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

South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

10.00am on Monday 28 July 2025
via Microsoft Teams

Minutes

Members	Constituent Authority
Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby (Chair)	Leader, Monmouthshire County Council
Councillor Dimitri Batrouni	Leader, Newport City Council
Councillor Lis Burnett	Leader, Vale of Glamorgan Council
Councillor Brent Carter	Leader, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Councillor Richard Clark	Deputy Leader, Torfaen County Borough Council
Councillor Sarah Merry	Deputy Leader, Cardiff Council
Councillor James Pritchard	Deputy Leader, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Steve Rayner	Chair of Planning Committee, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority
Councillor John Spanswick	Leader, Bridgend County Borough Council
Councillor Stephen Thomas	Leader, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Councillor Maureen Webber	Deputy Leader, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Officers	
Kellie Beirne	Chief Executive
Liam Hull	Strategic Director of Resources and S151 Officer
Colan Mehaffey	Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnerships
Mark Watkins	Strategic Director Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Mike Brough	Strategic Director, Regional Growth (Confirmed following agenda item 12)
Jill Byron	Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Clare Cameron	Transport and Energy Manager
Emma Wakeham	Local Area Energy Plan Programme Manager

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr Anthony Hunt, Leader, Torfaen County Borough Council, Cllr Huw Thomas, Leader, Cardiff Council and Cllr Sean Morgan, Leader, Caerphilly County Borough Council. Cllr Anthony Hunt was substituted by Cllr Richard Clark, Cllr Huw Thomas was substituted by Cllr Sarah Merry and Cllr Sean Morgan was replaced by Cllr James Pritchard.

2. Declarations of Interests

2.1 Cllr James Pritchard declared a personal interest as a current director of CCR Energy Ltd. Colan Mehaffey also declared a personal interest during item 12 as he has been appointed as an interim Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) Director to the Board of CCR Energy Ltd, a wholly-owned company of the CJC. Cllr John Spanswick declared a personal interest during item 13 on the agenda as he had met Marubeni representatives in relation to the Hybont project.

3. Minutes

3.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) **APPROVED** the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the CJC held on 2 June 2025 as a true and accurate record.

4. 2024/25 CJC Revenue Budget Final Out-turn Report

4.1 The CJC received a report setting out the final position (subject to audit) against the South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee Revenue Budgets for the financial year 2024/25. Liam Hull, presenting the report, explained that the financial year 2024/25 represented the first year where the budgets for CJC Statutory Duties and the CCR City Deal (CCRCD) were brought together as part of the same budget report.

4.2 Mr Hull stated that the previous report to the CJC in March setting out the position at Month 09 had forecast a net projected overspend of £115k. However, the CJC had been advised at that time that a capitalisation exercise would be undertaken in the final quarter to appropriately allocate staffing resources to capital programmes and to alleviate the position. The capitalisation exercise had now been completed and had resulted in a net underspend of £178k, with £29k being attributed to the CJC's Statutory Duties budget and the remaining £149k to the CCRCD budget.

4.3 Members were advised that the £29k underspend for the Statutory Duties budget was broadly in line with what had previously been reported to the CJC and was mainly as a result of reprofiling some Regional Transport Plan costs. It was recommended that the underspend was added to the CJC's Statutory Duties General Reserve which would then stand at £70k.

4.4 In relation to the CCRCD budget, a key area was the change in staffing costs variance following the capitalisation exercise in Q4. This had resulted in an underspend of £258k against the approved Employees budget and this was mainly as a result of the increased level of expertise available, particularly in legal and

finance services, which had presented an opportunity to internally support capital programmes rather than a need to seek external advisers. Overall this had brought reduced external capital spend which had put the budget in a positive position. It was proposed that the underspend of £149k in the CCRCD budget was used to create a a Specific Earmarked Reserve for the costs associated with the Aberthaw Procurement Challenge, including the cost of the independent review currently being undertaken.

4.5 The Chair commented that this was a positive position regarding the 2024/25 CJC Revenue Budget Final Out-turn and she thanked the Finance Team for all their hard work. She had noted that it had been pointed out there were some challenges ahead which the CJC needed to keep a clear eye on. Cllr Spanswick also thanked the Team and welcomed that there were the skills in-house which could benefit the overall budget.

4.6 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC:

1) Noted the final out-turn position against the approved CJC Statutory Duties Revenue Budget for the year ending 31 March 2025 (which is subject to external audit) and approved that the underspend of £29,016 was transferred to the CJC's General Reserve (Statutory Duties); and,
2) Noted the final out-turn position against the approved CCRCD Revenue Budget for the year ending 31 March 2025 (which was subject to external audit) and approved that the underspend of £149,370 was transferred to a Specific Earmarked Reserve created for the purpose set out in the report.

5. 2024/25 Q4 Treasury Management Report

5.1 Liam Hull introduced the report, stating that it set out the CJC's performance across a range of Treasury Management indicators in Quarter 4 of 2024/25. He brought to Members' attention that during the quarter there had been a change in operations with the CJC taking responsibility for its own Treasury Management activity. Previously this had been delivered by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC (RCT). Mr Hull thanked RCT officers for their support during the financial year and particularly prior to and during the transition period. He added that CJC taking on the responsibility for its own Treasury Management activity had gone very smoothly to date.

5.2 Mr Hull confirmed that the CJC had a low risk appetite in this area with surplus funds being invested with the UK Government Debt Management Office. This had however resulted in an interest yield of £830k in Q4 and a cumulative yield for the duration of 2024/25 of just over £3.1m.

5.3 Mr Hull advised that during Q4 there had been short term borrowing undertaken of £1m from a local authority within the region for a period of 7 days to support an unanticipated cashflow pressure. This money was repaid after the 7 day period. At financial year end there were no instances of borrowing. All principles within the Treasury Management Code and the CJC's approved Treasury Management Strategy were fully complied with during the quarter.

5.4 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC:

1) Noted a draft report on the 2024/25 Quarter 4 Treasury Management position was considered by the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee at its meeting of the 27 June 2025, at which there were no amendments proposed; and,
2) Noted the 2024/25 Quarter 4 Treasury Management Report (Appendix 1) and Prudential Indicators (Appendix 2).

6. Annual Business Plan 2024-25 Quarter 4 Performance Report

6.1 Members received a report providing the Quarter 4 reporting position against the 2024/25 Cardiff Capital Region Business Plan, including the CCR City Deal and the transition to the CJC. Liam Hull, presenting the report, stated that overall for 2024-25, CCR had achieved an actual Wider Investment Fund (WIF)spend of £54.3m versus a planned spend of £55m which demonstrated the pipeline development and improved performance and programme management across the organisation. Within Q4 there had been spend of £13.6m, of which £11.65m had been spent on 5 key investment programmes and projects. These included Fibre to Premise OGI: completed work on a multimillion-pound programme to connect Cardiff's city centre economic gateway to its 10 Gigabit-capable high-capacity full fibre network; Innovation and Clusters: the CJC had made a £1m investment in Space Forge, a UK-based aerospace manufacturing company and in the Challenge Fund, the Endoscopy Challenge: A new recyclable endoscope had passed clinical review and would be tested in live settings in early 2025. It had attracted £17m in private investment and won a medical innovation award in Q4 2024/25. Mr Hull also mentioned two notable projects which had been approved by the CJC in Q4, the Metro Central Business Case and the Short Form Business Case at Goat Mill Road (Northern Valleys Initiative) and also the Cluster Development Programme (SPF). The Programme had provided training to 1045 individuals, created 180 new jobs, safeguarded 173 jobs, and provided non-financial support to 607 businesses. However, it had not been possible to continue this programme into 2025/26 due to CCR not receiving an SPF allocation.

6.2 Mr Hull referred to the progress within Q4 of the implementation of the Economic Well-being Statement and Objectives, public engagement to commence on CCR's Strategic Equality Plan and the internal aspect of the organisational restructure being completed. CCR was now in the process of recruiting to some key external roles which brought much needed capacity and expertise. He made the point that in relation to marketing and communications, much of Q4 had particularly focused on the lead up to MIPIM.

6.3 Members were advised by Mr Hull that highlights included that at the end of Q4, a total of £19.1m had been returned through the evergreen approach to investment. A further £10m was expected to be returned per year over the next 2 years. As the WIF balances continued to reduce, 2025/26 was critical in determining how the return funds could best be utilised.

6.4 In response to a question from Cllr Batrouni, Mr Hull explained that a significant reason for the underspend in the Housing Viability Gap Fund programme was reprofiling into future years as some projects were not ready to commence by the end of 2024/25.

6.5 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC approved the Quarter 4 2024-25 performance report (Appendix 1) and authorised the CJC Chief Executive to formally submit the

report, including supporting information, to both UK and Welsh Governments, and other stakeholders as required.

7. Local Area Energy Plans – Update

7.1 The CJC received an update on progress of the development and implementation of the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP). Colan Mehaffey, presenting the report, stated the LAEPs were critical because they collated the evidence and demonstrated the work with stakeholders across a local authority area to identify the most effective route to reach a net zero energy system. The LAEPs looked at the whole energy system across the Domestic, Industrial, Commercial, Agricultural and Public Sector. They provided a data driven, evidence based approach and explored a range of different future local energy scenarios.

7.2 Mr Mehaffey referred to the huge effort by officers at CCR and the local authorities to take the LAEPs forward, funded by the Welsh Government. 9 of the 10 Constituent Councils had endorsed their LAEPs so far with the remaining LAEP due to be endorsed in September 2025. The reports contained local and regional actions with the regional level actions being taken forward by CCR in conjunction with officers across local authority areas. The regional level actions were consistent across the LAEPs.

7.3 Mr Mehaffey spoke about the LAEP Delivery and Annual Progress Review Process. During the LAEP's development a Regional LAEP Steering Group had been put in place and this had continued to meet on a monthly basis. This included officers from CCR and the Constituent Councils, Welsh Government, National Grid and Wales and West Utilities. The steering group had developed an annual progress review framework that set out a structure to develop annual reports for the LAEPs.

7.4 It was also brought to Members' attention that the former CCR Regional Cabinet in 2021 had set aside £500,000 of revenue funding to support investment activity and local authorities to deliver ambitions at scale and pace. It was now proposed and approval sought from the CJC to allocate the remaining balance of the funding across 2025/26 and 2026/27, with the main focus of this being on an Energy Investment Prospectus and 2-3 feasibility studies. The purpose of this was to look at how investment can be encouraged and driven forward.

7.5 Members asked a number of questions and raised a number of points in relation to the report, including the following:

- Cllr Thomas asked how the LAEPs could ensure that a local authority such as Blaenau Gwent did not get left behind from an energy point of view. Mr Mehaffey replied that the LAEP regional actions were designed to deliver for the wider region. An understanding would be developed as to where the potential investment opportunities would be and where the pressures on the energy system were. These solutions would be found at a regional level.
- Cllr Batrouni asked what the Carbon Disclosure Project was and also whether it was proposed to get a workable plan to reach the level of investment to meet the total cost of being carbon free by 2050 (this had been quoted by sources at over £5bn). Emma Wakeham informed those present that the Carbon Disclosure Project was designed to measure the carbon

emissions across the whole region which was undertaken on behalf of all the Constituent Councils. It was the start of the basis for how Net Zero could be reached, not only for energy but also other emissions. CCR was currently in the process of completing a submission for this year and the results were expected in January 2026. These results were able to be assessed as to how to progress for the following year.
Mr Mehaffey made the point that the scale of the challenge regarding being carbon free was huge. There had been an estimate made in terms of the potential depreciation of some technologies as they improve. There were potential opportunities through the Government's Industrial Strategy and Spending Review to drive investment in the region and updates would be provided on this aspect. Ms Wakeham added that the LAEPs worked on current costs and were updated on a 5 year basis. Kellie Beirne also mentioned the potential for the use of 'Green Bonds' for large scale climate initiatives being used more widely in areas such as the Nordic and Baltic countries. It needed to be looked at how the Investment Strategy could drive this investment, including aspects such as 'Green Bonds'.

- Cllr Spanswick sought clarification on the lack of the mention in the report for tidal and hydrogen energy. Mr Mehaffey stated that CCR was seeking a policy position from UK Government on tidal energy before it could be moved forward. Ms Wakeham added that hydrogen had been considered in the current LAEPs but in line with the Welsh Government approach it was only related to industrial and larger transport. It had been a choice for each local authority area whether to include hydrogen as a priority in their LAEP. Tidal was outside of scope currently but would make a big difference to emissions if there was a tidal project.

7.6 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC:

1) Noted the contents of the report and the progress made in the development and implementation of the LAEPs;
2) Endorsed the regional actions as set out in the LAEPs (Appendix 1);
3) Endorsed the Regional Renewable Energy Investment Prospectus (Appendix 2);
4) Endorsed the annual progress review process for the LAEPs; and,
5) Agreed to the remaining proposed spend for the Energy Project Development Fund.

8. Regional Transport Plan

8.1 CJC Members received a report seeking approval for the Regional Transport Plan (RTP), including the Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDP) and Integrated Well-Being Appraisal (IWBA) for submission to the Welsh Government. Colan Mehaffey, presenting the report, set out the background to the CJCs being required to produce a RTP and the journey the current RTP had taken to reach its current stage, including the draft being considered by the CJC in January 2025 and the comprehensive public consultation taking place over a 12 week period from February 2025. He mentioned the central RTP vision which is 'to provide an efficient, affordable and low carbon transport network that enhances quality of life for our people and creates the conditions for shared prosperity across the CCR" and stated that it was recognised in the RTP that transport was a powerful means by which economic wellbeing can be delivered. The vision was underwritten by a series of objectives that are directly aligned to the Wales Transport Strategy (WTS)

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priorities and ambitions and CCR Strategic Goals, to be a Competitive, Connected and Resilient region. There were also thematic policy areas in the RTP which were the guiderails over the next 5 years.

8.2 In respect of the RTDP, Mr Mehaffey explained this was a costed 5 year plan, had been developed in close collaboration with the 10 Constituent Councils, and is a list of schemes and interventions, intended to be progressed to help achieve CCR's vision, the RTP objectives, and the WTS priorities. The RTDP, as per the guidance, only included schemes to be delivered by local authorities but it also had to consider an integrated approach to the transport network. Mr Mehaffey said that the RTDP had been developed in alignment with those schemes in the National Transport Delivery Plan (NTDP) and the other RTPs in Wales, to ensure significant progress towards the WTS vision, priorities and ambitions were realised. The RTDP being submitted was subject to the funding allocations being confirmed by the Welsh Government in autumn 2025.

8.3 Mr Mehaffey emphasised that the recommendation was for the CJC to note that the RTDP being submitted was subject to the funding allocations being considered and confirmed by the Welsh Government in autumn 2025 and that further approvals by the RTSC and the CJC were required for the RTDP to progress. He also thanked officers across the region for their invaluable work in developing the RTP and for the work of Members of the RTSC taking the RTP to its current stage.

8.4 Members asked a number of questions and raised a number of points in relation to the report, including the following:

- The Chair stressed the importance of the CJC receiving full funding for implementing the recommendations as it would be unacceptable to cherry pick initiatives from a RTP. Connectivity was required across the whole region and lobbying was required from local authorities and the CJC collectively.
- In response to a question from Cllr Pritchard about the consultation, Mr Mehaffey responded that there were over 1000 statutory and non statutory bodies CCR had consulted with via officers and e-mail distribution. It would need to be looked at how CCR could continue to engage with all the stakeholders when it came to matters such as prioritisation of schemes on an annual basis.
- Cllr Spanswick requested that greater emphasis was placed on improving the bus network in the franchising plan as individuals were becoming even more disadvantaged, including in Bridgend, as a result of an inadequate bus network. It was also the case that transport needed to be integrated with the boundaries beyond CCR.
- Cllr Webber emphasised the need for the RTP to be deliverable within the timescale, take a collaborative approach and be affordable.
- Mr Mehaffey and Clare Cameron confirmed in response to a question from Cllr Thomas that there would be flexibility in the RTDP to adjust local priorities if new funding or opportunities arose. This would be reviewed on an annual basis over the course of the 5 year plan.
- Cllr Burnett stated the importance of the flexibility in the RTP/RTDP fitting in with the Strategic Development Plan so that development planning was joined up with transport planning.
- Cllr Batrouni commented that the CJC needed to be clear with the Welsh Government that their continued financial support was vital in delivering

transport schemes. He also perceived a shift of young people away from car ownership which created additional onus on transport planners to deliver a public transport system fit for the 21st Century.

8.5 In response to some of the earlier points, Mr Mehaffey observed that through the RTSC and the CJC there was powerful support as a region and this needed to continue whether this was influencing the Bus Services (Wales) Act or the Welsh Government with the Burns Commission schemes.

8.6 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC:

1) Approved the Regional Transport Plan and Integrated Well-Being Appraisal for submission to the Welsh Government; and,
2) Noted that the Regional Transport Delivery Plan being submitted is subject to the funding allocations being considered and confirmed by the Welsh Government in autumn 2025 and noted that further approvals by the Regional Transport Sub-Committee and the CJC are required for the RTDP to progress.

9. Welsh Language Compliance Annual Report

9.1 Mark Watkins presented the report. He confirmed that this was CCR's first Welsh Language Standards report in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 since it was given its final compliance notice in April 2024 (for implementation by 30 October 2024). The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 required that the Welsh Language was given equal status with English. This was a statutory report and demonstrated compliance in relation to service delivery, operational and policy making standards.

9.2 Mr Watkins advised Members that CCR had received a draft Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30 November 2023 requiring compliance to meet the standards set out in the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 relating to the Welsh language, which were determined by the Welsh Government under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. An application to challenge or amend 23 of the Standards was consulted upon with the Commissioner between November 2023 and March 2024. The outcome of this was that 8 of the Standards were unchanged, 9 Standards were varied, 4 exemptions were removed and 2 promotional Standards were removed entirely.

9.3 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC noted and agreed the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2024-25.

10. Outcome of Secondment Opportunity – Strategic Director Regional Growth

10.1 Members received a report providing the outcome of the recently advertised role of Strategic Director of Regional Growth, on a one-year fixed term secondment opportunity. Kellie Beirne, presenting the report, stated that this was a very wide ranging, important role as it would take forward aspects such as innovation, new propositions/investments and the Investment Zone and be an engine room for delivery for CCR. The recruitment process had been a very vigorous one, including an internal advert across CCR and its 10 Constituent Councils and with an Appointments Panel which included Frank Holmes as the role would have an important interface with the Investment Board. Following the advice of the Panel, the Appointments Sub-Committee had approved the appointment of Mike Brough,

the current Head of Infrastructure. This was for a one year period and a report would be submitted to the CJC following this period setting out next steps.

10.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC confirmed the appointment of Mike Brough, current Head of Infrastructure, to the role of Strategic Director of Regional Growth on a 12-month secondment basis.

Note: Mr Brough left the room for the duration of this item.

11. Updated Counter-Fraud, Bribery, Corruption & Anti-Money Laundering Policy

11.1 Liam Hull presented the report. The CJC had previously received details of, and approved, a version of the Counter-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy at its meeting held on 27 January 2025. The updated strategy now included the CJC's Anti-Money Laundering Policy, taking into account specific legislation.

11.2 Mr Hull thanked Hrjinder Singh for his work in delivering the Policy including the Fraud Risk Action Plan. Mr Hull also thanked Rebecca Westwood, Finance Business Partner, for taking on the role of Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO).

11.3 It was also brought to Members' attention that in relation to the updated Fraud Risk Action Plan, all five actions due for completion at the current time had been completed. Mr Hull added that the updated Counter-Fraud, Bribery, Corruption & Anti-Money Laundering Policy had been reviewed by the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee at its meeting held on 27 June 2025 and no amendments had been proposed.

11.4 It was **RESOLVED** that:

1) The CJC noted that the updated Counter-Fraud, Bribery, Corruption & Anti-Money Laundering Policy was reviewed by the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee at its meeting of the 27 June 2025 and no amendments were proposed;
2) The CJC Approved the updated Counter-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy (including Anti-Money Laundering Policy) attached at Appendix A;
3) The CJC noted the progress against the Fraud Risk Action Plan attached at Appendix B, updates against which, would continue to be provided to the CJC at appropriate intervals throughout the year; and,
4) That the Chair and Chief Executive be authorised to formally sign the Counter-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Strategy (including Anti-Money Laundering Policy) on behalf of the CJC.

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.

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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

12. CCR Energy Business and Transition Plan 25/26

12.1 The report was presented by Kellie Beirne.

12.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC approved the recommendations in the report.

13. Investment & Intervention Framework - Business Cases

13.1 The report was presented by Kellie Beirne.

13.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC approved the recommendations in the report.

Meeting end: 11.17am

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