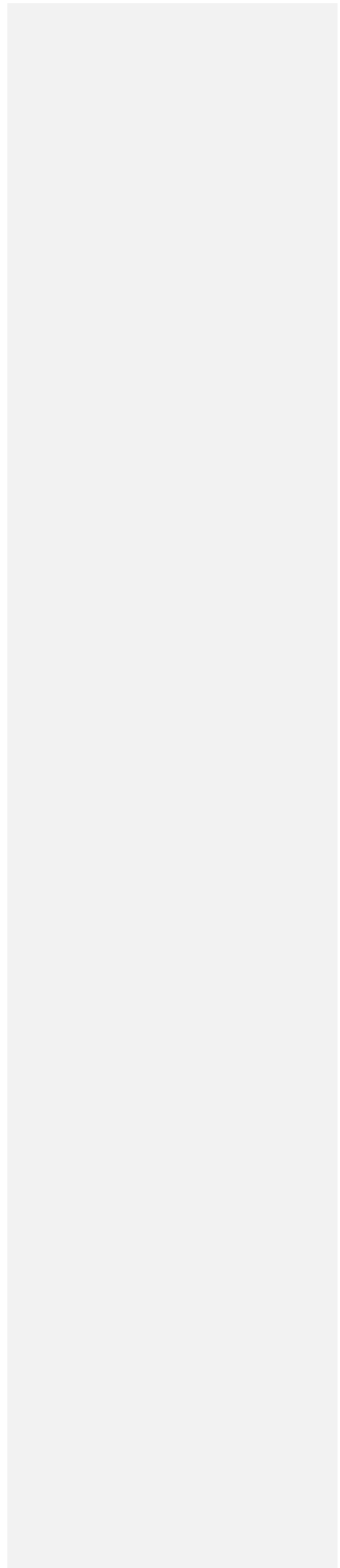


North Wales Rugby Union

Strategic Plan

2006 – 2011



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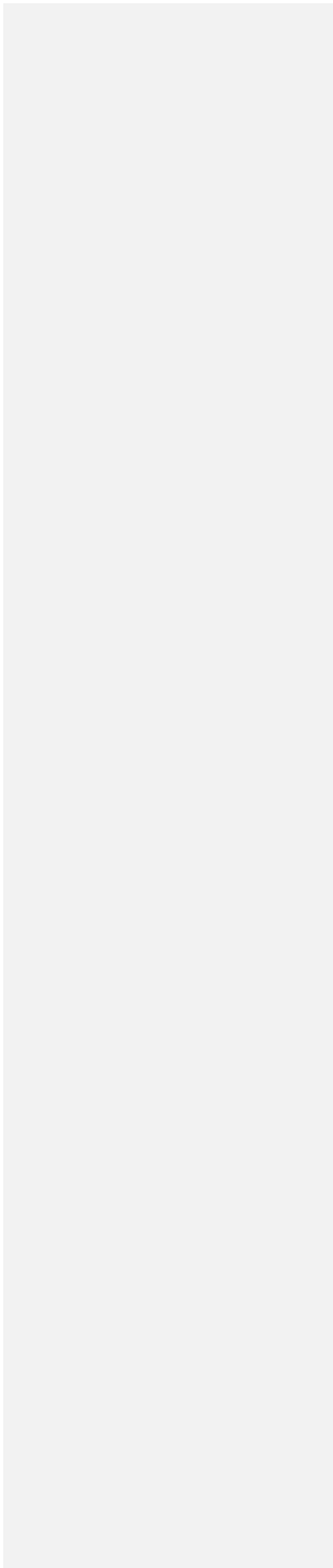
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FOREWORD: NORTH WALES

The setting up of the working party was prompted originally because of the reservations expressed about the continuing feasibility of clubs travelling to North Wales during the season to fulfil their league fixtures. It immediately became apparent that the time was right to broaden the scope of the working party remit to review the current state of rugby in North Wales and to produce a report which would present a view of the future development of rugby union in the region. After widespread consultation what follows is the result of those deliberations.

Rugby Union is recognised as the national game of Wales. From the beginning Wales has played against the best teams in the world and has always competed at the highest level. Furthermore, if the yardstick is the crowds that have filled the Millennium Stadium in recent years and the Cardiff Arms Park in a bygone era or, indeed, the two years when Wembley Stadium came briefly to be Wales' home turf, then we can safely say that rugby is our national game. When we consider the undying passion that the Welsh people have for rugby and how we identify so closely with it and how others beyond our boundaries identify the game with Wales, then it is natural to conclude that the game belongs to our nation. Wales and Rugby are synonymous.

The question arises however as to how true this 'national' identity is when we consider to what extent geographically is rugby's influence spread within Wales. Historically, it has been shown that rugby's strength is in the south part of the country. To go further it can be narrowed to the coastal strip and of the 70 mile corridor defined by the M4 motorway and which might extend some 20 miles north of this arterial line. It is within this area that the majority of clubs belong. This is history's footprint of Welsh rugby.

However this is not enough. It only tells part of the story. Lest it be forgotten North Wales has played an integral part in the development of rugby. Bangor were after all one of the signatories when the Welsh Rugby Union came into being. If there have been difficult times over the century especially in the years following the 2nd World War the enthusiasm has never dimmed and remained true.

Unlike their southern counterparts, rugby in the clubs and the schools in north and mid Wales has had to contend with teams from the top echelons of English football. Not far over the border reside some of the best football teams in the land so that competition for young people's attention and support is fierce and unrelenting.

Yet rugby has not only been able to hold on to a hard core of dedicated followers but to expand its base in the clubs and the schools. It has done so also without the immediate influence of a local team which could consider itself the status of a major so-called first class team.

Wales' rugby structure has been reviewed and revised on at least two occasions in the last decade as for example with the introduction of a National League to encompass all of the clubs throughout Wales and, latterly, in its further reorganisation as five, then four, regions to represent the top strata of competitive rugby in the new age of professional rugby.

For good reason, there has been a bias hitherto towards the south of Wales not least because therein lies the traditional strengths of rugby.

To continue to think in this way is to fall into a complacent and ultimately retrograde frame of mind. We must make the best use of all the talent and expertise that is currently available and to harness the deep rooted enthusiasm, conviction and vigour to improve the quantity and the quality of rugby in the area. There is need for a more focussed attention,

This working party review is therefore timely. The time is ripe to consider how best to move the game forward in the north and mid Wales so that the clubs can benefit and so achieve their potential.

It is of vital importance that the young people in the clubs, the schools and the colleges can aspire to the same levels and given the same opportunities as those who are closely attached to the regions and the academies in the south; that their pathway to excellence and high performance is as smooth and unhindered as those young people in south Wales; that the clubs should have a number of fixtures and of such a demanding level to satisfy their competitive needs. Their hopes must be fulfilled.

To ensure that no stone is left unturned in seeking these opportunities and to create a climate in which rugby will be allowed to flourish it is essential that the right partnerships are forged among all the interested parties. Governing the game within the jurisdiction of the Welsh Rugby Union is a necessary component if the pathway to the future is to be satisfactorily and comprehensively achieved.

Gerald Davies CBE DL

National Representative and Board Director, Welsh Rugby Union

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2005 the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) requested North Wales to prepare a strategic plan for the development of rugby in its area. The decision to commission this plan was brought about by several factors but mainly by publication of their (WRU) own plans. It was strongly felt by North Wales Clubs (and other bodies) that North Wales was at a disadvantage with what was planned and importantly its development potential was not being fully utilised.

The WRU plan states;

‘ We must ensure that rugby flourishes within North Wales and we will develop our plans to ensure that the aspirations of all Welsh players, referees and coaches can be met, regardless of geography’.

This strategic plan sets out our objectives for the sustainable development, in every sense of rugby in the area. The outcome of this plan is to create favourable conditions and opportunities for clubs, players, referees, coaches and schools to improve participation, opportunities, standards and achievements.

It is envisaged that a vibrant rugby scene in North Wales will have a positive effect on Welsh Rugby and communities at all levels.

The development of the game in North Wales is dependent on all parties (WRU, Clubs, Scarlets, and Colleges etc.) working together towards the same objectives. Current structures and policies need refining, additional resources and investments are required. Initiatives contained in this Strategic Plan offers opportunities over the next five years to raise the standards of rugby (below professional level) to a level comparable to the rest of Wales, thus becoming equal stakeholders in Welsh Rugby.

The current situation is not conducive to the promotion and development of the game in North Wales. This plan offers the rugby family an opportunity to work together at all levels in producing a framework to develop players, coaches, referees, representative teams and clubs of the highest quality. The plan strives to implement the necessary changes in order to give the population of North Wales an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the future of Welsh Rugby.

The WRU should give North Wales the opportunity to fully develop its Strategic Plan (funding and professional support) to create a focus from which young people will emerge to take their place in the professional game. A local development pathway must be put in place as an integral part of the Welsh pyramid system.

This plan has been prepared in full consultation with representatives of all the rugby fraternity in the area. WRU Board members and Officers together with Scarlets staff have been directly involved in its preparation.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The history of rugby union football in North Wales is rich with heritage. Records show that rugby was played in schools in Beaumaris, Ruthin and Ruabon from as early as the 1870s. The first game of rugby played under the laws of the WRU (or the Welsh Rugby Football Union as it then was) was between Bangor University and the Normal College in November 1887. Indeed Bangor RFC was one of the 11 founder members of the WRU in March 1881.

During 1881 a member of the club, Godfrey Darbyshire played for Wales in the first international against England at Blackheath. In 1882 two more local players H Vincent (Bangor) and CP Allen (then at Oxford University) were capped in 1882 and 1884 respectively, Charles Allen was the first Welsh player to score a try against England on the 5th January 1884.

Following the First World War interest in rugby increased hence more clubs were formed in Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, Holyhead, Wrexham and Ruthin. These were soon followed by Machynlleth, Newtown, Mold and Dolgellau Old Grammarians. The North Wales Rugby Union was formed in January 1931. In 1936 Llanidloes and Builth Wells were admitted as members of this integrating body.

Currently there are 34 clubs with 19 who are full members of the Welsh Rugby Union.

Others who have won caps for Wales with distinction include Wilf Wooller, Dewi Bebb, Tony Gray, Arthur Emyr, Stuart Roy, Andy Moore, Steve Moore and Robin McBryde. There have also been numerous players who have been capped at A, schools and youth levels. Tony Gray for example proceeded to become the national coach, the last coach to succeed at Twickenham.

Over the years North Wales has competed in the Welsh Counties Championship and have won the tournament on numerous occasions. During the 1970s North Wales played host to touring teams from Japan, Samoa, Fiji and a New Zealand U21 side.

Due to the construction work to develop the Millennium Stadium a full international match was played for the first time in Wrexham against Romania whilst in the same period welcoming a Rugby World Cup match between Japan and Samoa in addition to several A Internationals.

The huge local interest and enthusiasm for rugby was amply demonstrated in these well attended matches and helped enormously in raising the game's profile in what is historically a football-orientated region. Despite the closeness of several of England's major Premiership clubs, the interest in rugby football is immensely strong and is increasing.

It is more than ever important to tap into this enthusiasm and harness it to the benefit of the national game. Participation is high particularly at junior level. The Unitary Authorities are immensely supportive.

The time is ripe therefore to erase what was once referred to as ‘the Dovey Divide’, the separation between the traditionally strong clubs of south Wales from those of the north. This perception needs to be erased and a stronger recognition of the unifying force of rugby football throughout Wales.

There was a small fact-finding committee set up in the 1950s, headed by Rowe Harding, the vice President in 1953, to assess the condition of rugby in north and mid Wales. It reported favourably on the hard work done to overcome the distances between clubs and the rooted popularity of soccer.

If there were dedicated men who nurtured the game in the schools and the locality in general, development was restricted by the lack of finances. Due to the post war difficulties the Union itself was strapped for cash and only a small grant was made available.

Once more a working party has been set up to survey the rugby scene in the region. This is timely.

Rugby Union football in North Wales has reached another stage in its development. This is recognised in the following report. The time has arrived to consider a pathway for the successful future of the game in the region.

There is a long-standing and honourable past which must continue to form the foundation for a future of pride and of distinction. This moment of reflection and the results of these deliberations must not be lost. Rugby throughout Wales will be the inheritors.

3.0 VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

3.1 VISION STATEMENT

‘To create the organisational and developmental framework to achieve Regional status within the Welsh Rugby Union’

3.2 MISSION STATEMENT

‘We will do whatever it takes to ensure that all Clubs in North Wales prosper and thrive’

4.0 UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF NORTH WALES

The boundaries of North Wales area are identifiable by drawing a line west immediately South of Llanidloes to Machynlleth, this represents nearly fifty percent of the whole of Wales.

Due to its geographical location, North Wales is peripheral in terms of its links with South Wales; there are also historical and economic links with the Midlands and North West England.

Apart from the heavily industrialised and populated Wrexham/Deeside corridor, it is an area predominantly rural in character.

The communities which have grown around the towns and villages all have unique characteristics which are based on Welsh culture, local geography and varied historical backgrounds.

Despite the natural beauty of the landscape, in common with other rural areas it has suffered from economic decline following agricultural and industrial recession. Local rugby clubs (34 in total) play a very valuable role in sustaining and supporting their communities.

Population is nearly one million which is in excess of the combined population of Cardiff, Swansea, Neath and Newport. There is a University at Bangor and College of Higher Education in Wrexham; seven colleges of Further Education; sixty three Secondary Schools and four hundred and sixty Primary Schools.

Latest figures show that children in primary and secondary education total a hundred thousand. The Further Education Colleges' students population is around seventy five thousand.

5.0 OVERALL STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- **Co-ordinated Approach**

The large geographical and remoteness of the area makes effective management, administration and development of the game very challenging. To address this issue a local contribution and a coordinated approach is vital. Current administrative structures are fragmented with no defined objectives. **It is proposed that the Board establish a body to be called "The North Wales Rugby Union Council" which will encompass all local rugby bodies and will assist the Board and be a proactive focal point for all rugby activities in North Wales.**

- **Player Development Opportunities**

Currently, no effective resources exist to provide practical pathways to aspiring high performance players in the area. These high potential players find it more difficult to

attend academies in South Wales. **In order to remedy this situation it is proposed that an appointment should be made of a player development manager and the implementation of local skills centres will be a positive first step to providing a pathway and give players opportunities. We will also maximise the support and opportunities provided in our formal partnership with the Scarlets. The ultimate goal is to have a full academy and semi professional structure.**

- **Develop Identity**

A local area identity is of paramount importance. Currently the area is identified as District J which is meaningless at all levels within and outside the rugby fraternity. **One of the tasks given to the proposed Council will be to address this issue by working with the Board to promote a more meaningful identity for North Wales with a contribution from all the current stakeholders.**

- **Improve Media Coverage**

Currently, the level of media coverage is low, increased profile will improve recruitment and participation levels. **With the introduction of changes within this plan the opportunity of higher profile coverage in the media is evident. With this scope to increase media activities and a planned focussed approach improvements will be made which will benefit the game and the community. The Council will make recommendations to the Board to raise the profile and improve communications, in conjunction with the Press Officer of the Welsh Rugby Union.**

- **Improve Competition**

There is a perceived absence of a robust competition for the best performing and ambitious clubs and players to improve standards following new national league proposals. **Proposed new cross border and national league winners' competition games will bolster new local league competitions and give clubs and players the opportunities to excel at higher levels.**

Representative rugby at all levels will give players fresh opportunities and challenges e.g. Welsh Amateur cap. The involvement of players in vigorous representative matches will have a positive effect on club rugby playing standards and in order to retain these it is essential that a vibrant and competitive environment is created and sustained in North Wales.

- **Improve Quality of Games**

The lack of international and top class games staged in North Wales has a negative effect. **This will be addressed by the Council in conjunction with the Board.**

- **Developmental Region Status**

There are untapped human and physical resources in North Wales which have undoubted potential. With increased focus and investment these resources are ripe for development for the benefit of Welsh rugby and the community.

This Plan addresses some key issues in the development of these resources and makes a very strong case to create a unique developmental status region within the Welsh Rugby Union.

6.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with Scarlets • Strong junior participation levels • Development Officers in situ working in partnership with all unitary authorities • Strong developmental culture in rugby Clubs/Associations/Colleges • Excellent venue to stage important matches • Well established community based rugby clubs • Willingness to adopt and accept positive changes • Committed and hard working Club/Association Officers and Members • Full involvement of WDRU Clubs in rugby matters/leagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinated Approach • Player Development Opportunities • Develop Identity • Improve media Coverage • Improve Competition • Improve Quality of Games
WEAKNESSES	THREATS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remoteness for South Wales • Absence of High Performance Unit • Fragmented administration structures with no defined objectives • Closeness to wealthy clubs in the North West and the Midlands attracts best player and supporters • Lack of local area identity • Weak media coverage in the area • Perceived absence of robust competition for best performing players • Lack of 'representative' rugby culture amongst clubs and senior players • Large geographical area • Dearth of international/top class matches to be held in the area • Lack of strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Player drain to Sale (Premiership Club) and pro active semi professional clubs in North West and Midland of England • Difficulties in recruitment of club officials • WRU unable to support and sustain planned strategy • Other popular sports, including soccer with their development programmes • Lack of recruitment of referees
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7.0 KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Strategic Objectives will be addressed under the following headings:

- **Governance**
- **Leagues**
- **Development of the Game**

8.0 GOVERNANCE

Administration and Structure Changes

8.1.1 Goals and Objectives

- **A clearly identifiable body for North Wales within the WRU**
- **Pro-active focus on all aspects and promotion of rugby**

- **Improve communication – essential in a large geographical area**
- **Transparency, openness and accountability by all involved in rugby administration**

8.1.2 Current Situation

The following committees exist:

District J	North Wales Rugby Union
North Wales Youth	Junior Association
Colleges	Referees Society
Women	Welsh Districts Rugby Union (3)
Schools	

These committees are not involved in the operations and promotional activities of the game. These activities (e.g. leagues, competitions, referees, disciplinary, finances, grants, ticket allocations) are conducted via WRU in Cardiff.

Over recent years there has been a strong demand by clubs, players and organisations to have a body for North Wales which would allow the district to build its own identity, improve co-ordination, accountability and transparency under the overriding governance of the Board.

- **Organisation of Clubs and Activities**

The Schools/Junior/Youth Sections are running under the direction of the Regional Community Rugby Manager whose main responsibility is rugby development at these age levels. However it is apparent that there is a lack of communication/continuity with the senior game.

Referees have their own Society and will have a valuable role in our game's administration structure.

Women's rugby currently run independently, again it is felt that development of this sector would improve if they were included in a new structure.

Colleges of Further Education operate rugby activities independently and have an important role in the development of the game and as such can make an important contribution to the proposed Council.

The WDRU Clubs are run on their own jurisdiction which is currently under review; the WDRU continue to be an integral part of North Wales. Currently they run themselves through a Gwynedd/North East Counties/ Mid Wales split. There would undoubtedly be many positives for the development of the game if these clubs were brought under one umbrella. Realistically, these clubs cannot be excluded from our plan and therefore it is proposed that they will continue to be an integral part of the new council.

- **Meetings**

District J Clubs send Club representatives to monthly meetings. Feedback from these meetings indicate that they should become more formal and a stricter agenda to address issues such as budget monitoring, with a benchmarking discussion to address progress with regards to objectives set. Currently these meetings have no defined focus they include discussion of reports and developments which have previously taken place. As such changes will be implemented in order to make these committee meetings productive and focussed.

The Articles of Association of The Welsh Rugby Union Limited (44) state;

‘Each District may hold meetings from time to time to discuss matters relating to the Game in that District but shall hold a meeting (AGM) in August or September of each year’.

The current structure is very fragmented and lacks the full involvement of all the relevant bodies. There is an impression that it is a closed/talking shop which does not attract sufficient new blood for new ideas and a different approach, it needs to be more proactive.

9.0 STRATEGIC CHANGES

Structural Changes (See Appendix 1 for Structure)

- **The proposed structural changes will provide an effective organisational system for North Wales.**

9.1 The Board to establish the:

North Wales Rugby Union Council

9.2 Proposed members of the new Council (one representative from each)

WRU District J Clubs*

North Wales Youth

Junior Association

School Associations

Referees Society

Women’s Association

Gwynedd District	North East Counties
Montgomeryshire District	Colleges Further Education Panel
Regional Community Rugby Manager	Secretary
Treasurer	Chair
District J WRU Board Director	

(* one representative from each club)

9.3 Election of Council Members

Each member of the Council will be elected by their respective Club or Association. Clubs and Associations will be made clearly aware that their representatives on the Council will be making recommendations to and assisting the WRU Board in taking rugby matters forward in the area and as such they should appreciate the importance of their role in the proposed structure. Council Officers, i.e. Chair, Secretary, Treasurer would be elected or appointed by the Council for a two year term of Office and may be re-elected after expiration of their term.

The Council may set up sub-committees of which there will initially be four comprising of:

Executive Committee	Finance & Audit Committee
Development Committee	
Communications & Marketing Committee	

The members of the sub-committees are to be Council Members, Executive Committee Members and such co-opted members that the Council or the sub-committees in question may appoint. Co-opted members of sub-committees shall not be entitled to vote at sub-committee meetings. The Chair of the Council shall be the Chair of the Executive Committee but shall not be chair of any of the other sub-committees.

9.4 The main sub-committees of the Council and their membership should be:-

- I. The Chair of the Council will also be the Chair of the Executive Committee.**

The Executive Committee will comprise of the following:

- Chair
- Secretary

- Treasurer
- Three Chairs of Sub-Committees
- Regional Community Rugby Manager
- WRU Board Director (Under current WRU constitution the nominations for and appointment of WRU Board Director remains the responsibility of WRU Clubs,)

The Executive Committee will be responsible to the management of the Council, monitoring and implementing the policies established by the Board.

II. Development Committee

This Committee is to implement national policies and identify local opportunities for the development of the game at all levels and age groups, coaching at all levels and age groups, coaching referees and laws, also to be the report point for all representative teams and North Wales Schools.

One of the primary responsibilities of this committee will be the recruitment and retention of referees.

Committee members ideally should have player development experience, also managing development representative teams. An integral member of the Committee would be the Regional Rugby Community Manager who will ensure that WRU National policies are fully carried out. It would also include coaches, referees, and Junior/Schools/Youth organisers. This Committee will also be tasked as the reporting point of North Wales region representative sides and school, junior and youth associations. There is again the opportunity to co-opt members in case of need.

The Committee, via its Chair, will make regular reports on progress against targets to the Executive Committee of the Council on a minimum monthly basis.

The Committee will be made up from Council Members, up to eight, including Chair plus any co-opted members deemed necessary.

III. Communication and Marketing Committee

This Committee is to be responsible for the communication and marketing of all aspects relating to rugby activities at all levels and providing assistance to Clubs, Associations and close liaison with media, press to promote the game in North Wales in conjunction with the WRU's Press Officer.

This Committee is also to instigate and sustain an effective communications system to include IT between all clubs and organisations in North Wales. First task will be to establish communication systems and set targets for positive media/press coverage for rugby in North Wales.

Committee Members should preferably have experience of communications/promotion work. There is the possibility of co-opting if necessary.

The Committee should comprise of up to seven Council Members including Chair plus co-opted members.

IV Finance and Audit Committee

This Committee is to provide advice on issues relating to finance, to include monitoring and identification of revenue sources and cost control measures. To carry out audit and review functions to ensure compliance with accountancy standards and preparation and monitoring of budgets.

Ideally members of this Committee should have experience in rugby/other bodies' financial administration, i.e. accounts, budget preparation and monitoring. Experience and knowledge of accountancy standards would be a great advantage; there is the option to co-opt suitable members with this experience.

It is imperative that all financial rules are clearly set out and adhered to. It will be this sub-committee's initial responsibility after consultation with the Council to set up these rules and thereafter ensure there are effective checks in place to audit all financial matters on a continuous basis. It will also be the sub-committee's responsibility to prepare annual audited accounts and monitor budgets for all functions of the Council's activities and to report to the Executive Committee on a regular basis.

The sub-committee will be made up to seven Council members including Chair plus any co-opted member deemed necessary.

9.6 Frequency of Board and Committee Meetings

Initially it is envisaged that the Council would meet on a quarterly basis to set objectives, create new initiatives, monitor progress etc. in accordance with the policies of the Board. The Executive and Sub-Committees would meet monthly.

The committees of the existing Associations will continue to meet and each organisation will have an input to the new Council.

See Appendix 2 for draft Constitution of Council.

10.0 LEAGUE STRUCTURES

10.1 Goals and Objectives

- **Participate in regionalised league structure, conforming to the Community game concept of the Union**
- **Become Sustainable**
- **Re-structure league** (See appendix 3)

- **Introduce a Cross Border competition (Lancashire/Cheshire/Midlands clubs) and/or Inter Welsh League *Championship* would be set up to further challenge (say) the Top 4 of Division 1.**

The promotion and relegation within these leagues would be dealt with by the Board.

10.2 Player Development

- The talented, ambitious club players would be offered representative rugby at U16, U18, U20, initially in cross border fixtures, eventually changing to competing in the National Reebok tournament.
- At U25 the players would be challenged via the National Amateur Competition.
- The “senior” North Wales player (over 25) would be involved in a representative cross border games.
- The Player Development Manager (new post) would be responsible, via a network of part time Skills and Conditioning coaches, for providing representative players with Personalised Individual Development Programmes.

A close link with the Scarlets will further enhance this process. (See appendix 4 for a summary of the partnership between Scarlets and North Wales)

10.3 Coach Development

- The club coaches would be supplied with the High Performance information from the Player Development Co-ordinator via seminars organised by the Regional Rugby Community Manager. In addition, they will be invited to a series of nationally arranged Coaching Association meetings to further develop their knowledge and skills.

10.4 Referee Development

- It is proposed that the new Council will localise and incentivise recruitment of referees

10.5 Semi-Professional Rugby

- Our objective is that a Semi-Professional team should eventually be set up in North Wales, playing in the Premiership.
- This would be a natural development, leading on from the planned structures in this paper. It would provide a focus for players, a goal to aspire to. It would

mean that our better players would not have to travel to South Wales, or more easily into England to achieve this level of rugby.

10.6 Appropriate Facilities

- Due to the absence of a ‘first class rugby club’s’ facilities, the region would benefit greatly from a ‘rugby centre’ which would be a focal point for player development and a venue for representative matches at all levels. Scheme plans including site identification have been drawn up by local entrepreneurs/rugby enthusiasts and the Council in conjunction with the Board will evaluate the project.
- The centre would be an important stepping stone towards our objective of a semi-professional team.

11.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE GAME

11.1 Goals and Objectives

- **The WRU accept that North Wales has unique characteristics that require immediate attention and investment to create a developmental region**
- **Attain High Performance Status**
- **Establish a semi-professional North Wales team to compete in the Premiership**
- **Clubs to revert back to North Wales leagues**
- **Cross-border fixtures for the top clubs in the North Wales**
- **North Wales U25 to compete in the national amateur competition**
- **District rugby up to the age of U16**
- **The appointment of full time Player Development Manager, Skills Coach and Fitness Adviser.**
- **Regional Community Rugby Manager and Development Officers workload to be redefined with a greater emphasis on working with the Clubs.**
- **Age Group Rugby (Reebok) for age groups - U16, U18 and U20**

- **Re-establishing the senior North Wales team with meaningful fixtures, status and resources which in time will develop to become the semi-professional team playing in the Premiership**

11.2 Current Situation and Structure

The current structure of the game in this region is disjointed and ineffective in developing the game at player, club and representative level. Currently the region is a part of the Scarlets region which makes it difficult to access the Professional, Semi-Professional, High Performance and Academy setups in Wales.

- **Regional Community Rugby Manager**

One full-time officer funded by the WRU as other areas of Wales. The role of this post is to manage the processes which support an increase in participation and continuous improvement in the standards of club and coach development.

- **Development Officers**

6.5 full-time officers aligned to the Local Authorities including Ynys Mon, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham and North Powys. These posts are funded 50% by the WRU and 50% by the Local Authorities. This is consistent with the rest of Wales and their mission is to increase participation and improve standards. Participation levels in the region and indeed playing records up to the ages of 13 or 14 compare favourably with the rest of Wales.

- **Volunteers**

A number of dedicated volunteers manage and coach various representative teams throughout North Wales. There is a vibrant Junior section from U12 to U16 who play in District competitions and regularly outperform teams from opposing Districts, while the Under 18 team play most of their matches in England with performance levels being encouraging.

- **Player Development**

As part of the Scarlets region our better under 16s and under 18s talent filter into the Scarlets development system. Time has proven that travelling up to 300/400 miles (or relocating) regularly to South Wales to train and play in order to be part of the Scarlets high performance is difficult to sustain. However, even with limited resources and geographical drawbacks, the player development scheme in place has had some positive results including:

- Four boys in the national structure at U16 and U18
- One selected for the successful Urdd sevens team in Dubai
- Ten boys selected for the Welsh Colleges squad
- Six selected for the Crawshays team

Undoubtedly there is talent in the region, and with improved facilities, resources, expertise and a local pathway many more could be developed and truly reach the high performance player category.

11.3 Clubs

Hitherto North Wales clubs have been part of the National Leagues with:-

- Llangefni in Division 3 West and Ruthin in Division 3 South East

- Division 4 North:

Bala	Caernarfon	Colwyn Bay
Denbigh	Llandudno	Mold
Nant Conwy	Newtown	Pwllheli
Wrexham		

- Division 5 North:

Bangor	Bro Ffestiniog	Bethesda
Dolgellau	Llanidloes	Machynlleth
Rhayader	Rhyl	Rhosllanerchrugog
Welshpool		

- There are further leagues in Gwynedd, Clwyd and Mid Wales involving a combination of district clubs, 2nd teams and some 3rd teams.

At present the winners of division 4 North have the opportunity to enter a play off to gain promotion into division 3, however current WRU policy is to create a regionalised league structure (below the premiership) split into East, West and North. This forms the Union's concept of the "Community Game".

The geography of North Wales clubs and indeed past opt outs of National Leagues, makes it difficult to argue that any club could sustain the travelling for an extended period on a purely amateur basis. However, it is acknowledged that the regionalisation of the leagues would initially be to the detriment of the standard of club rugby and that the top clubs would require additional challenges in addition to the North Wales league.

11.4 Representative Rugby

As has been stated representative sides are run from U12 to U18 mainly by volunteers, with the assistance of the Development Officers under the guidance of the Regional Community Rugby Manager. What becomes apparent is that the North Wales regional

teams are competitive up to U14 age group but then the gap grows between teams in the South and teams in North Wales. It is our view that this is due to the support structures in South Wales which are not available in North Wales

The senior North Wales team as stated has a strong tradition of playing touring teams and competing in the Counties Cup. However, over recent years due to the demise of the competition the team has not played. It is imperative that the team is resurrected with a meaningful fixture list and adopting a professional approach.

The recently formed amateur U25 team has competed in the inaugural national competition will again take part in season 2006-2007.

12.0 ACTION PLAN

12.1 North Wales Initiatives 2007-2008 Season

- Restructure leagues on a regional basis of North Wales, composing of Divisions 1 and 2 North with promotion and relegation, below which will be 3 North East, 3 North West and 3 Mid Wales leagues. (See Leagues Appendix no 3) The composition of these leagues will be reviewed regularly by the Board, but it is vitally important to have a strong and vibrant 1st and 2nd division if standards are to improve.
- Cross border competition for the top clubs in Division 1, playing RFU clubs in the North West of England and Midlands, the exact nature is yet to be determined but discussions are under way.
- Inter Welsh League Champions competition for Division 1 North winners.
- Senior North Wales side to be resurrected with the status and backing it deserves, its crucial to appoint coaches, managers and administrators of the highest quality to carry out this work. Re-establishing the identity of the region is essential with resources immediately applied to the task.
- The North Wales U25 amateur team should build upon the progress made in its first year. This is a fundamental step in the development of players and providing a higher level of competition.

12.2 Initiatives requiring action by WRU and other bodies.

2006 - 2007

- To establish an academy of elite training centres across North Wales. Each centre will cater for 11 -18 year old elite rugby players within their locality by meeting once a week to receive expert tuition and advice from paid skills and conditioning coaches. The service, staff and evaluation process will be co-

ordinated by a full time Player Development Co-ordinator (PDC). Details of this scheme can be seen in Appendix 5 and work is in progress to deliver this initiative through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Coleg Menai from June 2006, details can also be seen in Appendix 5. To review the Under 14 age group (as at 2005-2006) for entry into Age Grade Rugby in 2007-2008.

2007 - 2008

- The PDC initiative is the first step towards gaining High Performance Status. The success of this initiative is key to further initiatives and investment. There will be a tripartite working relationship between Coleg Menai, Scarlets and the WRU to ensure that the programme achieves the required standards.
- The further appointment of full time skills and conditioning coaches.

2008 - 2009

- Review sustainability of U16 and U18 entry into Age Grade Rugby competition, and the appointment of full time skills and conditioning coaches.

2009 - 2010

- Monitoring of the development and performances at U16 and U18 teams before entry into the National Reebok U20.

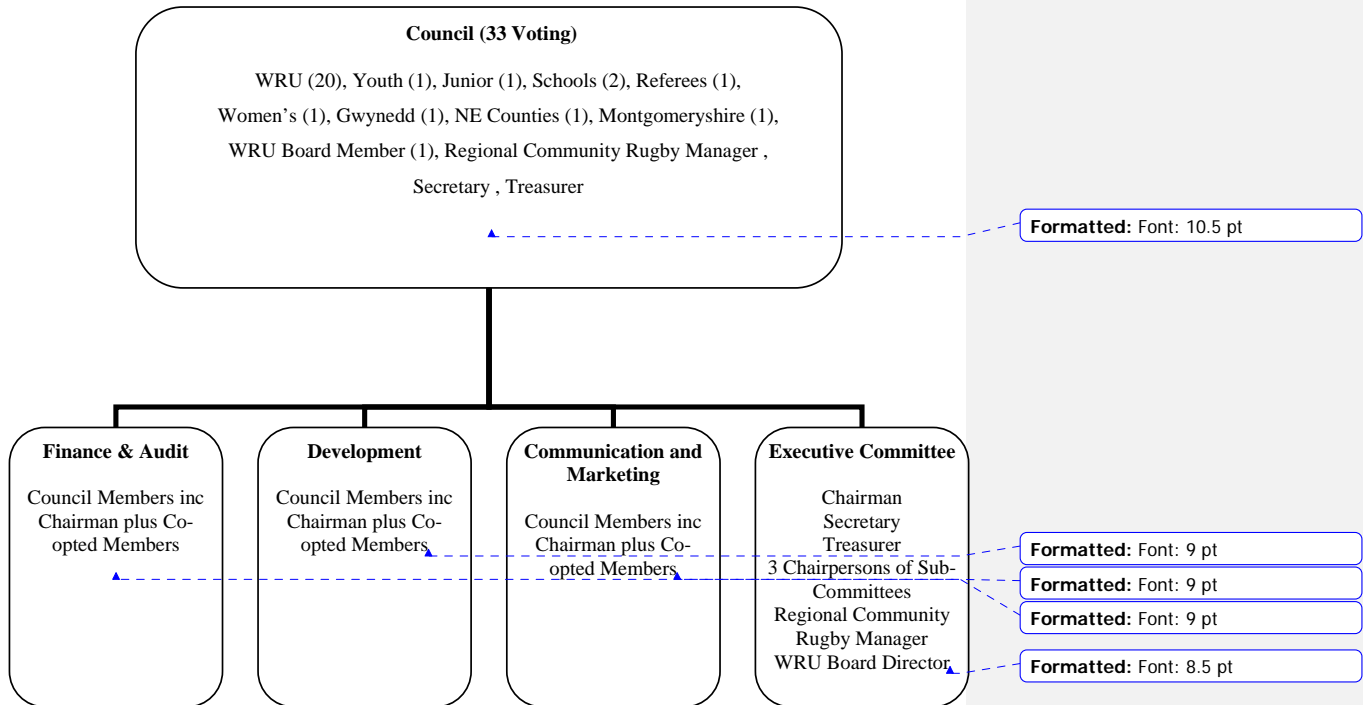
2010 - 2011

- A North Wales semi-professional team playing in the Premiership. This is a realistic goal and work towards setting up the organisation, administration, coaches, finances and facilities should start in 2006/2007. The creation of a North Wales identity is critical in creating role models and to encourage participation and setting of standards.

13.0 APPENDICES

13.1 Rugby Board Structure

North Wales Rugby Union Council



13.2 Draft Constitution of The Council

- **Name**

The Council shall be called North Wales Rugby Union Council (hereinafter called the Council)

- **Affiliation**

The Council will be set up with the approval of the Board of Directors of the Welsh Rugby Union Limited and will conform with the constitution and by laws, regulations and resolutions of the Welsh Rugby Union Limited and any directions made by the Board.

13.3 Aims and Objectives of the Council

To assist the Board in the implementation of its objective to

- Promote
- Foster
- Encourage
- Improve

Rugby Union in North Wales

These aims and objectives are consistent with the furthering of equal opportunities for all groups in rugby

13.4 Membership

- The Council will consist of the officers and the members
- Membership of the Council will comprise a WRU Board Director and representatives of any North Wales Rugby Union organisation provided such organisation:
 - ✓ is in the boundaries of North Wales as defined by the Welsh Rugby Union Limited
 - ✓ conforms with the constitution and by laws, regulations and resolutions of the Welsh Rugby Union Limited
 - ✓ conforms with the constitution and by laws, regulations and resolutions of the Council
 - ✓ continues to play or be engaged in the administration of Rugby Union

- In accepting membership, a person agrees to abide by the constitution of the Council.
- Membership of the Council will not be restricted on the grounds of sex, race or of political, religious or other opinions. To any person or organisation who meets this criteria and is prepared to accept and support the objectives of the Council
- In addition to the officers and the members, the Group Chief Executive of the WRU or his nominee shall be entitled to attend any meeting of the Council or its sub-committees.

13.5 Membership Fees

- Membership fees shall be stipulated by the Council
- Annual membership fees fall due on the 1st of January each year and are payable to the Council Treasurer
- The Council may decide upon other charges or subscriptions at its discretion

13.6 Officers

- The officers of the Council shall be Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer
- These officers shall hold office for a two year term of Office and may be re-elected after expiration of their term.

13.7 Committees

- The Council may delegate any of its powers to any sub-committee
- The Council shall act for the members. Liabilities incurred shall not fall upon the membership (provided they act in accordance with the constitution, in honesty and good faith).

13.7.1 The Executive Committee shall comprise:

- Chair (The Chair of the Executive Committee will also be Chair of the Council but not Chair of any other Sub committees)
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Chairs of Sub-Committees
- Regional Community Rugby Manager

- WRU Board Director

13.7.2 Any other Sub-Committees sanctioned by the Council will comprise of

- Chair
- Up to 8 Council members all elected by the Council
- Any co-opted members as the Sub-committees deem necessary. Co-opted members shall not be entitled to vote.

13.8 Meetings of the Council shall be convened by the Secretary and the Council shall meet quarterly or as deemed necessary. The Sub-committees will meet as deemed necessary.

- **The quorum necessary for the transaction of business on:**
 - Council meetings shall be 16 members present and eligible to vote
 - Sub-committee meetings shall be 4 members present and eligible to vote
- Every question on meetings of both Council and in Sub-committee meetings shall be determined by a majority of the vote of members present and voting, every member having one vote. In the event of an equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting shall have a casting vote.
- The interpretation of the Council constitution shall be vested in the Council, who shall decide all questions relating to the Council, save those specified in, or involving an amendment to the constitution.
- The Council shall be responsible for considering any application for membership and shall decide if this application should be accepted. This decision shall be in accordance with a non-discriminatory policy specified in 2.2.

13.9 Finance

- All monies raised by, or on behalf of, the Council shall be applied to further the objects of the Council and for no other purpose.
- The Treasurer is responsible for the finances of the Council.
- The financial year of the Council ends on 31 May
- Proper accounts shall be kept of all sums of money received and paid out by the Council.

- An audited statement of accounts shall be kept of all sums of money received and paid out by the Council and a copy of which must be submitted to the WRU within 3 months of the end of the financial year.
- The funds of the Council shall be lodged at a bank or building society in an account in the name of the Council and all cheques, drafts etc. drawn on these accounts shall be signed by any two of the following officers
 - Treasurer
 - Chair
 - Chair of Finance and Audit Committee

13.10 Annual General Meeting and Other Meetings

- The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Council shall be held in every year during the month of June when the annual report of the Council and Sub-committees and the audited statements of accounts up to the end of the financial year shall be presented.
- Not less than 21 days notice of the date of the AGM shall be given to all members by the Secretary.
- The AGM shall elect such officers of the Council as it may from time to time determine.
- Nominations for officers shall be received by the Secretary not less than 14 days prior to the AGM.

Nominations shall require 2 signatures from member organisations. No nominations shall be accepted from the floor of the meeting. Nominations can only be accepted from persons eligible to vote in the AGM.

- The dates of Council meetings and Sub-committee meetings shall be determined at the previous meeting. In addition the Chair may call a meeting when s/he considers it necessary or desirable, or upon the written request of at least 10 members of the Council.
- All members shall be entitled to attend and vote at general meetings of the Council and shall have equal voting rights.
- The quorum for general meetings shall be 16 members present and eligible to vote.
- An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) shall be called by an application in writing to the Secretary signed by no less than 10 members. The Council shall have the power to call an EGM by decision of a simple majority of its members. The Board shall have the power to direct the Council to call an EGM.

13.11 Voting Procedures

- Each member shall be entitled to one vote
- A motion shall be carried by a simple majority of those present and voting, except when the motion is a constitutional amendment which shall require a two-thirds majority (see 2.13).
- The Chair shall have a casting vote in addition to a deliberative vote.

13.12 Minutes

The Board shall be entitled to receive such minutes of the Council and of any general meeting as it considers appropriate.

13.13 Property and Staff

- Responsibility for all property owned or leased by the Council, and for the employment of paid staff and volunteers rests with the Council.

13.14 Discipline and Appeals

- The Council may refer any complaint action they deem necessary against any member to the WRU but subject to the overriding authority of the Board retain the authority to terminate or suspend the membership of any member guilty of conduct deemed to be to the detriment of the Council.
- The appeal should normally be considered within 14 days of it being received by the Secretary.
- There shall be the right of appeal to the Regulatory Committee of the WRU or an Appeal Committee set up by the Board, against any decision made by an officer of the Council.

13.15 Dissolution Procedures

- In the event of the Council ceasing to exist, and following the discharge of all debts and liabilities, any assets at the time of dissolution shall become the property of the WRU. No member shall obtain any asset from the Council.
- The Council may be wound up on a resolution of the members, passed by a two-thirds majority at a special meeting convened for that purpose upon the request of 10 members of the Council. At least 21 days notice of the meeting shall have been sent to all members of the Council.

- In the event of the passing of the resolution to wind up the Council, the Board shall appoint a representative committee which shall be empowered to distribute the assets, including cash and investments in hand, to the WRU.
- The Board may dissolve the Council at any time by notice in writing to the Secretary.

13.16 Review of the Constitution

- This constitution shall be reviewed on an annual basis.
- Amendments to the constitution shall only be agreed at AGMs with the approval of the Board.
- Additions to, or alterations of, the constitution shall be submitted to the Secretary not less than 21 days before the date of the AGM, or with a request for a special meeting of Council members. No resolution involving an amendment to the constitution may be proposed or amended from the floor of a meeting.
- In the event of a proposal for amending the constitution being submitted, the Secretary shall inform the membership and the Board of the proposed motion not less than 14 days before the AGM.
- Any amendments to the proposed motion duly proposed and seconded in like manner shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary not later than 14 days before the said meeting.
- Any alterations to the constitution shall require a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.

In the event of any question or matter arising which is not provided in the constitution, such question or matter shall be dealt with by the Council, whose decision shall be final unless overruled by the Board within 28 days of the decision by the Council.

13.17 Draft League Structure

Season 2007-2008

North Wales Rep. XV's

Senior
Under 25
Under20
Under18
Under16

Division 1 N	Division 2 N	Division 3 W	Division 3 E
Bala	Bangor	Benllech	Abergele
Caernarfon	Bethesda	Bethesda 2XV	Bala 2XV
Colwyn Bay	Bro Ffestiniog	Caernarfon 2XV	Cobra
Dinbych	Dolgellau	Dolgellau 2XV	Colwyn Bay 2XV
Llangefni	Llanidloes	Harlech	Corwen
Llandudno	Machynlleth	Holyhead	Dinbych 2 XV
Mold	Rhayader	Llandudno 2XV	Flint
Nant Conwy	Rhos	Llangefni 2XV	Llangollen
Newtown	Rhyl	Menai Bridge	Mold 2XV
Pwllheli	Welshpool	Nant Conwy 2XV	Rhyl 2 XV
Ruthin		Porthmadog	Ruthin2XV
Wrexham		Pwllheli 2XV	Shotton
		UCW Bangor	Wrexham 2XV

13.18 Partnership between the Scarlets and North Wales

Summary

1. North Wales to be a development region allied to the Scarlets Region at High Performance Level.
2. Llanelli Scarlets to be the pathway to professional rugby for players from North Wales. This will cease if/when North Wales obtain full regional status with a professional team competing in Celtic and European Competitions.
3. Scarlets to contribute to the work and management of the Player Development co-ordinator and Scarlets Centres of Excellence in North Wales
4. Scarlets Community and Marketing Department to continue its contribution to joint ventures in North Wales e.g. Cashback Initiative, Scarlets Schools Cup etc.

13.19 Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP)

The KTP scheme aims to facilitate links between FE/HE colleges and business through the transfer of knowledge to businesses, and support for recent graduates to gain training and experience in industry.

- **A Brief Description**

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships is a UK wide, cross government, activity that helps businesses to improve their competitiveness and productivity through the better use of knowledge, technology and skills that reside within the 'knowledge base'. In this context, the knowledge base comprises of higher education institutions, further education institutions (teaching at least the equivalent of National Vocational Qualification Level 4) in appropriate subjects, independent research and technology organisations and public sector research institutions or establishments in the UK.

- **The Purpose of the Partnerships**

There are three main agendas:

- to facilitate the transfer of technology and the spread of technical and business skills
- to stimulate and enhance business-relevant research and training undertaken by the knowledge base
- to provide company-based training for Associates to enhance their business and specialist skills.

How a KTP can benefit North Wales Rugby Union

The proposal is to create a network of elite training centres across North Wales. Each centre will cater for 11-18 year old elite rugby players within their locality by meeting once a week to receive expert tuition and advice from a paid Skills Coach and Conditioning Coach. The service, staff and evaluation process will be co-ordinated by a Player Development Co-ordinator.

In short, the Player Development Co-ordinator will:

1. Devise and implement effective Management processes for the delivery of the North Wales Player Development Programme.
2. Line manage the Skills and Conditioning Coaches at the Elite Player Development Centres.
3. Manage the Elite Player Development Budget.
4. Monitor and evaluate player progress.
5. Identify and develop a group of potential elite/technical coaches.

6. Develop an understanding of the professional game through regular training visits to Llanelli Scarlets.
7. Transfer knowledge and experience gained through exposure to the professional environment to the elite player development programme coaches.
8. Identify, monitor and recommend potential Scarlets to the Scarlets Recruitment Manager.
9. Work closely with Scarlets Regional High Performance Manager and Academy Manager.
10. Liaise with the Regional Community Rugby Manager on the selection of potential elite coaches.
11. Provide periodic reports to the KTP Local Management Committee.
12. Manage the North Wales Under 17 and Under 18 Squads. This will include the recruitment and development of high performance coaches.

Initial research suggests that this role and in particular the creation of management systems to deliver and monitor the programme answers the criteria required for a Department of Trade and Industry Knowledge Transfer Partnership.

In simple terms, the College (Coleg Menai) would provide the management expertise to manage the programme effectively – this would be the ‘Knowledge Transferred’.

Finance:

- 1) The WRU contribution will be £16000 pa towards the scheme. The scheme will last 2 years.
- 2) The Department of Trade and Industry will invest £24000 in the scheme.
- 3) 4hrs per week (1hr Skills/1hr Conditioning for 11-13 yr old, 14-16 yr old and 16-18 yr old) x 48 weeks x 5 centres x £10 per hour= £14400 to be covered by National Community Rugby Manager.