the Llwyddo'n Lleol Sub-Group**
 - 1.1 Currently, day to day matters regarding the Llwyddo'n Lleol programme are guided by a sub-group, with representation from the operational partners (Gwynedd Council, Menter a Busnes and Bangor University), and eight additional members. The group meets every two months. The intention was to allow the additional members to be updated regarding the work, and to discuss problems and generate ideas. In practise we have found that the meetings are rather one-sided, with a strong emphasis on updates rather than a discussion, since there is not always a problem or matter to discuss
 - 1.2 Because of this, a number of members would not attend meetings, and it was decided to hold a meeting to discuss the role of the sub-group in December. As a result of the workshop, the group suggested:
 - That team meetings between the operational partners only should continue to be held regularly.
 - That the operational team should draw upon the expertise of wider members of the sub-group as required
 - That members of the full sub-group would be updated regarding progress in activities by e-mail
 - That meetings of the full sub-group be held as specific matters arise.Members were, however, keen to retain a proactive role in the programme, and indeed considered that the new arrangement would facilitate their ability to contribute, by allowing them to concentrate on matters within their own expertise.
 - 1.3 The approval of the Gwynedd Economic Partnership is therefore requested regarding these changes.
- 2 The Submission of an Application for Funding from the Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Community Action Fund – 2008/09**
 - 2.1 An application for funding to the Welsh Assembly Government's Rural Community Action fund is currently being written, in the form of an Action Plan, for the Llwyddo'n Lleol programme.
 - 2.2 The application will include the same package of activities as this year, and will look to complete the programme's trial period in 2008/09, and ensure a strong foundation for

2.3 February 1st, 2008 is the deadline for the submission of applications. Because of this, the approval of the Gwynedd Economic Partnership is requested to submit an application on its behalf, reporting on its exact content in the next meeting.

3. 2007/08 Outputs against Targets

3.1 The programme's outputs for quarter 3 2007/08 will be available by the next meeting.

Any matters relevant to other partnerships (note which):

none

Coordinator's Name:

Nia Swann

Phone Number:

01286 679774

Nia Swann@gwynedd.gov.uk

Email:

Person responsible for the minutes:

Nia Swann

Gwynedd Business Support Management Team



BULLETIN (January 2008)

Name of Partnership:

Partneriaeth Economaidd Gwynedd

Date of Meeting:

26 Tachwedd, 2007

Main Action Points from meeting:

1. Agree on the work programme and specific events in relation to the Gwynedd Business Week.
2. The need to hold discussions with the Assembly as regards to further dissemination of the business support provision figures, as well as how they should be reported in the future.
3. Further consideration to the noted points in relation to the discussion and presentations regarding the Tourism Sector in Gwynedd.

Matters for the attention of the steering group:

1. Gwynedd Business Week 2008 and 2009 – as decided in the last meeting of the Gwynedd Business Support Management Team, a brief was sent out to relevant companies to organise and manage various events during May 2008 including events, awards and the dinner for Gwynedd Businesses during May 2008.

1.1 Following an assessment of the proposals, ATOM PR and Cambrensis were appointed to undertake the work of organising the business events. The Business Week Steering Group will meet with ATOM and Cambrensis on the 23rd of January 2008 to discuss the work programme and specific events.

2. Monitoring the current Business Support Provision

2.1 Welsh Assembly Government – Business Support Services - in response to the mis-implementation from the previous meeting of this team a document was circulated outlining the possible reasons why Gwynedd's figures seem to be low. **It was explained that a range of activities which remain Eglurwyd y byddai amrediad o weithgarwch sy'n parhau i fod ar y gweill yn digwydd ar adeg benodol, ond nad oedd adroddiad wedi ei dderbyn arno hyd yma.** Inevitably, this would lead to the delay for management purposes, Assembly staff are profiling indicative outputs and monitor outputs against these. Any variation exceeding the range of 10% (+ or -) will be reported upon and considered by senior managers.

2.1.1 The latest primary key performance indicators relating to Gwynedd were noted.

2.1.2 It was decided to hold further discussions on further indicators from these figures as well as how they should be reported in the future.

2.1.3 An outline of the main points were received also in regards to 'Flexible Business Solutions', the Assembly will outline it's future vision in relation to business support.

2.2 Gwynedd Council – Business Development Package - it was reported that the Council received 849 full application from 664 businesses. A total grant sum of £1.3M has been released to businesses on completion of their projects.

2.3 Gwynedd Council – Sites and Premises Enquiries - it was reported that 220 property and land enquiries had been received since 1 April 2007. A total of 187 remain open due to the lack of available premises or land. It was also noted that all the Council's industrial units are full, and there are waiting lists in respect to specific locations.

2.3.1 It was reported that under the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) no land for industrial development outside the Bangor area had been approved.

3. Strategic Matters

3.1 European Funding Programmes- an update was given on the latest situation with respect to the development of the 2007 – 2013 European Programmes: -

- Ireland – Wales Territorial Co-Operation Programme 2007-2013
- Convergence Programme for West Wales and the Valleys 2007-2013
- Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013

3.2 Tourism Sector – Presentations and Discussions – presentations were given by Sian Jones of Gwynedd Council, Dewi Davies from North Wales Tourism Partnership and Esther Roberts from North Wales Tourism.

3.2.1 An outline of the above's roles in respect of tourism in Gwynedd was given with an overview of the work undertaken to develop and promote tourism in the area.

3.2.2 There followed a discussion which highlighted the following: -

- The need for the Snowdonia Mountains and Coast brand to be standardised throughout and replicated to an agreed format.
- The issue of duplication of effort by different partners was raised and the need for a 'roles and responsibilities' document to map out all the activities being undertaken on a sub-regional or county basis.
- The effect of technology on the decision making process made by prospective visitors to the area especially with regard to the TIC services.

Business Support Management Team work programme

The team will next meet together with the Skills Sub-Group on the 28th February 2008.

Other matters to be discussed in the future are: -

- Industrial Sites and Premises
- Economic Sector Development

Coordinator's Name:

Colin Morris

Phone Number:

01286 679677

Email:

ColinM@gwynedd.gov.uk

Person responsible for the minutes::

Colin Morris

Community Regeneration Programmes.

BULLETIN (January 2008)

Name of Partnership:

Gwynedd Economic Partnership

Date of Meeting:

25 January, 2008

Summary of Activities:-

Gwynedd Regeneration Framework.

Gwynedd Regeneration Strategy.

Gwynedd Council Board approved and adopted the strategy in their meeting on the 18th of December, 2007. The Strategy Document is currently being printed prior to distribution.

Area Regeneration Plans.

Following the pilot project recently conducted in the Pwllheli and Llŷn area, the Area Regeneration Plan for that area will be available soon. We aim to continue developing the Area Regeneration Plans by undertaking work on creating area plans for the Meirionnydd area next.

Contact Person – Catrin Thomas, Community Regeneration Manager, Gwynedd Council

Communities First.

The Welsh Assembly's Government programme in disadvantaged areas to tackle deprivation and causes of poverty.

Current Main Activities:-

- Barmouth – Establish a resource and enterprise centre.
- Bowydd and Rhiw – Develop activities and skills for the outdoor activities sector.
- South Pwllheli – Develop a children and families integrated services programme.
- Pen Llŷn – Implement the programme for supporting older people.
- Marchog – Manage the Healthy Living Centre and vire community health services.
- Peblig – Redevelop the Noddfa community centre.
- Talysarn and Nantlle – Complete the 'Planning for Real' process.

Recent Developments:-

The Welsh Assembly Government has announced that the programme will change its focus from April 2009 onwards, to concentrate on creating tangible regeneration outcomes. It is expected that every local Communities First Partnership must have an action plan in place for the upcoming 'Communities Next' programme to secure funding until March 2012.

Contacts - Ifan Ll. Jones, Gwynedd Council,
Carys Williams, Mantell Gwynedd,

GENESIS

The Welsh Assembly's Government programme working with economic inactive individuals to remove barriers to entering into work / training.

Current Situation for 2007-08:-

- Number of Beneficiaries on the programme – 337
- Number of Beneficiaries that have completed the programme – 62 (with 22 having returned to work, and 33 to further education).
- Number of Beneficiaries that are Welsh speaking - 230.
- The Main barriers to work / training – transport / skills and qualifications / confidence / care responsibilities.

Recent Developments:-

The Welsh Assembly Government is currently working on a Convergence bid to extend the programme for a further 6 years.

Contact - Angharad ab Iorwerth, Gwynedd Council.

CIST Gwynedd Grants.

The package of various grants to support voluntary and community initiatives.

Current Situation for 2007-08:-

- Rural Fund II - 8 projects have received a formal offer of grant to the amount of £560k, which ensures a total investment of £1.460,000 in the county.
- Key Fund – 10 projects have received a formal offer of grant to the amount of £128k, which ensures a total investment of £279k in the county.
- Voluntary Development Capital Grant – 10 projects have received a formal offer of grant to the total of £72k, which ensures a total investment of £189k in the county.
- Voluntary Development Revenue Grant – 10 projects have received a formal offer of grant to the total of £77k, which ensures a total investment of £112k in the county.

Current Situation 2006-08:

- Galluogi Gwynedd Fund – 85 projects have received an offer of grant to the amount of £144k
- Caeryglchu Fund – 5 projects have received and offer of grant to the amount of £149k.

Recent Developments:-

New members have been elected to sit on the Cist Gwynedd Grant Panel, and they will meet during February.

Mantell Gwynedd have submitted an application to extend the Galluogi Fund, and is awaiting a decision during next month.

Contacts - Delyth Vaughan, Mantell Gwynedd.
Heather Williams, Gwynedd Council.



Activity Report: European Programmes in Wales

European Programmes Update

MEETING:	Gwynedd Economic Partnership Steering Group
DATE:	25 January 2008
PURPOSE:	To update Partnership Members on the operation of 2000 – 2006 European Programmes and the Development of 2007 – 2013 European Programmes
RECOMMENDATION:	Note the contents of the report
AUTHOR:	Sioned E. Williams Head of Economy and Regeneration Service

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Partnership's members on the implementation of 2000 – 2006 European Programmes and the development of 2007 – 2013 European Programmes, specifically:

- West Wales and the Valleys Objective One Programme 2000 - 2006
- Wales - Ireland Territorial Co-Operation Programme 2007 - 2013
- West Wales and the Valleys Convergence Programme 2007 - 2013
- Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 - 2013

2. Objective 1 Programme

2.1 *Aftercare:*

The role and responsibility of the Partnership's Secretariat in providing advice and assistance to Objective One project managers in Gwynedd continues. The Secretariat provides support to project managers to prepare for and host Article 4 visits by the Wales European Funding Office (WEFO) and continues to support applicants - 55 Article 4 visits on local projects in Gwynedd have been undertaken to date.

2.2 As a part of the continuing after-care service, the Secretariat has recently contacted 47 project managers offering advice and support within the issues that may be of concern. 16 meetings have been organised in the next few weeks.

2.3 Publicity:

The Partnership continues to work to ensure positive publicity locally for the programme. The Partnership had a stand in the official launch of the Ireland Wales 2007-2013 Programme in Llandudno on 7 December 2007.

3. Ireland / Wales Territorial Co-Operation Programme

3.1 The Ireland / Wales Territorial Co-Operation Programme was officially launched on the 7th December 2007. Speeches were received by Ieuan Wyn Jones AM, Deputy Welsh First Minister, Colm McGrady, Consult General For

Ireland in Wales, and Ann-Kerstin Myleus, Deputy Head of the Territorial Co-Operation Unit in the European Commission.

3.2 The first call for application closed on the 18th of January. It is envisaged that there will be two calls per year, with the next programmed for May. It is understood that up to 30 applications were submitted in the first call.

3.3 Members' attention is drawn to the fact that the North West Wales Development Officer is yet to be appointed. It is foreseen that the Officer will be in place by March. In the meantime, support is available for applicants through the Territorial Co-Operation Unit in Merthyr Tydfil. The Secretariat has provided initial support for applicants, but the lack of a Development Officer has hindered the process of developing applications here in Gwynedd.

3.4 Further information on the programme is available through the website www.irelandwales.ie which provides contact information for applicants who are in the process of developing ideas, as well as all relevant documents. The Members are reminded that the WIN 2 (Wales Ireland Network) is now available to aid the formation of Partnerships that may lead to the submission of project applications. The scheme provides financial assistance to eligible organisations to cover travel and subsistence costs. Application form and guidance are available on the website.

4. Convergence Programme

4.1 Spatial European Teams (SET's):
Discussions are continuing to secure Technical Assistance funding from the Programme to support the work of the SET's, which will provide information, advice and support to project applicants during the lifetime of the Programme. Officers from throughout the North West who are likely to be involved in the SET's will meet on the 22nd January.

4.2 Strategic Frameworks:
All ERDF Strategic Frameworks, excluding Priority 5 Theme 1 (see 4.7), have now got an 'agreed' status on the WEFO website. All ESF Strategic Frameworks continue with the 'under review' status. It is understood through the Strategic Frameworks Co-Ordinators that WEFO will continue to make minor changes before receiving the agreed status. There is no definite timescale for this work.

4.3 Project Information Forms:
There are 576 Project Information Forms by various agencies and bodies noted on the WEFO website so far. The discussion as regards to the next step in the process continues, it is likely that WEFO officers will discuss the way forward with the SET's.

4.4 The Partnership has expressed concern in the past regarding the lack of information from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) on projects being developed. Although the situation is improving with a few WAG project information forms appearing on the website and information being shared through other sources (see below), the main situation still persists.

4.5 National Projects:

Workshops were held at the beginning of January by WAG (Visit Wales), Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency and CADW on the national projects which are being submitted through Priority 4 Theme 3 (Environment for Growth). The five proposed projects are as follows.

- Heritage Tourism (CADW)
- Wildlife Tourism / Communities and Nature (CCW)
- Coastal Access (CCW and WAG)
- Coastal Tourism (Visit Wales)
- Sustainable Tourism (Visit Wales)

4.6 See attachment * for a report on the contents of the workshop as well as details on the proposed projects.

4.7 The Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), has arranged an ESF implementation workshop on the 29th and 30th of January at the Metropole Hotel in Llandrindod. The purpose of the event is to provide up-to-date information on the implementation of the 2007-2013 ESF Programme within DCELLS, including an update on the frameworks, match-funding and project development. A representative of the Secretariat will attend as well as a member of the Skills Sub-Group.

4.8 Targeting Priority 5: Building Sustainable Communities (ERDF)

In a meeting of the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) on the 6th of December 2007, a paper was submitted by WEFO on the method of targeting resources within the priority which would supplant the opinion of the Spatial Planning Group.

4.8 Members attention are brought to attachment * which outlines the decision as well as outlining obligations to Gwynedd.

4.9 Project Monitoring, Management and Control Systems Guidance

Member attention is drawn to the fact that the guidance is available on the WEFO website. The main aim of the guidance is to ensure that projects are structured and run in compliance with European Commission Regulations, this reduces the risk of grants clawback. Further information is available through; www.wefo.wales.gov.uk/default.asp?action=page&ID=2175

6. **Wales Rural Development Programme**

6.1 Following Members support for the business plan and proposed project for Gwynedd through the Rural Development Programme, they were submitted to WAG on the 30th November 2007. At the moment, WAG Officers are assessing eligibility of the individual projects before considering the business plan. No feedback has been received up to now.

6.2 It is understood that discussions between WAG and the European Commission on the contents of the Rural Development Plan continues, they continue to wait for approval in March.

7. Recommendation

7.1 Partnership Members to support the contents of the report

BRIEFING NOTE

Workshop Priority 4 Theme 3 (Environment for Growth) - ERDF**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Visit Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), the Environment Agency and CADW are currently working to develop five regional projects targeting Priority 4 Theme 3 of the ERDF Convergence Programme.
- 1.2 A steering group has been meeting since October 2007 to develop the proposals. The group's primary task is to identify duplication and develop integration between the five projects.
- 1.3 The five proposed projects and the are noted below:
 - Heritage Tourism (CADW)
 - Wildlife tourism / communities & nature (CCW)
 - Coastal Access (CCW and WAG)
 - Coastal Tourism (Visit Wales)
 - Sustainable Tourism (Visit Wales)
- 1.4 Members should note that the budget for this section of the Programme in £54M - it is therefore anticipated that the majority of the available funds will be allocated to these projects.
- 1.5 The steering group hosted five project workshops between the 3rd and 9th of January, to further develop the initial proposals and as a precursor to a wider consultation with potential partners.

2. Details of Proposed Projects (Draft)**2.1 Heritage Tourism (CADW)**

Project Content Development & implementation of a pan Wales national interpretation plan; improving access physical & intellectual to heritage sites, heritage tourism marketing and promotion plan plus development support and facilitation to achieve integrated heritage tourism packages, local/regional networks and partnerships for marketing and heritage product development and community driven conservation projects

2.2 Wildlife tourism / communities & nature (CCW)

Project Content Develop or improve green infrastructure (paths, cycleways, nature reserves, bridleways other natural heritage attractions) & promote peoples experience & enjoyment of the natural environment.

2.3 Coastal Access (CCW and WAG)

Project Content Create an all Wales coastal path, linking up existing paths and providing a long distance trail around the Welsh coast. Specific sections will be suitable for use by the disabled, by cyclists and by horse riders.

2.4 Costal Tourism (Visit Wales)

Project Content Development & Promotion of watersports; support for the Green Sea Initiative (support for projects to improve beach access, infrastructure & facilities to meet blue flag & v Green Coast criteria, plus water sampling & tackling diffuse pollution), support for 2 Coastal Recreational Parks, improvements to coastal management and promotion of environmental codes for operators and visitors.

2.5 Sustainable Tourism (Visit Wales)

Project Content Developing & promoting activity tourism; developing effective destination management; minimising environmental impacts through an effective environmental management programme and tourism information systems.

Beneficiaries: Tourism SMEs involved in activity, cultural & wildlife tourism, fisheries, & providers of facilities for outdoor recreation plus communities.

3. **General comments following the workshop**

3.1 Daw'r sylwadau o gynodeb gan Lowri Gwilym, Swyddog Polisi, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru;

- Bids will be 'umbrella' i.e. allow smaller projects to bid for funding to them.
- CCW Communities and Nature bid is the furthest ahead at the moment.
- Awareness of fit with Spatial Plan will be crucial.
- Need to be clear where there may be synergies and overlaps between the 5 projects.
- Lack of clarity on delivery and management arrangements – will there be a project board for each project.

4. **Next Steps**

4.1 Selection criteria will be developed for each of the 5 umbrella projects in order to evaluate the smaller projects that will be bidding into them. One of the key criteria will be the sustainability of the projects.

4.2 Regional events to be held on March, with the aim to get the Expressions of Interest for the 5 umbrella projects into WEFO in April. Following that, a dedicated WEFO Project Development Officer (PDO) will be allocated to each project and work on a business plan for each project will proceed.

5. **Recommendation**

5.1 Partnership Members to support the contents of the report.

BRIEFING NOTE

Targeting Priority 5: Building Sustainable Communities (ERDF) Implications for Gwynedd**1. Background**

- 1.1 Priority 5 of the ERDF Convergence Programme is comprised of £114m of funding over the a period of 7 years (2007-2013), that is the equivalent of 13% of the total of the ERDF programme. This Priority works to support longer term integration and supports economic development.
- 1.2 Priority 5 is divided between two themes:
 - Theme 1 – Physical Regeneration (including town centre renewal): supports area environmental physical regeneration as part of an integrated regeneration strategy.
 - Theme 2 – Community Economic Cymunedol: aims to build on lively sustainable communities by improving access and improved services and increasing the contribution of the third sector.
- 1.3 It is noted in the Operational Programme that Priority 5 activities will address the most deprived areas and communities where the activities are likely to have the greatest impact. The document suggests that the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, together with data from the Welsh Rural Observatory, provides a picture of the areas with special needs (and responds to what is needed) between rural communities and towns.
- 1.4 To ensure that the use of the measure is suitable to local circumstances in the Operational Programme, the Spatial Plan Area Groups were responsible for prioritising in each area by developing Sustainable Regeneration Strategic Frameworks.
- 1.5 In the Central and North West Wales Sustainable Regeneration Strategic Frameworks a number of priority areas are suggested, as well as, noting the need for measures to ensure wider support to reflect the nature of our rural communities.

2. Summary of the decision of the Programme Monitoring Committee on targetting resources.

The Welsh European Funding Office submitted a paper to the Programme Monitoring Committee meeting on the 6th December 2007 on the method of targetting resources in the priority that would replace the opinion of the Spatial Plan Groups. The method recommended by WEFO has been noted in Option D below and has been completely sealed on the conclusions of the Welsh Multiple Index of Deprivation (WIMD 2005);

- A - target funding through the Assembly's Economy and Transport Regeneration Programmes (Heads of Valleys and Môn/Menai).
- B – Target resources on the basis of Communities First Areas.
- C – Select deprived small individual areas through the WIMD 2005 definition.

- **D – Select the more deprived small individual areas though the WIMD 2005 definition, by clustering or increasing the size of the area to be more co-ordinated in community terms or physical regeneration schemes.**

2.2 In order to implement Option D the Assembly Government has identified 44 areas that will be eligible to receive support (33 in the Valleys area, 6 in the South West , 5 in the North and 0 in Central Wales (see Annex A). **Two areas in Gwynedd have been identified through this method (Bangor and Caernarfon).**

It is suggested that **80%** of the funding is available (£91m approx) will be divided between schemes in the 44 settlements with the other **20%** (£23m approx) available to the rest of West Wales and the Valleys. It is recommended in the paper that the Rural Development Plan would provide support in the rural areas that will not gain from the result of this decision (noted, however that only £73m approximately is available to support all economic development activity (Axes 3) of the Plan up to 2013)

2.4 It is not certain from the paper whether the intention of this method to target resources will be used for all of Priority 5 or only Theme 1 and part of Theme 2 only. We will have to wait for confirmation through the official minutes of the PMC for further guidance. It is obvious that there is a connection between Theme 1 and the first part of Theme 2 but it is likely that the Theme 2 resources will follow the investments in Theme 1 to fulfil the intention of ensuring integrated regeneration schemes.

2.5 The PMC have agreed to review the situation in 18 months.

3. Implications

- 3.1 The targeting of funding using this method is disadvantageous to rural areas and contradicts the request / ethos of rural local authorities and the North and Central Wales Spatial Plan Groups. It will limit / restrict the most benefit to small number of town areas, that include large towns and cities like Swansea and Llanelli
- 3.2 As has been noted in point 2.2 two areas of Gwynedd have been included in the 44 areas that will receive 80% of the funding. Gwynedd Council welcome the designation of Bangor and Caernarfon, in recognising / acknowledging their needs and we already developed suitable/ appropriate physical regeneration schemes.
- 3.3 In these areas, however, there are already priorities designated by a number of Assembly Government schemes included in the Môn Menai programme. As a result the Council has been endeavouring to ensure that other regeneration areas that have needs in the county; by ensuring our post industrial communities (Blaenau Ffestiniog, Penygroes, Bethesda etc) coastal settlements (Barmouth, Tywyn, Pwllheli, etc) and our rural centres (Dolgellau, Bala, and rural villages) also receive attention. In these areas the Council had hoped to set up an appropriate fund to support projects like Adwy Cyf. That have provided support to restore unoccupied property to use and improve the environment. Additionally, it was hoped to prepare an appropriate physical regeneration plan for Blaenau Ffestiniog. The PMC decision will hinder our ability to carry out our wishes.

Additional Information:

- Convergence ERDF Operational Programme 2007 - 2013:
<http://www.wefo.cymru.gov.uk/default.asp?action=page&ID=2068>

- North Wales Sustainable Regeneration Strategic Framework:
<http://www.wefo.cymru.gov.uk/frameworks/SustainableRegeneration.htm>
- Programme Monitoring Committee papers 6th December 06Papurau Pwyllgor Monitro
(see paper [07]11):
<http://www.wefo.cymru.gov.uk/default.asp?action=page&ID=2165>
- Mynegai Amddifadedd Lluosog Cymru 2005:
<http://www.dataunitwales.gov.uk/cym/WimdProject.asp?id=2077>
- Arsyllfa Gwledig Cymru:
<http://www.walesruralobservatory.org.uk/>

BRIEFING NOTE

Common Agricultural Policy(CAP) and Rural Development Policy Reform Health Check**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) health-check was launched by Mariann Fischer Boel, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development on 20 November, 2007. The main aim of the Health-check is to adapt the CAP so as to meet the circumstances and challenges faced in the period between 2008 and 2013.
- 1.2 It should be noted that the Health Check is not intended to change the essential direction of the CAP or to instigate further fundamental reforms as seen in 2003. It is seen more as an exercise to tie up loose ends from the last reform.
- 1.3 It should be remembered that this process is not being conducted in isolation, there are numerous other issues that means the Health Check will have far reaching implications. The budget review will raise a number of issues on the European Union (EU) spending in totality, of which the CAP is allocated the largest single share.
- 1.4 The initial consultation period will come to an end on 15 January 2008, with the focus being placed on three questions as well as key proposals.

2. Key Questions

- 2.1 From the CAP perspective , the Health Check asks;
 - How to make the direct aid system more effective and simpler?
 - How to make market support instruments originally conveyed for a community of six, relevant in the world we live in now?
 - How to confront new challenges, in particular from climate change, bio-fuels, water management and the protection of biodiversity?

3. Key proposals

- 3.1 The Commission's proposals can be divided into four main categories;
 - 3.11 Adjustments to the Single Payments Scheme to make it more effective, efficient and simple including cross-compliance along with consideration of the scope for further decoupling.
 - 3.12 Proposals covering the main market regimes, including dairy policy and arable set aside
 - 3.13 Issues concerned with modulation and budget spending.
 - 3.14 Addressing new challenges in relation to climate change, the growth in bio-fuels and water management through adaptation to risk and opportunities.

- 3.2 Members' attention is drawn to the fact that CAP is divided into two separate pillars (Pillar 1 – Payments to Farmers and Piler 2 – Agri-Environment Schemes and Rural Development). What is referred to in 3.13 above has implications for the Rural Development Plan as it currently stands.
- 3.3 The CAP budget has now been fixed until 2013, which means that any addition to rural development funding will be made through Compulsory Modulation (Transfer between Pillar 1 and 2). The scale of Compulsory Modulation has been set at 2% annually between 2010 – 2013, however, the UK Government have chosen to increase this figure through Voluntary Modulation. Wales will have an additional rate of 4.2% in 2009, it is not yet clear if there will be continued support for Voluntary Modulation from the Commission.

4. CAP and Rural Development

- 4.1 The process for conducting a Health Check on the CAP therefore has a clear link with the notion of Rural Development within the European Union. The members are already aware of the Rural Development Plan (funded through Pillar 2) as one of the main programmes which will be operational in Wales during the period 2007 to 2013.
- 4.2 The scheme will be implemented through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). This is not a part of the structural funds (ERDF a ESF).
- 4.3 The Commission's EFRD budget for Rural Development programmes is being co-financed through public and private funding within the member states. This means that €211.4 billion is available for spending throughout the EU.
- 4.4 A total of 94 development programmes have been submitted, it is expected that programmes from Wales, England and Scotland will be approved during the first part of 2008.

Further Information

An event is being held to discuss the Health Check at Bangor University on 28 January at 7:30p.m – for further information, please contact Cheryl Evans, European Information Centre on 01248 383 772. Further information will be circulated by the Secretariat in due course, and a representation from the Secretariat will be attending on the event.

Web Sites

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/healthcheck/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/index_en.htm

http://europa.eu/pol/agr/overview_en.htm