South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

Cyd-bwyllgor corfforaethol De-Dwyrain Cymru

ITEM 3

South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

09.30am – 11.30am on 3 June 2024 at the Council Chamber, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Penallta House, and via Microsoft Teams

Minutes

MEMBERS		
Name	**Position**	**Authority**
Cllr Dimitri Batrouni	Council Leader	Newport City Council
Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby (Chair)	Council Leader	Monmouthshire County Council
Cllr Lis Burnett	Council Leader	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Cllr Anthony Hunt (Deputy Chair)	Council Leader	Torfaen County Borough Council
Cllr Andrew Morgan	Council Leader	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Cllr Sean Morgan	Council Leader	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Cllr John Spanswick	Council Leader	Bridgend County Borough Council
Mr Julian Stedman	Chair, Planning Committee	Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority
Cllr Huw Thomas (Deputy Chair)	Council Leader	Cardiff City Council
Cllr Geraint Thomas	Council Leader	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Cllr Stephen Thomas	Council Leader	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Officers		
Kellie Beirne	Chief Executive	Corporate Joint Committee
Rhys Thomas	Deputy Chief Executive	Corporate Joint Committee
Jayne La Grua	Monitoring Officer	Corporate Joint Committee
Hrjinder Singh	S151 Officer	Corporate Joint Committee
Colan Mehaffey	Head of Data and Innovation	Corporate Joint Committee
Jack Latkovic	Democratic Services Manager	Corporate Joint Committee
Julie Rees	Audit Manager	Audit Wales

1. Welcome and Apologies

Kellie Beirne welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies made.

2. Election of Chairperson of the Committee for 2024 – 2025

On a motion from Cllr Anthony Hunt, seconded by Cllr Sean Morgan, the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee unanimously **ELECTED** Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby as the Chairperson for the municipal year 2024- 2025.

Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby extended thanks to Cllr Hunt for his hard work and leadership during the transition period to the Corporate Joint Committee and praised his grace and inclusiveness in navigating the difficulties, which has been greatly appreciated by all.

3. Election of Deputy Chairperson of the Committee for 2024 – 2025

On a motion from Cllr Anthony Hunt, seconded by Cllr Sean Morgan, the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee unanimously **ELECTED** Cllr Huw Thomas and Cllr Anthony Hunt as Deputy Chairpersons for the municipal year 2024- 2025.

4. Declarations of Interests

There were none.

5. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the meetings of Regional Cabinet and the Corporate Joint Committee from 18 March 2024, and the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Joint Committee from 7 May 2024 as true and accurate records.

6. Appointment of Members of the CJC, Nomination of Substitute Members and Allocation of Portfolios

Jayne La Grua introduced the report which confirmed the Membership of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) for the 2024/45 municipal year, together with each Authority's nominated Substitute Member, and which also sought approval of each Council Member's portfolio of lead responsibility.

It was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee:

1) Noted the Committee's Membership for the 2024/25 municipal year;

2) Noted each Authority's nominated Substitute Member; and

3) Approved the Member Portfolios for the municipal year.

It was also **RESOLVED** that the allocation of portfolio responsibility for the 2024/25 municipal year be as follows:

a) Governance, Resources & Assurance - **Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby**

b) Research, Innovation & Investment – **Cllr Anthony Hunt**

c) Industrial Policy, Internationalisation & Core Cities – **Cllr Huw Thomas**

d) Infrastructure and Major Projects Delivery – **Cllr Andrew Morgan**

e) Climate Response – **Cllr Sean Morgan**

f) Spatial and Transport Policy – **Cllr Lis Burnett**

g) Northern Valleys (Co-Portfolio leads) - **Cllr Stephen Thomas and Cllr Geraint Thomas**

h) Building Capability – Data and Skills - **Cllr Dimitri Batrouni**

i) Economic Inclusion – **Cllr John Spanswick**

7. Establishment of, and Appointments to, Sub-Committees and Advisory Boards for 2024-25

Jayne La Grua presented a report on the establishment of Sub-Committees and Advisory Boards for the 2024-25 municipal year. She outlined the composition and terms of reference for each Sub-Committee:

a) Appointments Sub-committee (sits on an ad hoc basis).
b) Governance and Audit Sub-committee.
c) Regional Transport Sub-committee.
d) Standards Sub-committee.
e) Strategic Development Sub-committee.

Jayne La Grua also outlined the establishment of two advisory boards - Investment Board and Regional Growth Board.

Jayne La Grua highlighted a small amendment to the Regional Growth Board's composition, reducing the number of members from 14 to up to 14 and making provision for two CJC members to sit as observers.

Kellie Beirne also suggested that additional items needed to be included in the Chair's brief, in order to reflect the outward role of the Chair. This was proposed to take the form of: Investor relations, international relations, partnerships with national stakeholder bodies and intergovernmental relations.

On a motion from Cllr Andrew Morgan, seconded by Cllr Dimitri Batrouni, it was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee:

1) Approved the establishment of the following sub-committees for the 2024/25 municipal year:

a. Appointments Sub-Committee

b. Governance and Audit Sub-Committee

c. Regional Transport Sub-Committee

d. Standards Sub-Committee

e. Strategic Development Sub-Committee

2) **Approved the establishment of the following advisory boards for the 2024/25 municipal year:**

    a. **Investment Board**

    b. **Regional Growth Board**

3) **Approved the amendment of the composition and quorum of Regional Growth Board.**
4) **Noted the arrangements for a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
5) **Noted and agreed with nominations and appointments to each of the sub-committees and advisory boards established for the 2024-25 municipal year.**
6) **Elected Cllr Andrew Morgan as the Chair and Cllr Lis Burnett as the Deputy Chair of the Regional Transport Sub-Committee for the 2024-25 municipal year.**
7) **Elected Cllr Lis Burnett as the Chair and Cllr Andrew Morgan as the Deputy Chair of the Strategic Development Sub-Committee for the 2024-25 municipal year.**
8) **Authorised the Monitoring Officer to make appointments to any vacancies and report any such appointments to the next meeting of the CJC for information.**

8. Programme of Meetings of the CJC

Jayne La Grua presented a report which invited the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee to approve the programme of ordinary meetings for the 2024/25 municipal year.

It was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee:

1) **Approved the programme of ordinary meetings of the CJC for the 2024-25 municipal year as set out in the report; and**
2) **Approved the provisional programme of ordinary meetings of sub-committees for the 2024-25 municipal year as set out in the report.**

9. Members Remuneration and Allowances 2024-2025

Kellie Beirne presented a report on the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) regarding allowances for the 2024-25 municipal year. She noted that the IRPW had not yet made determinations for Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) due to their early stage of establishment. However, the IRPW had included provisions for cost of care, personal assistance, travel, and subsistence. Kellie Beirne mentioned that this would impact the payment of lay members, but that the Monitoring Officer was in regular contact with the IRPW office to address this issue.

It was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee:

1) **Noted the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) in its Annual Report for 2024;**
2) **Noted the IRPW's Determinations 2024/25;**

3) **Approved the draft Members' Scheme of Remuneration for 2024/25; and**
4) **Delegated authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any necessary amendments to the 2024-2025 Members' Scheme of Remuneration from time to time during the municipal year in order to reflect any in-year determinations issued by the IRPW.**

10. Strategic Development Plan – Update on Delivery Agreement

Kellie Beirne presented an update on the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) delivery agreement. She outlined the process, timeline, and the establishment of a pre-SDP Sub-Committee working group to oversee its preparation. Kellie Beirne emphasised that this working group would help resolve issues related to governance, voting, and representation.

Cllr Huw Thomas stressed the importance of learning from councils' engagement and participation strategies to ensure truly representative consultation across the city region. Colan Mehaffey responded that they were working with partners and considering pan-regional solutions that are pragmatic.

Cllr John Spanswick noted that Bridgend was the only authority with a replacement local development plan and that was why it made sense to have the officer who had helped bring this about, as part of the CCR approach in developing the SDP.

Cllr Lis Burnett emphasised the need for strategic planning to reflect the lived experiences of all communities, the need to avoid introspection, and the importance of the interplay between transport and planning. Cllr Burnett stated that if the transport infrastructure was not in place to deliver the aims and objectives of the spatial development, they would be setting themselves up to fail.

Kellie Beirne added the importance of combining engagement processes to avoid over-consultation, joining up transport, the economic review, and spatial planning. She mentioned using innovative tools like the Democracy Box in Blackwood to access voices that did not feel represented.

Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby highlighted the importance of considering health board plans around the location of doctor surgeries, health clinics, and dentists in relation to spatial development and transport.

On a motion from Cllr Anthony Hunt, seconded by Cllr Sean Morgan, it was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee:

1) **Approved the approach to the development of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP);**
2) **Agreed that the work on the Delivery Agreement (DA) will be reported into the Strategic Development Sub-Committee, which, in its early form, will meet as a working group to oversee the preparation of the DA and seek to make recommendations to South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) on wider governance and representation issues; and**

3) **Authorised CJC officers to prepare the draft DA and undertake consultation with relevant consultation bodies.**

11. 2023/24 Final Out-turn and Unaudited Annual Return

Hrjinder Singh presented the final audited annual return for the CJC's 2023-24 revenue budget. He explained that a nominal budget of £255,662 was set due to technical issues with CJC regulations, with £25,000 allocated for work on the regional transport plan and strategic development plan. The final position showed an underspend of £17,521, which Hrjinder Singh proposed transferring to general reserves.

Hrjinder Singh also presented the annual return for audit, which had been pre-certified by the responsible financial officer (Section 151 officer) and has been completed by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council internal audit section with no amendments resulting from the internal audit report.

On a motion from Cllr Anthony Hunt, seconded by Cllr Sean Morgan, it was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee:

1) **Noted the final out-turn position for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 as set-out in this report and approve that the underspend of £17,521 is transferred to the CJC's General Reserve;**
2) **Approved the CJC's unaudited Annual Return;**
3) **Authorised Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby, as the newly elected Chairperson of the Committee, to sign the Annual Return so it can be submitted to Audit Wales, to commence the 2023/24 audit as set out in the report;**
4) **Noted the statutory deadline for the conclusion of the 2023/24 external audit is 30 November 2024 and that, in the event there are any material changes identified by the external audit, then an updated Annual Return will be brought back to the CJC for review and approval prior to this date.**

12. Appointment of Interim Section 151 Officer

Hrjinder Singh left the meeting for this item.

Kellie Beirne introduced the report by saying that the current Interim Section 151 Officer, Christopher Bradshaw, would step away from his role on 3 June 2024. She expressed gratitude to Chris for guiding the organisation through a transitional period. Liam Hull, the newly appointed Section 151 officer, would join in mid-July and, until then, it was recommended that Hrjinder Singh be appointed as Interim Section 151 Officer for an interim period.

Cllr Anthony Hunt welcomed Hrjinder Singh's appointment and thanked him for stepping up.

On a motion from Cllr Sean Morgan, seconded by Cllr John Spanswick, it was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee:

1) **Noted that Christopher Bradshaw is to step down as Interim Section 151 Officer for the SEWCJC with effect from the 3 June 2024;**
2) **Appointed Hrjinder Singh as the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee's Interim Chief Finance Officer pursuant to Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, with effect from the 3 June 2024 and until such time as the appointed Strategic Director of Resources and permanent Section 151 Officer, Liam Hull, takes up his post, expected to be 15 July 2024.**

13. Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Audit Plan 2023

Julie Rees, from Audit Wales, explained that the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Audit Plan 2023 outlined the audit work, approach, methodology, identified risks, areas of focus, timetable, team, and audit fee for auditing the City Deal's performance accounts for 2022-23.

Julie Rees highlighted the five audit risks identified, with two being significant risks - management override which was standard, and the valuation of financial instruments due to their complex nature. The three areas of focus were new project developments and their accounting treatment, group accounting for two newly consolidated groups (CCR Energy and Innovation Investment Fund), and the accounts preparation process itself, which was flagged as high-risk following issues from the prior year audit.

Julie Rees emphasised that the audit was underway after receiving the accounts in autumn 2023, with significant progress made to date according to the planned timetable. Julie stated her team were meeting regularly with CCR officers to discuss progress and were awaiting a revised full draft of the accounts to bring the audit to a close.

On a motion from Cllr Sean Morgan, seconded by Cllr Anthony Hunt, it was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee note the detailed Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Audit Plan for audit year 2022-23.

NOTE: Julian Stedman did not vote on this item.

14. Exclusion of Press and Public

The South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee **RESOLVED** that the public and press be asked to leave the meeting during discussion of the remaining items of business because exempt information as defined in Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 is likely to be made known.

NOTE: Julian Stedman left the meeting at 10:30am in accordance with the Standing Orders in relation to the delivery of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal.

EXEMPT SESSION

15. Investment and Intervention Framework Report

Cllr John Spanswick and Geraint Thomas declared interests in this item as two of the pipeline investments mentioned in the report were in the geographical areas of their Principal Authorities.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that their respective personal interests would be noted in the minutes, but that they were not prejudicial interests, and that the Members could remain in the meeting and take part in the discussion and voting.

Rhys Thomas introduced report.

On a motion from Cllr Anthony Hunt, seconded by Cllr Huw Thomas, it was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

16. CCR Energy Ltd Loan Notes

Cllr John Spanswick declared an interest in this item as he is on the board of CCR Energy Limited.

The Monitoring Officer noted Cllr Spanswick's interest and Cllr Spanswick did not participate in the discussion or vote on this item.

Rhys Thomas introduced report.

On a motion from Cllr Sean Morgan, seconded by Cllr Huw Thomas, it was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee approved the recommendations in the report.

Meeting end: 11.30am

Date of Next Meeting: 26 July 2024