

# SBCD Portfolio Governance Evaluation

## 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 To evaluate the merit of differentiating the accountabilities for strategic oversight and delivery control, thus empowering the Joint Committee (JC) and Programme Board (PB) to exercise its function with agility and in line with the delivery tempo of the programme, as recommended in the Gateway 0 review into the SBCD Portfolio.
- 1.2 To strengthen the understanding of stakeholders' role and enhance the current reporting, governance and assurance arrangements.
- 1.3 A total of 14 conversations were held between the Portfolio Management Office (PoMO) and a cross profile of representatives from each of the organisations that make up JC and PB to seek their views on how the Governance Boards currently operate and how they could run more efficiently.
- 1.4 The report will be split into 4 sections, namely:
  1. Frequency of meetings
  2. Role of the Joint Committee / Programme Board
  3. Documentation
  4. Representation
- 1.5 The report notes 16 recommendations that will be discussed at the next JC / PB. Annex A lists all recommendations.

## 2. Frequency of Meetings

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- 2.1 The PB meet monthly before each JC and Economic Strategy Board (ESB).

### **Evaluation Summary**

- 2.2 All JC and PB members are in 100% agreement that the current frequency of meetings is appropriate whilst programmes / projects transition from initiation into delivery. Potential to review this at the end of financial year as majority in agreement these could move to bi-monthly meetings.
- 2.3 Joint Scrutiny Committee (JSC) should be the main gatekeeper for decision making at JC, with this in mind meetings need to be more regular. Also noted that meetings have been cancelled lately.
- 2.4 Opportunity for JC / JSC / PB to get together bi-annually to cover delivery status of programmes / projects and do a horizon scan / forward look for the next 6 months.

## Recommendation

- (1) Agenda item to be added to March Joint Committee / Programme Board to consider bi-monthly meetings going forward.
- (2) JC to review the frequency of JSC meetings.
- (3) Hold a bi-annual seminar for JC / JSC / PB to look at programme / project delivery and 6-month projection.

## 3. Role of the Joint Committee / Programme Board

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As stated in the Terms of Reference:

- 3.1 The Joint Committee has ultimate responsibility and accountability for decisions taken in relation to the Swansea Bay City Deal's Heads of Terms, in line with the visions and interests of all participating parties and the City Deal document signed on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
- 3.2 The PB have 4 distinct roles:
  - Preparing recommendations on the overall City Deal programme
  - Supporting programme / project development
  - Monitoring programme / project development
  - To work on a regional basis to improve public services

### Evaluation Summary

- 3.3 The majority of JC / PB members had a positive reaction to how the meetings have evolved over the last 6/8 months and trust has been re-established between partner organisations resulting in meetings becoming more organised and focused, however there is room for improvement regarding functionality of meetings.
- 3.4 All JC / PB members understood their role, however there was a difference in opinion over a few matters. Some members questioned how robust the process is when it comes to challenge from the PB and felt there was a lack of challenge in documentation being presented prior to submission to JC and could benefit from having more feedback than what is currently received.
- 3.5 When asked whether the PB would benefit from having some responsibility in matters requiring decision there were mixed reviews. Whilst all members saw the ownership of strategic decisions sitting with the JC, some members felt there was appetite for operational decisions to be delegated down to Programme Board.
- 3.6 Several members expressed an interest in creating more opportunities for ESB to be more involved in programme / project development in order to add maximum value. Several members also felt the link between JC / PB and ESB could be improved.
- 3.7 Several members mentioned that PB should consider how programmes / projects are networking as there is potential for collaborative working. There is also a benefit of holding Workshops outside of PB where programmes / projects can share experiences such as Lessons Learned at critical delivery phases.

3.8 Confusion that meetings are still referred to as Programme Boards rather than Portfolio Boards.

### **Recommendations**

- (4) For the PB to provide a clear steer on direction of programmes / projects, governance and documentation presented, to guide the SBCD Portfolio through deliberation, support and action. Meetings to be more succinct to allow time for discussion and feedback.
- (5) Deliberation required on whether a level of decision making becomes part of PB responsibilities. Report required on how this may look.
- (6) JC / PB Agenda and minutes to be shared with ESB.
- (7) ESB members / Chair to be invited to PB for discussion on feedback at an appropriate frequency.
- (8) PB members and Programme / Project Teams to have the opportunity to submit Agenda items for consideration.
- (9) Future meetings to be re-named Portfolio Board and all documentation to align.

## **4. Documentation**

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4.1 All reports prepared by the Board pertaining to City Deal and regional or sub-regional matters, once approved by the Board will be submitted 'as draft' to the Joint Committee for approval via the Regional Office.

### **Evaluation Summary**

- 4.2 Majority of members mentioned there has been a vast improvement in the quality and consistency of reports submitted the past 6 months and noted there is a very clear and consistent process in terms of best practice.
- 4.3 Monitoring and reporting of performance metrics for the SBCD ensures the effective management and delivery of the portfolio and its constituent programmes / projects. The majority of members stated they found the SBCD Monitoring report extremely useful, which is presented on a quarterly basis at both JC and PB and focuses on whether the delivery of the portfolio is proceeding as planned and in a timely manner focuses on programme / project inputs and output. A few members found the amount of detail provided in the Monitoring report to be slightly overwhelming but confirmed they would prefer to see more detail than less so can pick out the key information relevant to them and cascade within their organisations. Most JC members stated the information presented needs to be focused and direct so clear decisions can be made where required.
- 4.4 Most members also found the SBCD Portfolio Highlight report to be very useful, which is presented to both JC and PB on a monthly basis and focuses on key achievements and risks. Members also found the use of graphics to be a nice addition.
- 4.5 When members were asked in terms of reporting what would benefit them going forward, 100% found simpler and more concise executive summaries would be an extremely useful mechanism of pulling out the key information from reports.

- 4.6 Process for signing off reports need to be documented. If there are no or minor changes in papers that are sent for financial / legal approval between PB and JC, they shouldn't need to be subject to a second approval.
- 4.7 Some members noted that previous JC / PB meetings have seen non SBCD related items presented. Future consideration needs to be given on when / where to present, to not deviate from the main focus of the governance arrangements which is to deal with SBCD Portfolio related items.
- 4.8 When asked what you feel is missing from current Boards, a few members suggested adding a standard agenda item to focus on a particular programme / project. This would rotate between each of the 9 programmes / projects and provide the Board with more visibility of progress and allow them to provide In-depth support.
- 4.9 Guidance from the Welsh Language Commissioner advises that all presentations at Board meetings should be bilingual to operate in a context where the Welsh language has official status in Wales.

## Recommendations

- (10) Executive summaries to be provided at the meetings for all reports submitted either verbally / via presentation, ensuring programme management terminology is clear and concise.
- (11) Reports presented at PB that have no or minor changes do not require further sign off prior to submission to JC.
- (12) Discussion and decision required on whether non SBCD related items should be brought to JC and PB.
- (13) Invite alternate programme / project leads to future meetings to give a more in-depth update on current status, which also gives them regular access to PB members.
- (14) Decision required on how to comply with the Welsh language standards at JC / PB.

## 5. Representation

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### Joint Committee

- 5.1 Each of the Councils shall appoint its leader or equivalent as its representative as a member of the Joint Committee and all such members shall have full voting rights.

Each Council may appoint a deputy for its member on the Joint Committee who may attend meetings of the Joint Committee as a substitute for the Council's appointed member on the Joint Committee. However, such deputy shall only be entitled to attend meetings of the Joint Committee in the absence of the Council's appointed member.

The Accountable Officer or their representative shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Joint Committee but shall not have a vote.

The head of paid service of each of the Councils shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Joint Committee but shall not have a vote.

The Joint Committee may co-opt the following Members: Swansea University, Trinity Saint David, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Board and Hywel Dda Health Board as appropriate however these bodies shall not have a vote.

### **Programme Board**

- 5.2 The Swansea Bay City Region Programme Board consists of the Chief Executives from each of the Councils or another officer nominated by the Chief Executive.

The Programme Board co-opt additional representatives to the Board. Members include the following:

Swansea University  
University of Wales Trinity St David  
Hywel Dda University Health Board  
Swansea Bay University Health Board

### **Evaluation Summary**

- 5.3 Having optimal representation at Programme Board is critical to the success of the SBCD Portfolio.
- 5.4 Programme Board benefits from having a mix of executive leadership and practitioners. This creates a balance of hands on experience and people who are agents of change. Some members felt due to being more involved / hands on with the programmes / projects the meetings could benefit from having SRO's in attendance or there could be an opportunity to set up a subgroup.
- 5.5 All members agreed that the current membership for JC is fit for purpose.
- 5.6 Some members felt frustration on occasions in maintaining quoracy throughout JC / PB meetings where attendance at PB of some organisations have been quite sporadic. Need to ensure the right level of representative attends if the meeting is delegated.

### **Recommendations**

- (15) Discussion to be held on whether SRO's need a more active role in PB.
- (16) Create a delegate list for JC / PB to document who can represent in members absence (Action raised at PB 26<sup>th</sup> November).

## Recommendations

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- (2) JC to review the frequency of JSC meetings.
- (3) Hold a bi-annual seminar for JC / JSC / PB to look at programme / project delivery and 6-month projection.
- (4) For the PB to provide a clear steer on direction of programmes / projects, governance and documentation presented, to guide the SBCD Portfolio through deliberation, support and action. Meetings to be more succinct to allow time for discussion and feedback.
- (5) Deliberation required on whether a level of decision making becomes part of PB responsibilities. Report required on how this may look.
- (6) JC / PB Agenda and minutes to be shared with ESB.
- (7) ESB members / Chair to be invited to PB for discussion on feedback at an appropriate frequency.
- (8) PB members and Programme / Project Teams to have the opportunity to submit Agenda items for consideration.
- (9) Future meetings to be re-named Portfolio Board and all documentation to align.
- (10) Executive summaries to be provided at the meetings for all reports submitted either verbally / via presentation, ensuring programme management terminology is clear and concise.
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- (12) Discussion and decision required on whether non SBCD related items should be brought to JC and PB.
- (13) Invite alternate programme / project leads to future meetings to give a more in-depth update on current status, which also gives them regular access to PB members.
- (14) Decision required on how to comply with the Welsh language standards at JC / PB.
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