South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

Cyd-bwyllgor corfforaethol De-Dwyrain Cymru

South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

11.00am on Monday 27 January 2025
via Microsoft Teams

Minutes

Members	Constituent Authority
Councillor Lis Burnett	Leader, Vale of Glamorgan Council
Councillor Brent Carter	Leader, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Councillor Paul Griffiths	Deputy Leader, Monmouthshire County Council
Councillor Anthony Hunt (Deputy Chair)	Leader, Torfaen County Borough Council
Councillor Laura Lacey	Deputy Leader, Newport City Council
Councillor Andrew Morgan	Leader, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Councillor Sean Morgan	Leader, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Councillor John Spanswick	Leader, Bridgend County Borough Council
Mr Julian Stedman	Chair of Planning Committee, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority (for items 1 – 8)
Councillor Huw Thomas (Deputy Chair)	Leader, Cardiff Council
Councillor Stephen Thomas	Leader, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Officers	
Kellie Beirne	Chief Executive
Jayne La Grua	Strategic Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Colan Mehaffey	Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnerships
Liam Hull	Strategic Director of Resources and S151 Officer
Hrjinder Singh	Head of Finance, Risk and Assurance and Deputy S151 Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dimitri Batrouni and the Chair, Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby; Councillor Anthony Hunt took the Chair in her absence.

2. Declarations of Interests

2.1 Cllr John Spanswick declared a personal interest in respect of Item 9 on the agenda that the Planning Committee at Bridgend CBC was due to consider an application in relation to this matter.

3. Minutes

3.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEW CJC) **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting of the CJC held on 16 December 2024 as a true and accurate record.

4. 2025/26 Budget Report

4.1 The Committee received a report which set out the South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee's (CJC) Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2025/26 and sought approval of the amounts payable by the South-East Wales Constituent Councils and the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority in respect of Strategic Planning Budget Contributions, CJC General Budget Contributions and CCRCD Local Authority Partner Contributions for 2025/26.

4.2 The Strategic Director of Resources and S151 Officer introduced the report, noting that it should be read in conjunction with the Annual Business Plan 2025-26, which set out the relevant delivery activity, and made reference to the current staffing challenges and the impact of the autumn budget.

4.3 He noted that there was provision within the Joint-Working Agreement to increase Local Authority Contributions by up to 5% per annum to account for inflationary challenges. Given the financial challenges facing Local Authorities presently, it was recommended that Local Authority Contributions were frozen at their 2024/25 for 2025/26, with proposed contributions. BBNPA contributions were calculated based on an agreed percentage (0.60%) of the Strategic Development Plan Budget. As set out in the Statutory Duties budget, the proposed contribution from BBNPA for the Strategic Development Plan was £2,992, an increase from the 2024/25 contribution of £955. This increase was due to the increased resource required to deliver strategic planning responsibilities.

4.4 The CJC's Capital Programme consisted of the capital component of the CCRCD Wider Investment Fund. The fund totalled £445 million capital over a 10-year period and was a fully funded programme. 89% (£440 million) of the total fund was now committed to 28 projects and programmes in delivery, with around 50% of those commitments relating to investments that would deliver a return in-line with the fund's evergreen principle.

4.5 In conclusion, the Strategic Director of Resources highlighted the importance of financial resilience, and that serious consideration must be given to how the

statutory responsibilities of the CJC could be funded sustainably. He noted that it was approved by CJC in November 2024 for an independent review of the future requirements of the CJC to be undertaken that considered the statutory duties alongside ambitions for the future.

4.6 In response to Councillor Spanswick, it was clarified that the key reason for the increase in supplies and services was the inclusion of MIPIM costs; in 2024/25 MIPIM was funded through contingency, and therefore not included, whereas it had been included for 2025-26, which had been offset by a subsequent reduction in the contingency budget.

4.7 The Chair queried the possibility of joint reserve budgets in partnership with the Local Authorities. It was discussed that this could be a risk; however, the Strategic Director of Resources agreed to raise it at the next quarterly meeting between Section 151 Officers.

4.8 Following the discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to:

1) Approve the 2025/26 Operational Budget of £6,699,318;
2) Approve the utilisation of £1,289,363 Accumulated Interest on Balances as an underwrite contribution, whilst we await certainty on other sources of funding;
3) Approve Local Authority contributions of £1,278,963;
4) Approve Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority (BBNPA) contributions of £2,992;
5) Approve the proposed 2025/26 Wider Investment Fund budget & indicative programme to 2029/30 as set out within the report (table 7);
6) Note that a Medium-Term Financial Plan will be brought to the committee during the early part of 2025/26 following the conclusion of an independent review of future CJC requirements.

5. Annual Business Plan 2025-26

5.1 The Committee received a report which set out the key principles and provisions underpinning the 2025-26 Annual Business Plan for the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee. The Plan represented an integrated view of the programmes and core activities of Cardiff Capital Region, spanning CCR City Deal, Investment Zone and the statutory duties and requirements of the SEWCJC, and outlined the approach for a coherent approach to regional development.

5.2 The Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnerships introduced the report and outlined the background from the CJC Regulations being implemented on 1 April 2021, to Cardiff Capital Region transitioning from a City Deal programme to a Corporate Joint Committee. The Annual Business Plan for 2024-25 was the first year which reflected the vision for one combined model of regional development through the mechanism of the CJC.

5.3 Councillor Sean Morgan noted that he was overall supportive of the Plan, but commented that GDP was not the most suitable measure for growth in this instance, as the Plan considered areas such as communities, jobs and energy, as opposed to monetary value only.

5.4 The Chair noted the importance of the milestones outlined within the Plan and that these needed to be considered in all areas of work for CCR. The Chief Executive Officer agreed and noted that the Committee would receive quarterly update reports, whilst the Sub-Committees would consider the broader mechanisms to implementing these.

5.5 Mr Stedman reflected that further engagement with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority (BBNPA) in this area would be welcomed from CCR, and the Chair agreed and commended the contributions from BBNPA.

5.6 An inaccuracy on the map included within the Plan was noted, the location of Ewenny Road, and it was agreed for this to be amended.

5.7 Following the discussion, the Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the SEWCJC Annual Business Plan for 2025-26 and noting the Annual Budget Report for 2025-26 which was summarised within this report and set out separately on the agenda.

6. Draft Regional Transport Plan

6.1 The Committee received a report which included the draft Regional Transport Plan (RTP), the draft Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDP) and the draft Integrated Well-Being Appraisal (IWBA), which would be issued for consultation in February 2025.

6.2 The Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnership introduced the report, highlighting the requirement to produce a RTP with a five-year lifespan, from 2025-2030, which had been developed in accordance with the 'Guidance to CJCs on RTPs' (2023) issued by Welsh Government. The Case for Change had set out an evidence-based overview of the current transport situation, and the key issues for transport and travel in the region, which had been approved by Regional Transport Sub-Committee (RTSC) and CJC in July 2024. The various components to the report had also been approved in draft form by Regional Transport Sub-Committee (RTSC) and CJC throughout the process.

6.3 The draft RTP had been developed in consultation with CJC's RTSC, regional transport officers, and key internal and external stakeholders, including Welsh Government and Transport for Wales (TfW). Regional Transport Sub-Committee had recommended that the CJC approve the draft RTP and associated components proceed to consultation at the meeting on 17 January 2025.

6.4 Councillor Andrew Morgan, as the Chair of Regional Transport Sub-Committee, thanked the officers for their hard work on the RTP. Councillor Lis Burnett, as the Chair of Strategic Development Committee, also praised the officers for their continued work and support with the Sub-Committees, and for providing regular updates on the development of the Plan.

6.5 In response to queries from Members regarding individual areas within the Local Authorities, the Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnership agreed to discuss these outside of the meeting, namely, the park and rides, and the congestion on the M48.

6.6 Following the discussion, the Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1) Approve the draft RTP, RTDP and IWBA to proceed to public and wider stakeholder consultation;
2) Note the approach to consultation on the RTP.

7. Updated Counter-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy

7.1 The Committee received the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee's updated Counter-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy, which had been adopted by CJC on the 1 April 2024, following the transition from the previous arrangements to a standalone legal entity.

7.2 The Strategic Director of Resources introduced the report, noting that CJC had now completed its 2024/25 risk assessment and had developed its Fraud Risk Action Plan in response to the risks identified. Regular updates on the progress against the Fraud Risk Action Plan would be reported to the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee, as part of its annual work programme, and, where deemed appropriate, the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee would escalate risks to CJC for information and/or further consideration. The updated Strategy and the Fraud Risk Action Plan had been considered by the Governance and Audit Sub-Committee at the meeting on 17 January 2025.

7.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1) Noted that the updated Counter-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy was reviewed by the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee at its meeting of 17 January 2025 and no amendments were proposed;
2) Considered and approved the updated Counter-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy;
3) Noted the development of the Fraud Risk Action Plan progress against the Action Plan would be reported to the Governance and Audit Sub-Committee throughout the year and escalated to the CJC where deemed appropriate.

Councillor Andrew Morgan left the meeting at 1203 hours.

8. Responsible Investment Policy

8.1 The Committee received the enhanced Responsible Investment Policy and a new Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Scorecard. To align with the recent updates to CCR's Investment Framework, the publication of CCR's Strategic Equality Plan and Biodiversity Compliance Plan, the Policy and Impact function had led to the refreshment of CCR's Responsible Investment Policy. To support the implementation of CCR's Responsible Investment Policy and wider statutory requirements, the Policy and Impact function had developed a series of tools, including an ESG Scorecard. The ESG Scorecard would allow CCR Officers and Members to consistently evaluate investment propositions for their ESG credentials and monitor progress against these metrics over the lifetime of an investment or the duration of funding.

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8.2 Councillor John Spanswick thanked the officers for their report and commended the inclusion of the ongoing work to scope the possibility of becoming a Real Living Wage Region on the ESC Scorecard.

8.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1) Approve the Responsible Investment Policy;
2) Acknowledge the ESG Scorecard as a key implementation tool for the Responsible Investment Policy.

Exclusion of Press and Public

The SEW CJC **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: In accordance to the Standing Orders in relation to the delivery of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority was not represented during the Exempt Session.

EXEMPT SESSION

9. Investment and Intervention Framework

Councillor Brent Carter left the meeting at 1223 hours.

9.1 The Chief Executive presented the report.

9.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations in the report.

The meeting concluded at 1229 hours.

Date of Next Meeting: 10 March 2025

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