Cyd-bwyllgor Corfforedig De-Ddwyrain Cymru | South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

Report for:	ACTION
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO

For Consideration By	South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee
Report Title	Economic Well-being Objectives and Statement
Report of	Colan Mehaffey, Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnerships
Contact Details	Colan.mehaffey@cardiffcapitalregion.gov.uk
Date to be Considered	31 March 2025
Implementation Date	Immediate
Affected Council Areas	All
Keywords / Index	Economic Well-being

Reason for this Report

1. To seek comment and approval of an Economic Well-being Statement and Objectives for the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEWCJC), known for the purposes of this report as Cardiff Capital Region (CCR).

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the SEW CJC:

   (1) Approve the proposed Economic Well-being Statement and Objectives.
   (2) Acknowledge the attached Action Plan as a key forward looking document outlining CCR's strategic priorities.

Background

3. CCR's transition to a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) and establishment as a standalone Public Body necessitated the development of new policy positions, in line with enhanced statutory requirements and powers.

4. The initial functions of CCR, as prescribed by the CJC Establishment Regulations, relate to preparation of a Regional Transport Plan, a Strategic Development Plan, and the exercise of Economic Well-being powers.

5. In the case of the Economic Well-being function, CCR has the ability to undertake activities that promote and support economic development within the region.

6. As a public body, CCR has a statutory obligation to establish Well-being Statement and Objectives, which will be key driver for future planning and activity.

7. CCR have developed an Economic Well-being Statement, Objectives, and High-Level Action Plan to support its exercise of the Economic Well-being power. These can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

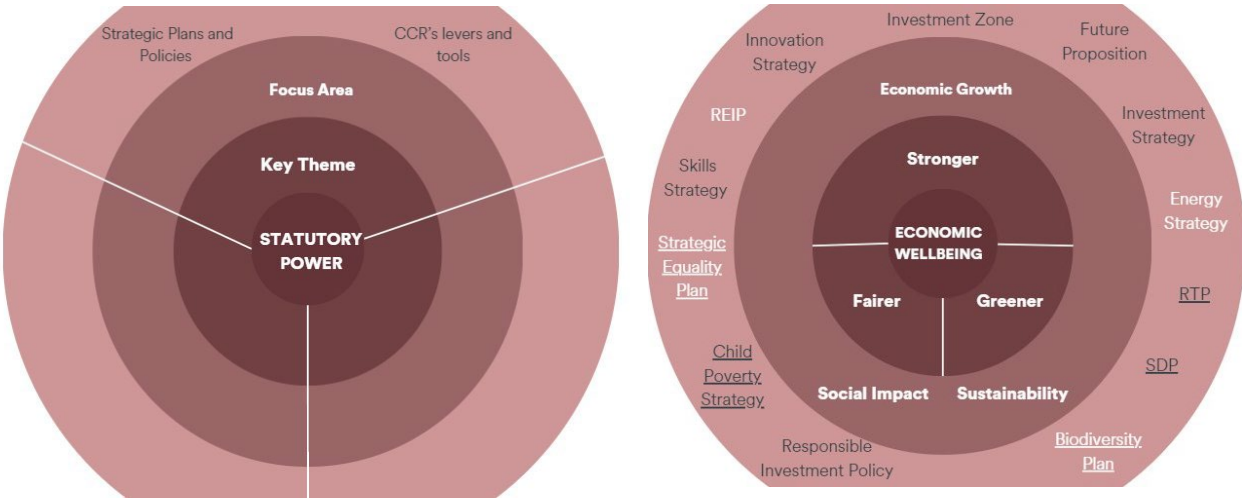
8. CCR's proposed Economic Well-being Statement speaks to the statutory duties placed upon CCR, the strategic ambitions outlined in the Regional Economic and Industrial Plan, the work of our Local Authority Partners, and the wider policy and legislative agenda at Welsh Government and UK Government.

9. Importantly, the Economic Well-being Statement and Objectives defines and builds on the type of inclusive, sustainable economic growth CCR has long been committed to pursuing.

10. The Economic Well-being Statement focuses on three key areas: **Stronger, Fairer, and Greener.** These are reflected in the proposed Economic Well-being Objectives, High-Level Action Plan, and CCR's Policy Framework.

11. The Economic Well-being Statement and Objectives speak to the Policy Framework developed by the Policy and Impact team in 2024. The framework demonstrates how Economic Well-being is central to all other strategies, activities, and duties of CCR. It pulls together the Regional Transport Plan, Strategic Development Plan, and Regional Economic and Industrial Plan; ensuring all duties deployed by CCR are working towards our shared ambition of Economic Well-being.

12. The Policy Framework, included here, sets the high-level vision for CCR as seen here in Figure 1:



Key
White – Plans developed and approved.
Black – Plans currently in development/not yet developed.
Underlined – statutory requirement of a public body.

13. Existing strategic priorities, including those detailed in the above Policy Framework, are pulled out in the attached action plan. Our proposed actions ensure CCR's strategic direction can be realised in a meaningful and tangible way.

Work to Date

14. Prior to the CJC transition, a survey shared with Local Authority officers in Autumn 2023 provided valuable feedback on the proposed role of CCR regarding Economic Well-being. The findings of this survey have been factored into CCR's proposed Statement, Objectives, and Action Plan.

15. A Working Group, led by Kevin Gardiner (Regional Growth Board Chair) and comprising Professor Gill Bristow (Head of the School of Geography and Planning, Cardiff University), formed in early 2024 to better understand and define Economic Well-being as it pertains to CCR with consideration to the fiscal tools and policy levers we can deploy as a new public body.

16. Professor Rob Huggins (Cardiff University) and Professor Piers Thompson (Nottingham Trent University) were commissioned by the Working Group to develop a report analysing the Well-being of the Cardiff Capital Region across a range of indicators. The findings of this report have been presented to the Regional Growth Board and established a baseline for our proposed Economic Well-being metrics at a regional level.

17. CCR's Regional Growth Board have been instrumental in developing the proposed Economic Well-being Statement and Objectives since its formation, providing feedback and input from an array of perspectives, industries, and key stakeholder groups.

18. The cross-disciplinary rigour of the Regional Growth Board and high-value research presented to the Board allowed for insightful debates regarding the concept of Economic Well-being and the role of CCR in realising this duty. The Regional Growth Board provided key insights, allowing CCR to appropriately prioritise and resource elements of the proposed action plan and clearly set its vision for Economic Well-being in the region.

19. The Economic Well-being Statement, Objectives, and Action Plan are recommended by the Regional Growth Board to the Corporate Joint Committee for their approval.

Implementation and Next Steps

20. CCR has developed a Policy Framework placing Economic Well-being at the core of our purpose, allowing us to align strategic plans and policies that act as our key levers and tools. This Policy Framework can be found in Appendix 2 to this report.

21. CCR are in the process of developing of an Economic Well-being Data Dashboard. Please see Appendix 3 for the proposed regional metrics and data points to support the monitoring of our progress against the objectives.

22. Continued engagement with select members of RGB to ensure dashboard fit for purpose.

23. The Dashboard will be updated annually and will include data points at the regional and Local Authority level. This tool will be openly accessible and utilised by CCR decision-makers and officers, LA partners, and the wider public.

24. The Policy and Impact Function will be undertaking public engagement on the proposed Economic Well-being Statement, Objectives, and Action Plan, commencing in April 2025. Purposeful public engagement will be key in improving qualitative data collection, helping to inform future policy and strategy development.

25. As per the legislation, CCR will publish an annual report detailing progress towards the Economic Well-being Objectives.

Reasons for Recommendations

26. The designation of the statutory power empowers CCR to not only do more where its required but become more effective and meaningful in our approach.

27. Setting objectives and a clear statement around Economic Well-being allows CCR to:

    a. Set the operating parameters for the organisation, in the context of Economic Well-being as a statutory power and the wider UK policy context;

    b. Streamline CCR policies, strategies, and plans;

    c. Align other regional actors on CCR's core purpose, economic well-being remit, and responsibilities;

    d. Establish a baseline for regional economic well-being performance that can inform future policy and investment decisions; and,

    e. Support the development of a regional economic well-being observatory.

Financial Implications

28. There are no direct financial implications to the recommendations set out within this report.

Legal Implications

29. Regulation 11 of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations 2021 grants the economic well-being function, set out in Section 76 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, to the CJC.

30. A corporate joint committee which has been granted the economic well-being function may do anything which it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic well-being of its area.

31. The economic well-being function may be exercised in relation to or for the benefit of—

(a) the whole or any part of the corporate joint committee's area;

(b) all or any persons resident or present in its area.

32. The economic well-being function includes power to do anything in relation to, or for the benefit of, any person or area situated outside the corporate joint committee's area, including areas outside Wales, if the corporate joint committee considers that it is likely to promote or improve the economic well-being of its area.

33. The power is subject to any prohibition, restriction or other limitation as may be provided for in regulations.

34. Unlike the requirements for CJCs to produce Regional Transport and Strategic Development Plans, the Economic Well-being Power is a ***permissive*** power, i.e. the CJC "***may*** do anything which it considers is likely to promote or improve the economic well-being of its area".

35. Also, unlike regional transport planning and strategic development planning, where delivery of functions at local level will be dependent on decisions made regionally by CJCs, the economic well-being power is a ***concurrent*** power where both the constituent councils and the CJC have the same rights to exercise the power in their respective areas.

36. Where both the constituent councils and the CJC have concurrent powers, Corporate Joint Committees: Statutory Guidance makes clear that those rights are not diminished by either parties exercising them. There should, however, be clarity on who does what, when, where and how, preventing duplication and promoting synergy between regional and local actions. It will be for the constituent councils to determine what types of decisions, functions and/or activity remains at a local level and what would be best undertaken at a regional level through the CJC.

Well-being of Future Generations

37. The Corporate Joint Committees (Amendment of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) Regulations 2021 bring CJCs within the scope of Parts 2 and 3 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

38. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development, meaning the process of improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action aimed at achieving the well-being goals of:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

and by acting in a way which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

25. In order to act in accordance with the sustainable development principle, when exercising its functions, the Committee must take account of the following things:
    - the importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long term needs;
    - the need to take an integrated approach to achieving the well-being goals;
    - the importance of involving others with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and of ensuring those persons reflect the diversity of the population of the region;
    - how acting in collaboration with others could assist to meet the region's well-being objectives;
    - how deploying resources to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may contribute to meeting the region's well-being objectives.

26. In developing the Recommendations of this report, regard has been had to the well-being duty arising under the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act').

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

27. The Equality Act 2010 (Public Authorities subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty) (Wales) Order 2021 amended Part 2 of Schedule 19 to the Equality Act 2010 to provide that Corporate Joint Committees are subject to the Public Sector Equality duty set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

28. The Equality Act 2010 (Authorities subject to a duty regarding Socio-economic Inequalities) (No. 2) (Wales) Regulations 2021 amended section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 in order to add Corporate Joint Committees to the list of relevant authorities subject to the Socio Economic Duty.

29. The Committee must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act; (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not; and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not.

30. The characteristics protected under the Act are:
    - age;
    - disability;
    - gender reassignment;
    - marriage and civil partnership;
    - pregnancy and maternity;
    - race;
    - religion or belief;
    - sex; and

- sexual orientation.

31. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
    (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
    (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
    (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

32. The socio-economic duty requires public bodies to, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. Officers are of the view that the decisions recommended in this report will have a positive equalities impact.

33. CCR is outwardly committed to advancing the economic development of the Region, through its investments and projects across key portfolio areas and its additional regional planning powers.

Welsh Language Implications

35. The Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015 (Amendment) Regulations 2021 bring Corporate Joint Committees within the scope of the standards specified by the No.1 Regulations.

36. In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, consideration has been given to the impact the recommendations made in this report may have on opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language, whether the proposals treat the Welsh Language more or less favourably than the English Language, and opportunities for increasing the positive effects, or decreasing the negative effects, of the proposals on the Welsh Language.

37. No negative impacts were identified which would prevent approval being sought to implement the recommendations of this report.

Risk Management

38. The operational risks associated with approving the Economic Well-being Statement and Objectives are minimal.

39. It is advised there may be unintentional reputational risks associated with CCR if the Committee do not endorse and support the organisation in implementing the Statement and Objectives, as CCR outwardly asserts its commitment to Economic Well-being.

Links to CCR Priorities

41. This report relates to the following outcome(s) set out in CCR's Regional Economic and Industrial Plan for 2023- 2028:
    - COMPETITIVE - Enable businesses within our priority sectors and public services to achieve higher levels of productivity through innovation-led growth.
    - CONNECTED - Invest in cutting-edge digital and physical infrastructure and grow the green economy through investing in and promoting companies, technologies and community initiatives that are embracing the de-carbonisation agenda.
    - RESILIENT - Maximise 'good growth' by ensuring prosperity is shared and spread across the Region and take direct steps to reduce the economic and social disparities between our places.

Kellie Beirne
Chief Executive, South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

31 March 2025

Appendices
Appendix 1 – Economic Well-being Statement and Objectives
Appendix 2 – CCR Policy Framework
Appendix 3 – Economic Well-being Data Dashboard

Appendix 1 - Economic Well-being Statement, Objectives, and Action Plan

Economic Well-being Statement:

Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) will work in partnership to foster a regional economy that is stronger, fairer, and greener, generating good growth and creating conditions for shared prosperity across our ten local authorities.

Economic Well-being Objectives:

1. CCR will grow the regional economy.
2. CCR will create conditions for shared prosperity.
3. CCR will invest in the region's green future.

Objective 1 – Stronger: CCR will grow the regional economy.

How will CCR do this?

CCR will…

1. Invest in interventions across the region, creating jobs, and boosting productivity, by deploying CCR's City Deal Wider Investment Fund and delivering against our Regional Economic and Industrial Plan.
2. Attract inward investment to the region and leverage private sector capital, by having a strong presence at regional, national, and international investment events, including MIPIM and UK REiiF.
3. Create the conditions for an effective and efficient innovation environment, guided by our Innovation Strategy and focusing on key areas, including Good Innovation, Fail Well, Entrepreneurship, & Intrapreneurship principles.
4. Advocate for the role of Corporate Joint Committees as regional economic growth bodies and leverage further public sector funding for our region.
5. Successfully deliver an Investment Zone for South East Wales, fuelling economic growth and job creation within sectors and technologies of the future.

What will CCR achieve?

CCR will…

1. Foster more jobs and entrepreneurship, increase GVA, and effectively leverage public funds and key assets, such as Higher Education, across the region.
2. Ensure the region is investable and can attract the private sector investment required to deliver the ambition.
3. Facilitate a long-term, sustainable, and reliable regional governance structure that builds on a culture of collaboration.
4. Improve the critical mass of activity, focused on future sectors, and raise R&D potential whilst elevating a major economic centre for the UK, through the delivery of the Investment Zone.

Objective 2 – Fairer: CCR will create conditions for shared prosperity.

How will CCR do this?

CCR will…

1. Develop regional policy positions and levers, ensuring all activity and decision-making is aligned to CCR's Economic Well-being Objectives, Child Poverty Strategy, Strategic Equality Plan, and Responsible Investment Policy, amongst others.
2. Address high rates of economic inactivity within our region by establishing a regional partnership on employment support and utilising the higher education and further education skills consortium developed by CCR.
3. Increase the accessibility of opportunity, work, and travel for those across the region by developing key infrastructure plans and projects alongside our Local Authority partners, including a Regional Transport Plan, Spatial Development Plan, and a focus on housing.
4. Facilitate business engagement within the region, enabling local SMEs to access funding opportunities, network and collaborate in areas of mutual interest, and knowledge share across sectors.
5. Co-ordinate and continue to work alongside Academic Partners and vocational skills providers within the region, leveraging the opportunity these partnerships offer and co-developing approaches to civic missions.

What will CCR Achieve?

CCR will…

1. Target the deployment of funds and the development of a Regional Transport Plan and Spatial Development Plan to help address existing regional disparities and inequalities.
2. Increase investment into Fair Work, ensuring that all jobs created by CCR receive more than the Real Living Wage, and actively seeking above average pay, good working conditions, terms, and hours.
3. Increase access to opportunity and skill creation, fostering improved social mobility across all corners of the region and reducing economic inactivity.
4. Recognise the foundational economy through our investment activity, alongside our priority sectors, thereby helping to spread employment creation widely across the region.

Objective 3 – Greener: CCR will invest in the region's green future.

How will CCR do this?

CCR will…

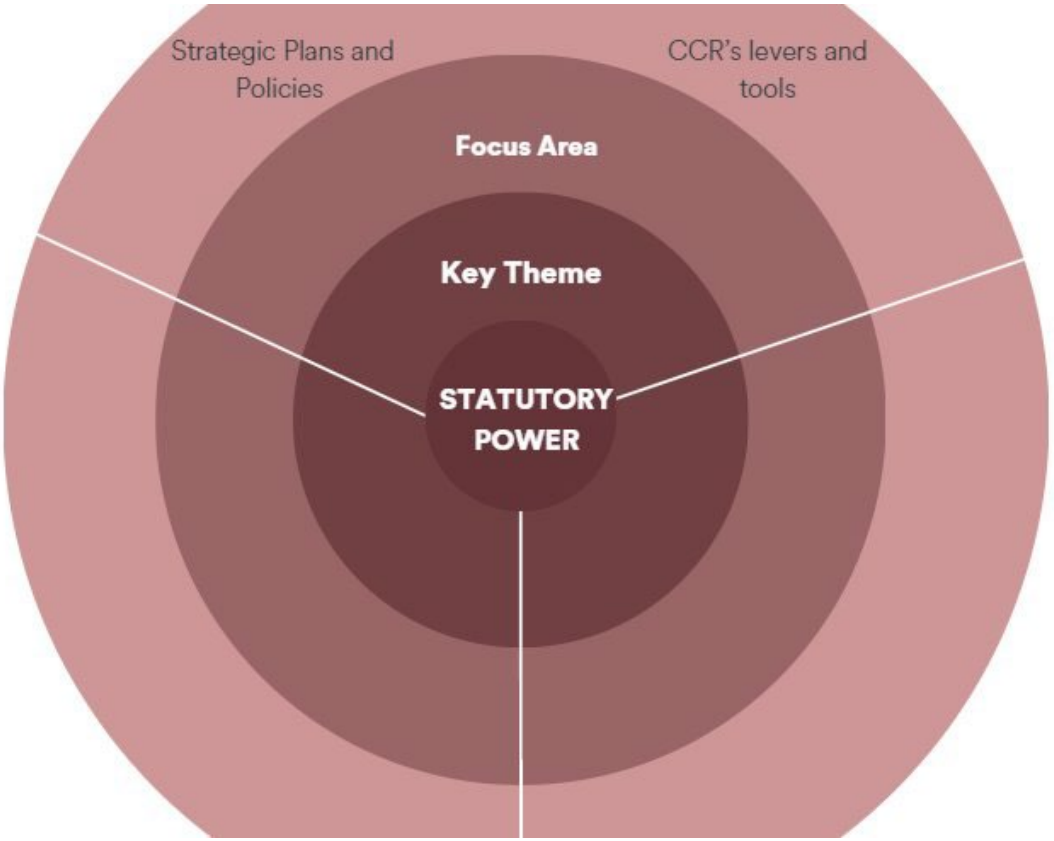
1. Invest directly in the green economy, through the deployment of the Wider Investment Fund, and future funding models, and ensure that all investments and projects are environmentally sustainable.
2. Foster energy security and renewable energy production within our region and seek to partner GB Energy and other national bodies in pursuit of innovative solutions to the energy transition by utilising key assets.
3. Work with the key regional partners to develop a regional Energy Strategy and deliverable action plan.
4. Attract further private sector investment to deliver on green projects, for example those identified as high priority within the Local Area Energy Plans.
5. Collect, monitor, and develop an action plan to reduce organisational carbon emissions and explore CCR's role in Climate Adaptation and Mitigation.

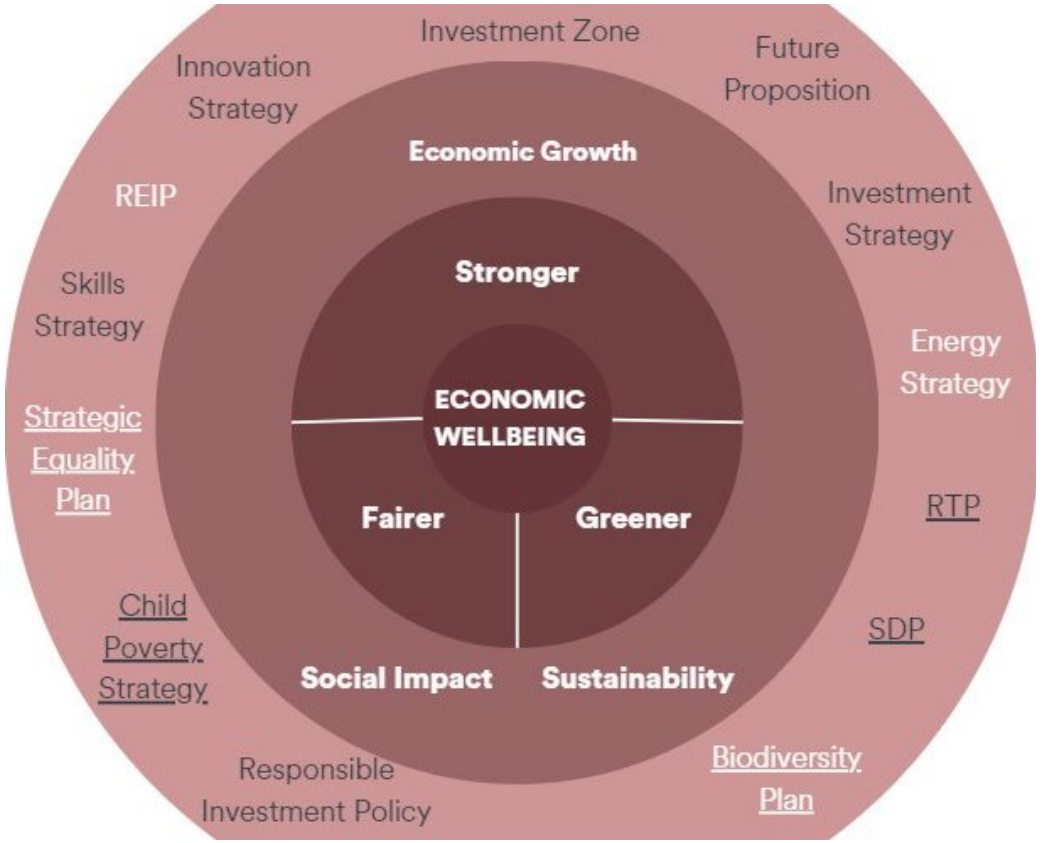
What will CCR Achieve?

CCR will…

1. Mitigate our impact on the region's environment and seek to improve its resilience.
2. Facilitate sustainable energy production and improve energy security.
3. Maximise the opportunities presented by the green economy, utilising existing sectoral strengths.
4. Meet our organisational net zero target and play a key role in supporting the region in realising its wider net zero ambitions.

Appendix 2 – CCR Policy Framework





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Appendix 3 – Proposed Metrics for the Economic Well-being Data Dashboard

Economic Well-Being Statement	Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) will work in partnership to foster a regional economy that is stronger, fairer, and greener, generating good growth and creating conditions for shared prosperity across our ten local authorities.		
Key Themes	**Stronger**	**Fairer**	**Greener**
Objectives	CCR will grow the regional economy	CCR will create conditions for shared prosperity	CCR will invest in the region's green future
Metrics	Employment Rate	Regional demographics	Recycling rates
	Unemployment Rate	Index of Multiple Deprivation	Greenhouse gas emissions (co2 equivalent tons per capita)
	Economic inactivity rate	Worth and life satisfaction	Low carbon energy production
	Income tax out turn	Gender pay gap (place of residency)	Air quality
	Regional jobs, GVA, inward investment	% of people living in households in material deprivation	Number of journeys, distance, and mode of transport
	Average salaries	% of people in income deprivation	Housing stock and efficiency
	UKRI funding outcomes	% of working-age people in employment deprivation	Regional Biodiversity %
	% NEET	% of people in overcrowded households	Index of Multiple Deprivation - Environmental measures
	Level 4 qualification rates	% of adults aged 25-64 with no qualifications	Green economy investment – per WIF deployment to date, what % has been invested in green economy?
	Skills level by sector	Social housing rates	
	Enterprise start-ups, survival, and death rates		
	Human capital – working age population		
	UKCI - competitiveness		
	Entrepreneurship levels		