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

Extraordinary meeting of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

09.30am on Monday 6 October 2025
via Microsoft Teams

Minutes

Members	Constituent Authority
Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby (Chair)	Leader, Monmouthshire County Council
Councillor Lis Burnett	Leader, Vale of Glamorgan Council
Councillor Brent Carter	Leader, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Councillor Deb Davies	Deputy Leader, Newport City Council
Councillor Anthony Hunt	Leader, Torfaen County Borough Council
Councillor Andrew Morgan	Leader, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Councillor James Pritchard	Deputy Leader, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Councillor John Spanswick	Leader, Bridgend County Borough Council
Julian Stedman	Member, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority
Councillor Huw Thomas	Leader, Cardiff Council
Councillor Stephen Thomas	Leader, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Officers	
Kellie Beirne	Chief Executive
Liam Hull	Strategic Director of Resources and S151 Officer
Mike Brough	Strategic Director, Regional Growth
Colan Mehaffey	Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnerships
Mark Watkins	Strategic Director Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Jill Byron	Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Hrjinder Singh	Head of Finance, Risk and Assurance and Deputy S151 Officer
Cliona May	Democratic Services Manager
Jonathan Deacon	Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr Dimitri Batrouni, Leader, Newport City Council and Steve Rayner, Chair of Planning Committee, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority. Cllr Batrouni was substituted by Cllr Deb Davies and Steve Rayner was substituted by Julian Stedman.

2. Declarations of Interests

2.1 There were no declarations of interests.

3. 2023/24 Audited Statement of Accounts

3.1 The South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) received a report presenting the final, audited Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement in respect of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Committee for the financial year 2023/24.

3.2 Mr Hull, presenting the report, referred to the fact that the financial year 2023/24 was the final year under the previous accountable body arrangements prior to the full CJC transitional arrangements being implemented. There had been delays to the audit in previous years due to a combination of lack of capacity and capability within the Finance team and also due to the complexity of some of the transactions which sit within the City Deal accounts. This had had a knock on effect for the 2023/24 accounts which had meant that the statutory deadline for the completion of the audited accounts had been missed. The draft accounts and audited versions were signed and submitted to Audit Wales on 28 November 2024 and as a result of this delay to the submission of the draft financial statements, the timeline for the audit needed to be accommodated within Audit Wales' work programme and this had also contributed to the protracted nature of the audit.

3.3 Mr Hull stated that the audit for 2024/25 Statement of Accounts was under way and Audit Wales were making good progress in relation to this. Whilst the 2023/24 Audit was being completed and until the accounts were signed by the Auditor General for Wales, which was expected shortly, any adjustments found as part of the 2024/25 audit work could result in 2023/24 accounts needing to be revisited. Mr Hull advised that there was one misstatement that Audit Wales had recently discovered which was not included within their Audit of Accounts report. As set out in CCR's Letter of Representation to the Auditor General (appended at Appendix 1b of the CJC report), the treatment of consolidated notional interest in the group accounts was not material in 2023/24 and it would be adjusted within the final 2024/25 financial statements.

3.4 Mr Hull brought to Members' attention that the 2023/24 accounts took into account the cost associated with the Aberthaw Procurement Challenge. He also mentioned that Audit Wales' representatives had attended the Governance and Audit Sub-Committee meeting held on 26 September where they had presented their 'Audit of Accounts Report' for 2023/24. The Sub-Committee had considered the audited Statement of Accounts, the Annual Governance Statement (appended at Appendix 3 of the CJC report), together with the associated Audit Wales audit report

(appended at Appendix 1a of the CJC report) and recommended that the CJC approved them.

3.5 The Committee was also advised by Mr Hull that there were 4 matters arising in Audit Wales' audit report relating to the quality of the draft accounts. He added that whilst these were fully accepted by CCR management, it was important to note that these were similar observations to previous years and related to arrangements under the previous accountable body model where a lack of capacity and capability impacted the quality of the draft accounts. There had been a smaller Finance team at that time. The management response was that the recommendations had all been taken forward and implemented.

3.6 Councillor Morgan asked whether in the light of the 4 recommendations arising from Audit Wales' audit report and the fact that the 2024/25 accounts had not yet been signed off formally, he could be given assurance that the actions were being implemented. Mr Hull replied that he was able to give an assurance. One of the issues Audit Wales had raised related to creditors. This was a matter that Internal Audit had looked at in 2024/25 and had received the highest level of assurance from them. He explained, however, that capacity and capability still remained on the Corporate Risk Register as a risk although it had been improved in the Finance team and this had had a positive impact. Kellie Beirne added that Audit Wales had referred to the complexity involved in CCR's accounts due to the nature of the investments. Capacity and capability was being increased and methodology around peer review was being developed.

3.7 Councillor Hunt welcomed the reassurance regarding the recent capacity improvements and requested regular updates on the 2024/25 accounts. He commented that it would also be worthwhile the CJC keeping abreast of the review of capital accounts, the review of financial instruments documentation and the review of accounting of creditors.

3.8 Mr Hull provided an update on the 2024/25 accounts that he had met with Audit Wales the previous week and they were content with the progress of the audit to date. The parties were still working towards the end of October for completion of the audit. Audit Wales were content that the consolidated spreadsheet CCR had shared with the 10 Constituent Councils in early September could be used to consolidate into the Local Authorities' own individual accounts. There was therefore not anticipated to be any hold up for the signing off of any of the 10 Constituent Councils' accounts.

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

1) Noted that the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee considered the audited Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement, together with the associated Audit Wales audit report at their meeting held on 26 September 2025 and recommended that the CJC approved them;
2) Approved the audited Statement of Accounts 2023/24 for Cardiff Capital Region City Deal in Appendix 2 of the report;
3) Approved the audited Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 in Appendix 3 of the report;
4) Noted the Audit reports of Audit Wales on the Statement of Accounts of Cardiff Capital Region City Deal for the year ending 31 March 2024 in Appendix 1a of the report;

5) Noted the final Letters of Representation for South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee in Appendix 1b of the report; and,
6) Noted that the following documents would be formally signed at the conclusion of the CJC meeting on 6 October 2025:
   - Statement of Accounts for Cardiff Capital Region City Deal – Chair of Joint Committee and S151 Officer;
   - Annual Governance Statement – Chair of Joint Committee and Programme Director;
   - Audit Certificate for the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal – Appointed Auditor, Wales Audit Office. To be signed at a later date;
   - Letter of Representation for the Joint Committee – Chair of Joint Committee and Programme Director.

Meeting end: 09.46am

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

South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

09.30am on Monday 13 October 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 Joanne Gauden	Executive Member for Economy, Skills & Regeneration, Torfaen County Borough Council
Councillor John Morgan	Cabinet Member, Economy & Place, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Councillor James Pritchard	Deputy Leader, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Julian Stedman	Member, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority
Cllr Huw Thomas	Leader, Cardiff 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
Jill Byron	Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Julie Stokes	Head of People & Culture
Toby Williams	Cluster Development Manager
Cliona May	Democratic Services Manager
Jonathan Deacon	Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr Brent Carter, Leader, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council; Cllr Anthony Hunt, Leader, Torfaen County Borough Council; Cllr Andrew Morgan, Leader, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council; Steve Rayner, Chair of Planning Committee, Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority and Cllr Stephen Thomas, Leader, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. Cllr Anthony Hunt was substituted by Cllr Joanne Gauden, Cllr Andrew Morgan was substituted by Cllr Maureen Webber, Steve Rayner was substituted by Julian Stedman and Cllr Stephen Thomas was substituted by Cllr John Morgan.

2. Declarations of Interests

2.1 Cllr Gauden declared a personal interest in respect of Item 14 on the agenda that she knows the managing director of Prosteel Engineering, Richard Selby. Cllr Gauden stated this was because she and Mr Selby had worked together on Torfaen Economic Forum. Cllr Brocklesby also declared a personal interest that she has met and knows Mr Selby.

2.2 Kellie Beirne also declared that she knows the managing director of Prosteel Engineering, Mr Selby, as he had sat on the CCR Business Council and CCR Economic Growth Partnership as well as the Princes Trust Advisory Board. She added that she had not received the papers for this item and would leave the meeting for the duration of the item being considered.

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 28 July 2025 as a true and accurate record.

4. 2024/25 Draft Statement of Accounts

4.1 Mr Hull presented the report, confirming to CJC Members that in his capacity as Section 151 Officer he had signed the certificate within the Statement of Responsibilities of the Draft Statement of Accounts and that these had been submitted to Audit Wales on 3 September, to commence its external audit. This had followed a robust quality assurance process on the working papers alongside an analytical review.

4.2 Mr Hull advised that it had not been possible to meet the statutory deadline of 30 June for submission of the draft accounts. It was important to note that this was the first year of the new arrangements and combined the previous CCR City Deal transactions with the Small Bodies return previously completed for CJC Statutory Duties. The Welsh Government expectation for this year was that the 2024/25 audited accounts would be signed by 31 October. In order to achieve this, Audit Wales had significantly increased their resource working on these accounts. Both Audit Wales and CJC staff were prioritising the audit and any associated queries to meet this deadline. He added that the audit was progressing well and he would keep Members updated. Given the level of transactions, Audit Wales had wanted assurance over the CJC draft accounts ahead of signing off the 10 Constituent

Councils' accounts. Audit Wales consolidate their proportion of CJC transactions into their own group accounts and they had subsequently confirmed that the consolidated spreadsheet the CJC had shared with the local authorities at the beginning of September following submission of the draft accounts can be used to finalise the Constituent Councils' accounts. There would therefore be no reason to delay the signing of the Constituent Councils' accounts.

4.3 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC noted that the Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25 had been signed by the Section 151 Officer and submitted to Audit Wales.

5. 2025/26 Q1 Treasury Management Update

5.1 Members received a report which set out the CJC's performance against its 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy. Mr Hull, presenting the report, confirmed that the paper had been considered by the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee at its meeting of the 26 September 2025. He also explained a key aspect of the report which was the treatment of a £10m interest free loan from the Welsh Government. This had been novated to the CJC during 2024/25. It was not currently being used to fund any element of the CJC's capital programme and was not able to be utilised until such time that an appropriate scheme had been agreed with the Welsh Government for the use of that funding. It was therefore not being included in the borrowing figures.

5.2 Mr Hull referred to the Treasury Management activity in Q1 leading to a yield of £661k. This had followed the low risk appetite approach set out in the CJC Treasury Management Strategy which included lending any surplus funds to the UK Debt Management Office. The forecasted total interest yield for the year was £2.4m and it was expected that this would allow for a contribution of just short of £1.3m to the revenue budget which was approved as part of the budget setting for 2025/26. Mr Hull advised that any underspends in the operational budget would mean that the contribution from interest could be reduced. He added that in relation to performance against key indicators included in the report there had been no instances of non-compliance during the quarter.

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

1) Noted a draft report on the 2025/26 Quarter 1 Treasury Management position was considered by the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee at its meeting of the 26 September 2025, at which there were no amendments proposed;
2) Noted the 2025/26 Quarter 1 Treasury Management Performance Report and its associated appendices (Appendix 1 – Full Treasury Management Report and Appendix 2 - Prudential Indicators); and,
3) Noted that regular updates will be provided throughout the year.

6. 2025/26 Month 05 Revenue Budget Monitoring Update

6.1 Liam Hull presented a report setting out the CJC Revenue Budget position as at the 31 August 2025. He provided the information that there was a projected underspend of £211k at Month 5 against the approved budget. The overarching reason for the underspend was related to there being a high number of vacancies in CCR over the first part of the year. There had been a planned approach, following an organisational restructure at the end of 2024/25, with a clear focus to recruit to heads of department roles initially. The recruitment of these senior roles

had been completed and there was an ongoing recruitment continuing in the organisation over the coming months. Currently CCR still had approximately 25% vacancies across the organisation.

6.2 Mr Hull brought to Members' attention that the staffing position was partially offset by an overspend in Legal and Governance employees budget heads. This was due to a continued reliance on interim agency arrangements in this department, given the difficulties of recruiting to a number of key roles on a more permanent basis. A number of these roles were statutory in nature. Further permanent recruitment in this area would be prioritised.

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

1) Noted a draft of the 2025/26 Month 05 Revenue Budget Monitoring Update report was considered by the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee at its meeting of the 26 September 2025, at which there were no amendments proposed;
2) Noted the Revenue Budget position as at the 31 August 2025 (Month 05) as set out in the report; and,
3) Noted that regular budget updates will be provided to the Committee throughout the year.

7. Annual Business Plan 2025-26 Quarter 1 Performance Report

7.1 Approval was sought for the report which set out the Q1 reporting position against the 2025/26 CCR Business Plan, including the CCR City Deal and the transition to the CJC. Mr Hull took Members through the notable matters in Q1, as set out in the report, including that there had been an underspend of £7.6m during the quarter, with £6.2m of this due to investment timing delays (slippage into future quarters). Mr Hull advised that there was a high degree of confidence that these costs would be incurred and indeed some of the costs had already been incurred in Q2. Also, approximately £1.4m was repositioned back into 2024/25 due to the closing of accounts which increased the reported overall 2024/25 spend. He added that movement such as this at the end of the financial year was standard practice when accounts were closed. Overall spend remained on track over the course of the financial year.

7.2 Other notable matters Mr Hull mentioned in relation to Q1 included a key event, UKREiiF, being held in May where CCR shared a major stand with the West of England Combined Authority, the external phase of the CCR operational restructure and also the projections for CCR's 'evergreen' investments. Mr Hull stated that the return on investments cumulatively was over £20m at the end of June and this figure was projected to rise to £44m by the end of 2027/28.

7.3 Kellie Beirne was asked by the Chair what leads were being followed up post UKREiiF. She replied that these involved follow up meetings which included an active developer in city regeneration and investment organisations. It was intended to bring a comprehensive report to a future CJC meeting detailing planning for Wales Week London, MIPIM and UKREiiF in 2026. The Chair commented that the report would be helpful as it was important that Members had a clear understanding of what the benefits were of investing in the events.

7.4 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC approved the Quarter 1 2025-26 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.

Note: Mr Stedman abstained on the grounds that the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority representative only votes on planning issues as set out in the CCR Constitution.

8. 2024/25 Performance Audit

8.1 Liam Hull presented a report which provided Members with the outcome of a recent Audit Wales Performance Audit. This focused on the CJC's business planning arrangements. It had been the first Performance Audit conducted by Audit Wales since the establishment of the CJC as a public body. It had concluded that the CJC has sound business planning arrangements and this was seen as a good outcome given that the organisation was at an early stage. It provided assurance as to how performance was managed across the organisation.

8.2 Mr Hull referred to Audit Wales' 3 recommendations in paragraph 8 of their report. These were 'being clear on its timescales' (reporting deadlines), 'developing guidance to help officers use its Power BI app' and 'setting performance measures'. Mr Hull stated that the recommendations were in the process of being implemented, particularly in relation to the development of the Corporate Plan which would be available to the CJC later in the year.

8.3 Cllr Batrouni welcomed the report overall but emphasised the importance of Audit Wales' recommendation in paragraph 20 of the report that the annual business plan should include 'measures, targets, or outcomes' and go beyond key milestones. He made the point that it was important to advise the public and other stakeholders what was happening and by when. Kellie Beirne explained that the Business Plan had been geared to the City Deal such as jobs, growth and leverage targets and it had only been recently that it had been expanded to take into account some of the wider CJC targets such as the production of plans and enactment of statutory duties. There was an ongoing discussion taking place with the UK and Welsh Governments regarding these targets. The new Business Plan / 5 year Strategic Business Plan would bring the revised targets into closer focus.

8.4 Colan Mehaffey commented that he had discussed the Performance Audit with Audit Wales and concurred with Ms Beirne's point that the City Deal had been very precise in relation to the targets. The difficulty for CJCs, such as the milestone around the Regional Transport Plan, was how targets were set for statutory measures and discharged duties. There was work to do for the SEW CJC and the CJCs in Wales more broadly around these targets.

8.5 Ms Beirne added that it was also important, in relation to the point raised by Cllr Batrouni, that it was important to tell the story externally as the level of focus on measures, targets and outcomes was there.

8.6 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC noted the report.

9. Market Supplement HR Policy

9.1 Mr Hull thanked Julie Stokes for her contribution in producing the report. In presenting the report, he explained that approval of the Market Supplement Policy by CJC Members and for the 2025/26 Pay Policy Statement to be amended accordingly to incorporate the change would be an important tool to help CCR recruit staff of sufficient calibre. Without the Policy, CCR would be restrained by its pay structure and it would be difficult to compete for staff in certain market conditions, including for professional services roles. This had the potential to lead to capacity and capability gaps in the organisation and an over-reliance on expensive interim agency arrangements. Allowing for discretion for a market supplement was therefore likely to lead to reducing the overall staffing cost envelope and bring a certain robustness to areas of the organisation that had been challenging in the past.

9.2 Mr Hull advised that the introduction of the Policy would bring CCR broadly in line with local authorities in the region. To protect against any equal pay concerns, it would be ensured that the Policy was implemented fairly and consistently across the organisation. A business case would need to be developed with the support of HR and Finance colleagues. The agreement of any supplements would need to be agreed by the CCR Chief Executive. To ensure appropriate segregation of duties, if it was proposed to introduce a market supplement for a post that reported directly to the Chief Executive, approval would need to be sought from the Appointments Panel. Any agreed market supplements would be reported to the CJC on an annual basis and would be subject to regular review.

9.3 Kellie Beirne referred to this Policy being used in very specific cases where there had been significant difficulties in recruiting permanently to key posts. In response to a question from the Chair, she stated that the role that had been most challenging in terms of recruiting permanently was the Monitoring Officer in Legal and Governance. There had also been difficulties recruiting permanently into Democratic Services.

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

1) Approved the Market Supplement Policy;
2) Approved the inclusion of market supplements in the Pay Policy Statement 2025/2026 section 49; and,
3) Adopted the revised Pay Policy Statement 2025/2026 set out in the Appendix to the report with immediate effect.

Note: Mr Stedman abstained on the grounds that the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority representative only votes on planning issues as set out in the CCR Constitution.

10. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

10.1 Mark Watkins presented the report. He stated that the suggested amendments to the Constitution had been proposed to address some quoracy challenges which had been experienced at the CJC. This was particularly with regard to the Investment Board and the Chief Executives of the Constituent Councils' ability to attend these meetings, taking into account their very busy schedules. It was proposed in the paper that Chief Executives were able to nominate substitutes to

ensure the quoracy challenges were minimised. The substitutes would have voting rights.

10.2 Mr Watkins advised that there were similar proposals in relation to the meetings of the CJC to mitigate quoracy challenges.

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

1) Approved the proposed changes to the CJC's Constitution to take immediate effect; and,
2) Requested that the Strategic Director of Legal and Governance publishes the amended Constitution on the CJC's website.

Note: Mr Stedman abstained on the grounds that the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority representative only votes on planning issues as set out in the CCR Constitution.

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

11. CCR Energy Transition Plan Status Update

11.1 The report was presented by Kellie Beirne.

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

12. CSC Foundry Ltd Governance Policy

12.1 The report was presented by Mark Watkins.

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

13. Investment Zone Interventions Framework (Gateway 4)

13.1 The report was presented by Mike Brough.

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

14. Pro Steel Engineering – Full Business Case

14.1 The report was presented by Mike Brough.

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

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15. Investment and Intervention Framework Report

15.1 The report was presented by Kellie Beirne.

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

16. Any Other Business

16.1 There were no items of Any Other Business.

Meeting end: 11.03am

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