

Regional Committee – 9th Meeting

Minutes of Meeting

2pm, Friday 12th December 2025

Building 20, Global Centre of Rail Excellence Site

Attendees:

- **Kirsty Williams – Chair of GCRE Regional Committee**
- **Simon Jones - Chief Executive, GCRE Ltd**
- **Andrew Johnson – Head of Strategic Communications, GCRE Ltd**
- **Cllr Steve Hunt – Leader, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council**
- **Cllr David Thomas – Leader’s representative, Powys County Council**
- **Diane Reynolds - Director of Economy & Community Services, Powys County Council**
- **Ceri Morris (in place of Nicola Pearce) - Head of Planning and Public Protection, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council**

Item 1: Welcome and Minutes

- 1.1 The Chair opened the session and welcomed attendees. This was the ninth GCRE Regional Committee meeting. Apologies had been received from Debra Williams, Catrin Lloyd, Jeremy Miles MS, James Evans MS and David Chadwick MP.

- 1.2 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed without amendment. The Chair indicated that the minutes of the committee would be published on the GCRE website as set out in the Terms of Reference.

Item 2 – GCRE Oral Update

- 2.1 GCRE Chief Executive Simon Jones gave an oral update to members. He highlighted progress in work to secure an Energy and Data Centre Partner (EDCP) for the site. The market had indicated positive interest, with the site highlighted as having positive characteristics for hosting renewable energy and data centre infrastructure. However, it was clear that more time would be needed to develop proposals, so GCRE was intending to extend the competition process into next year. This would mean a partner being appointed later in 2026.
- 2.2 Simon gave members an update on progress with the rail project. While, to date, no investment partner has yet been able to commit the private funding needed, feedback from the market has been that the GCRE project is viable and can be progressed. A market review over the summer made it clear that to secure investment the company needs to provide greater certainty about the final construction costs and confidence about investment viability in the early years commercial operation of the business.
- 2.3 Simon said that Welsh Government had indicated that it was prepared to explore how the GCRE project can be further de-risked by virtue of additional public funding or the provision of a guarantee in order to secure the private capital funding necessary to take the project forward, with any decision to move forward on those options one that would have to be taken by the next Welsh Government.
- 2.4 Cllr Thomas asked about the recent Wales Investment Summit (WIS) and GCRE's role at the event. Simon said that GCRE had been a project showcase at WIS and that positive leads were being followed up.
- 2.5 Cllr Hunt said that partners would continue to advocate strongly for the project. Simon said that financing and de-risking options could involve a portfolio of local authorities and CJsCs alongside Welsh Government and these discussion were continuing.
- 2.6 The Chair highlighted the need for constructive dialogue with the community about progress on the rail project and the EDCP process. Simon said that plans for a new planning application would provide an effective vehicle for such an approach.

2.7 Members noted the oral update.

Item 4: Future Regional Committee Structure

3.1 Andrew Johnson introduced the paper. In light of next year's Senedd elections and the new constituency boundaries coming into place, members would need to consider how representation from the future, enlarged Senedd is constituted on the committee.

3.2 He said that GCRE's board has been very clear, the Regional Committee is and will continue to be a critical element of GCRE's local engagement and will be important to its success in the longer term as it moves from construction through to operation. GCRE wants to ensure that there continues to be a balanced make-up of the group but recognises the pressures on member's time.

3.3 Members discussed the merits of various options and decided to invite all elected members of the new Brycheiniog Tawe Nedd Senedd constituency to attend the group after May. Members also agreed to take an approach where non-members with an interest in the future development of GCRE could be invited to future meetings on an ad-hoc basis.

Item 4: Any Other Business

4.1 No other business was proposed.

4.2 The Chair indicated that the next meeting of the group would be on Friday 13th March 2026.

4.3 The Chair brought the meeting to a close.