

## **Gwynedd Economic Partnership Steering Group**

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*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 and 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**

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to be programmed

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

Secretariat

30 November 2007