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

South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

09.30am on Monday 24 November 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 Anthony Hunt (Deputy Chair)	Leader, Torfaen County Borough Council
Councillor Andrew Morgan	Leader, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Councillor James Pritchard	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 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
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)
Rebecca Westwood	Finance Business Partner (for item 4)
Natalie Hughes	Senior Policy Analyst (for item 5)
Richard Matthams	Head of Strategic Development (for item 6)
Clare Cameron	Transport and Energy Manager (for item 8)
Nicola Somerville	Head of Operations, CCR Energy (for item 9)
Cliona May	Democratic Services Manager
Jonathan Deacon	Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 There were no apologies for absence. The Chair congratulated Cllr Pritchard who had formally been elected as Leader of Caerphilly CBC since the previous meeting of the CJC in October.

2. Declarations of Interests

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

3.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) **APPROVED** the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the CJC held on 6 October 2025 and the minutes of the meeting of the CJC held on 13 October 2025 as a true and accurate record.

4. 2024/25 Audited Annual Accounts

4.1 Liam Hull presented the report which sought approval for the 2024/25 Audited Annual Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). He confirmed that the Governance & Audit Sub-Committee had considered them at their meeting held on 21 November and had recommended to the CJC that they be approved.

4.2 CJC Members were advised by Mr Hull that Audit Wales had substantially completed their work and that they intended to issue an unqualified audit opinion. There were still some final procedural checks for Audit Wales to complete, including work relating to CSC Foundry. In light of this, there was an amendment to the recommendations to the CJC that the Committee approved the Accounts and the AGS, subject to the completion of the remaining audit procedures and on the basis that agreement of any minor non-material amendments would be delegated to the Strategic Director of Resources and S151 Officer in consultation with the Chair of the CJC. Any material changes would be brought back to the CJC for consideration.

4.3 Mr Hull referred to the 2023/24 accounts having been considered by the CJC in October 2025 and that there had been delay to the sign off of the accounts in recent years. However, this year there had been significant progress in this area and whilst the Welsh Government (WG) deadline of 31 October 2025 for the 2024/25 accounts had not been met, the timetable the CJC was working to was broadly in line with the timetable for the majority of local authorities across Wales. The main delay to this process had been the submission of the draft accounts which had been a knock-on effect from the delays to the 2023/24 accounts. Mr Hull thanked the Finance Team for their efforts and gave a special mention to Rebecca Westwood who had particularly contributed in terms of the improvements being reported. He also thanked Alice King, Audit Manager at Audit Wales and the team generally at Audit Wales who had kept the audit process on track for what was a very ambitious and condensed timetable put in place at the beginning of September.

4.4 Mr Hull provided an assurance that the previous delays were in the past. There was now the capacity and capability in the Finance Team to ensure that the deadlines were met going forward. He also summarised the information relating to the 2024/25 accounts with net assets having increased to just short of £134m and usable reserves of almost £22m. This was in line with what was expected as there had been further deployment of City Deal funds and also the returns being received from the 'Evergreen' investments.

4.5 Mr Hull mentioned that there was a significant issue raised in Audit Wales' audit report and set out in the report. This highlighted that there were improvements to be made despite the positive progress which had been seen.

4.6 Alice King presented Audit Wales' audit report at the meeting, confirming that it was intended to issue an unqualified audit opinion, subject to the final items that remained outstanding. She provided an update that the 'Finalisation of the audit of the Movement in Reserves Statement' had now been completed. There had also largely been completion of the agreement of the amendments. Audit Wales still had a few minor immaterial questions which had been recently sent to CCR but it was not anticipated that there would be any material adjustments arising from this. It was anticipated that the accounts would be certified by the end of November.

4.7 Ms King explained to Members there had been a significant issue raised in the audit report and a number of errors that had been found in the accounts. She clarified there remained no uncorrected misstatements in the accounts and two recommendations had been made which arose largely from the significant issue which had been accepted in full by CCR management. The issue had resulted from new disclosures that were required following the transition to the CJC. She added that Audit Wales were hopeful that lessons would be learnt in this specific area for future years.

4.8 Ms King concluded that there had been a positive outcome from the audit this year and thanked the CCR Finance Team for their hard work.

4.9 The Chair and Cllr Morgan welcomed the work of the CCR Finance Team and Audit Wales which had resulted in the significant improvement in the timetable for the accounts. Cllr Morgan also sought assurances that for next year there was a plan in place to ensure that the statutory deadlines were met for the accounts and that Members had oversight of the timetable with any delays being reported. Mr Hull responded that he had had initial discussions with Ms King and the Audit Wales team to plan for next year. There were no known issues which would prevent the Finance Team from meeting the statutory deadlines of 31 May 2026 and 31 July 2026.

4.10 Cllr Batrouni sought additional information on the matter raised by Audit Wales relating to IAS19 Post Employment Benefit disclosures and also the view of the Director of Resources regarding the position set out for Innovation Investment Capital (IIC) in the Subsidiary Companies Statutory Accounts. Ms King explained in respect of IAS19 that it had not been required to be a disclosure in the previous year's accounts but it was for 2025/26 following the transition to the CJC. She described it as a very complex set of accounting entries that were required to cover IAS19 and that there had been teething problems in reflecting the requirements

throughout the accounts. Communication had taken place between the two teams to ensure that this was materially correct in the future. There had also been some issues regarding how the information was requested from the actuary and this was believed to be a learning point. Mr Hull clarified that there had been no errors found regarding transactions to any individual. It was how they were consolidated into the financial statements and any various adjustments that needed to be made.

4.11 In respect of IIC, Mr Hull explained that the costs were not unexpected. At this stage this was due to the deployment of funds in managing the fund and ensuring the investment pipeline was up and running. It was anticipated that the investments would bring returns over the next few years. Kellie Beirne advised Members that the CJC and the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee would receive an annual report from IIC which was independently managed by PWC and led on by Capricorn Partners.

4.12 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 of 21 November 2025 and recommended that the CJC approved them;
2) Approved the audited Statement of Accounts 2024/25 and Annual Governance Statement subject to the remaining audit procedures being completed in conjunction with Audit Wales; and,
3) Delegated authority for the agreement of any minor non-material amendments in relation to the audited Statement of Accounts 2024/25 to the Strategic Director of Resources and S151 Officer in consultation with the Chair of the CJC.
4) Noted the Audit reports of Audit Wales on the Statement of Accounts of CCR City Deal for the year ending 31 March 2024;
5) Noted the final Letters of Representation for CJC; and,
6) Noted that the following documents will be formally signed at the conclusion of the CJC meeting on 24 November 2025:
   - Statement of Accounts for CJC – Chair of CJC and S151 Officer;
   - Annual Governance Statement – Chair of CJC and Chief Executive;
   - Audit Certificate for the CJC - Appointed Auditor, Wales Audit Office. To be signed at a later date;
   - Letter of Representation for the CJC – Chair of CJC and Chief Executive.

5. Regional LAEP (Local Area Energy Plan) Annual Report 2024-25

5.1 Natalie Hughes, presenting the first Annual Report, stated that it followed the CJC's consideration of progress of the development and implementation of the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) in July. A Progress Monitoring Framework had been developed with the LAEP Steering Group (including officers from each of the Constituent Councils) to ensure that progress was able to be reported on an annual basis.

5.2 Ms Hughes mentioned that the Annual Report included the reduction in carbon emissions for the local authority geographical area and monitored the progress against the milestones and actions in each of the LAEP sectors. She highlighted areas of significant progress. Overall, the total greenhouse gas emissions for the region had decreased by 52% between 2005 and 2023. This was with the caveat

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that for each sector the rates of reduction varied significantly. The largest percentage decrease had been for the waste sector (by 85% during this period). Conversely, transport sector emissions had reduced by 17% during this period.

5.3 Ms Hughes spoke about the aggregated LAEP milestones which looked at the regional picture across the 10 local authorities. These included looking at the milestones for the 2030 and 2050 targets, solar and wind generation, EV charging points, retrofit, heat pumps and some broader regional actions. There had been an increase of 67% in the region's solar generation, and 207% in the region's wind generation, from 2022-24. Members were also informed that 70% of the regional actions were on track. The 30% of actions that were behind schedule were being closely monitored and there was additional capacity in the CCR team which would look to address this.

5.4 A success to date brought to Members' attention was 'Solar Together'. This project offered Solar PV, batteries and EV chargers to domestic householders at on average 20% cheaper due to group purchasing. It was intended that a pilot heat pump project was taken forward across the region with 656 household installations, the reduction of co2 emissions by 286,748kg per year and bringing approximately £3 million investment into the region.

5.5 Another piece of work which was taking place across the region was the Building Retrofit Skills and Supply Chain Study setting out the scale of change required to deliver on the LAEPs and looking specifically from a skills and supply chains perspective. The report would set out some recommendations and next steps and would be linked with the broader work on the Skills Growth Framework and emerging regional Climate and Nature Strategy.

5.6 The CJC endorsed the report. Cllr Spanswick stated that there was a lot of information in the Annual Report about the current position. He recommended information was provided about progress needed to reach future milestones, including in 2030. Ms Hughes replied that she would work with the team on how best this information could be provided. Cllr Morgan asked that CCR present organisational specific data in addition to reporting on the region as a whole. He recommended this include what staff at CCR were doing to reduce their travel or use electric vehicles and whether clean energy was being used in offices and at venues CCR used. This was similar to information the Constituent Councils were required to provide. Ms Hughes responded that Ms Hughes responded that CCR would be able to provide this information, including in relation to emissions, and an organisational action plan in place. A sustainable events policy had also been introduced. Colan Mehaffey added that the information requested would be included in future reports.

5.7 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC noted and endorsed the contents of the Annual Report, paying particular attention to progress against key milestones and progress against regional actions.

5.8 **Action** (Natalie Hughes): CCR to set out in future LAEP reports progress needed to reach the milestones, including in 2030 and present CCR organisational specific data in addition to reporting on the region as a whole.

6. Governance Transition - Strategic Development Sub Committee (SDSC)

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6.1 Colan Mehaffey presenting the report, stated that following the WG's approval of the Delivery Agreement in August 2025, the next step was to formally convene the SDSC. He thanked Cllr Burnett in her capacity as the Chair, Cllr Morgan as the Deputy Chair and all the Working Group Members for their role to date in guiding the Delivery Agreement and laying the foundations for the Plan's next stage.

6.2 Mr Mehaffey highlighted that preparing a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) was not just a statutory requirement but was a powerful place making tool for the region, covering the 10 Constituent Councils. It provided the potential to shape growth, infrastructure and a coherent, long-term vision.

6.3 It was confirmed by Mr Mehaffey that the SDSC already existed in the CJC Constitution as the Sub-Committee established to take forward the SDP. It now needed to be formally convened. There would be 13 Members of the Sub-Committee, including 10 Executive Members with planning responsibility from each Constituent Council, 1 representative from Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority (voting) and 2 non-voting CJC Members (Chair and Deputy Chair). It was proposed that the quorum for the SDSC would be aligned with the approach taken for the CJC meetings of 70% or 8 of the 13 members. Decisions would be made by simple majority of voting members present. The Chair would not have a casting vote for Sub-Committee business and in the event of a tied vote, the matter would be referred to the CJC (as the parent body) for determination.

6.4 Mr Mehaffey commented that it would be possible to review the voting mechanisms as the work of the SDSC progressed. The SDSC had the ability to make recommendations on this point to the CJC.

6.5 Cllr Hunt welcomed the involvement, and utilisation of the experience, of the Constituent Councils' Executive Members on the SDSC. He made the point that it was vital that the Sub-Committee also utilised the experience of the Local Authorities' officers as much as possible.

6.6 Cllr Huw Thomas sought assurances that the simple majority voting procedure would not lead to one or two local authorities feeling they were dominated by other Constituent Councils against the democratic will within the local authority. The SDP was a very important strategic document governing land use and planning and there were potential areas of controversy. There were examples in England where the aim of developing a SDP had not been achieved. It was vital that collaboration and consensus was achieved. Mr Mehaffey, in response, referred to an example in England where a local authority had withdrawn from the process and the SDP had become more of a spatial strategy and said that it was vital to learn from such examples. The Working Group had looked at alternative voting mechanisms and there was the option for the SDSC next year to take a forward view at what decisions the Sub-Committee might make and where any potential issues might arise. One option was to look at whether there would potentially be a need for referral to independent expert panels.

6.7 Cllr Burnett emphasised that, as the Chair of the Working Group and the SDSC when convened, she was committed to all the Constituent Councils being content with the overall direction and end result of the SDP. This had been the case since the establishment of the Working Group with the aim of achieving outcomes which

covered the region. She believed that the simple majority vote would help to achieve a consensus and collaborative discussion when all the Constituent Councils were voting on the same basis. She added that it was key for the SDSC to work alongside the Regional Transport Sub-Committee so that the transport ambitions were complementary to those of strategic development.

6.8 The Chair made the point that an essential element was investing the time in regional discussions outside the meeting to build collaboration and consensus. This had been achieved for the best part of 10 years at CCR. Cllr Morgan expressed the view that it should not reach the point where a vote was held at a SDSC meeting where the Constituent Councils did not agree and a local authority or authorities felt it necessary to vote against it. Account should be taken of the Councils' Local Development Plans. Cllr Thomas concurred with this and the importance of establishing consensus so that a local authority did not have a fundamental problem as a result of the majority voting system being used without the necessary discussions taking place.

6.9 In response to a question from Cllr Spanswick it was confirmed that substitutes would be permitted in the event that SDSC members were not available. Cllr Pritchard requested that the communications for the Sub-Committee were issued with local residents in mind.

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

1) Noted that the Strategic Development Sub-Committee (SDSC) already exists within the CJC Constitution and Standing Orders as a Sub-Committee responsible for the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) function and now needs to be formally convened ("stood up");
2) Approved the activation of the SDSC to oversee preparation and delivery of the SDP; and,
3) Authorised the changes to the quoracy rules for SDSC as set out in paragraph 7.2 of the report.

7. Local Innovation Partnership Fund (LIPF)

7.1 Colan Mehaffey presented the report, stating that the LIPF is a UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) backed programme which CCR was successful in securing for the region. This would provide at least £30m of grant funding to enable the region to build stronger innovation partnerships, identify priority clusters of strength and build portfolios of projects that were able to leverage private and national investment. There was an expectation that the programme would bring up to a further £90m of private investment.

7.2 Mr Mehaffey mentioned the work with UKRI and across the region on the development of the new programme. Private and public sessions had taken place, including workshops held in Blaenau Gwent, Cardiff and Newport, as part of the 'Readiness Check'. The Innovation Partnership would be the decision making body, responsible for strategy and vision and also to gather evidence for the cluster choices the Fund would be focused on. The work was an opportunity to review CCR's understanding of the priority clusters. A portfolio would be submitted to UKRI made up of regional project proposals in Spring 2026. Delivery of the programme would be established immediately following portfolio approval.

7.3 In respect of the governance arrangements, Mr Mehaffey advised that the Innovation Partnership would initially sit within CCR as it was being established. It would have representatives from the private, public and third sectors. The core Innovation Partnership would help define and deliver a regional strategy for Innovation. The expected composition of the Board in addition to the chair was 3 Higher Education representatives, at least 1 Further Education representative, 6 Private Sector representatives, 4 Public Sector representatives and UKRI representation (for LIPF relevant matters). He added that Professor Charlotte Deane, Executive Chair at the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council was the main UKRI lead.

7.4 Cllr Batrouni asked whether local authorities were able to submit proposals for consideration. Mr Mehaffey replied that the submission of the proposals would be an open process. It was for the Partnership to decide what the portfolios would look like. It was expected that the Higher and Further Education partners would also play a key role.

7.5 Cllr Batrouni recommended that joined up thinking included AI Growth Zones. He noted Mr Mehaffey's points that the WG had been the lead organization for AI Growth Zones with CCR being a partner and that there was a finite level of expertise available for the Partnership. Kellie Beirne advised that the Fund was at least £30m and further funding would need to be brought into the region. There would need to be consideration of how the various projects coalesced such as AI Growth Zones, the Investment Zone and potentially the defence offer. She added that this was in line with work being undertaken with Vaughan Gething on behalf of the First Minister on future access to the Industrial Strategy. Mr Gething had queried whether the region should have its own growth plan to mirror what the combined authorities were doing. It was recommended that the LIPF was provided as a briefing/presentation for the CJC Leaders and other relevant Constituent Council Members.

7.6 Cllr Spanswick welcomed a briefing and requested that each Constituent Council, including the officers, was able to contribute to the Innovation Partnership.

7.7 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC noted and endorsed the approach to the development of the LIPF for CCR, paying particular attention to the formation of a regional Innovation Partnership and the process CCR are following, as set by UK Research & Innovation.

7.8 **Action** (Colan Mehaffey): A briefing/presentation on LIPF to be provided for the CJC Leaders and other relevant Constituent Council Members.

8. Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDP)

8.1 Colan Mehaffey reported that the Regional Transport Sub-Committee (RTSC) had considered the RTDP at their meeting the previous week, had agreed the draft RTDP scenarios and recommended them to the CJC for approval. He advised that the appendices to the report, which set out the schemes included in the draft RTDP scenarios, were exempt on the basis that premature disclosure would potentially prejudice Ministerial budget decisions. The WG had asked that this information was not in the public domain at this time, pending their funding reviews.

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Any discussion of the schemes in the scenarios would need to be discussed during the exempt session.

8.2 Clare Cameron provided a summary of the report. She stated that the report provided the CJC with an overview of the Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDP), including the funding ask from Local Authorities to the Welsh Government (WG) for the financial year 2026/27 to deliver the outcomes set out in the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) over its five-year lifespan. Members were also requested to approve that the RTDP was submitted to the WG for approval and funding, within the timeframe prescribed by the WG.

8.3 Ms Cameron brought to Members' attention that the RTP, which the CJC had approved would be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales in July, had been approved by the WG in September. Since then, the Cabinet Secretary had written to the CJC regarding the WG providing an indicative funding allocation for the CJC to set the RTDP. The timetable for submission of the RTDP involved sharing a draft of the Plan with WG officers by 21 November. The WG would respond with recommendations for any amendments by 19 December prior to the formal submission for funding by the CJC at the end of January 2026. The Cabinet Secretary would be looking to approve the funding by the middle of March 2026.

8.4 It was also explained by Ms Cameron that one of the RTDP scenarios took into account that the Cabinet Secretary had requested a response, in the event there was additional funding from the WG over a 3 year period, as to the additional projects the CJC would wish to spend the money on. The Cabinet Secretary had also indicated the WG would provide additional funding for 2026/27, separate from the RTDP, for nationally significant schemes.

8.5 Ms Cameron clarified that in addition to seeking approval for the draft RTDP scenarios, there was a recommendation to delegate authority to the Chairs of the RTSC and CJC to approve final amendments, pending final submission to WG at the end of January 2026. This was required because when WG officers did respond by 19 December, there was the ability to make amendments prior to the final submission.

8.6 Cllr Morgan, also the Chair of the RTSC, thanked the CCR and Constituent Councils officers for all their hard work in putting together the lists of schemes set out in the RTDP scenarios. He stated that the region's ambition was only held back by the level of funding received. The schemes in the Plan had to be deliverable within 5 years and had to be affordable. Local authorities were looking at resources internally and the region continued to lobby WG over funding, including Burns Commission nationally significant schemes in the longer term beyond 2026/27. Cllr Pritchard concurred with the concerns about the quantum of funding received and that Caerphilly had to proceed with an important road scheme which would put a significant strain on the local authority budget. He added that further lobbying would be required. The Chair made the point that whilst the CJC was constrained by the resources that had been made available, it was crucial that it remained committed to making the process work and staying true to the region's transport ambition. She also wished to thank CCR and Constituent Councils officers and Cabinet Members for highways and transport for all their hard work in producing the draft RTDP.

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

1) Approved the draft RTDP scenarios;
2) Delegated authority to the Chairs of the RTSC and CJC to approve final amendments, pending final submission to WG at the end of January 2026; and,
3) Agreed to submit the final version of the RTDP to WG at the end of January 2026, alongside an additional list of schemes that could be delivered over a three-year period, should further funding become available.

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. CCR Energy Land Reclamation Relief & Corporate Interest Restriction Exemption

9.1 The report was presented by Liam Hull.

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

10. Investment Zone Update – Gateway 4 Informal Feedback & Gateway 5

10.1 The report was presented by Mike Brough.

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

11. Investment & Intervention Framework - Business Cases

11.1 The report was presented by Mike Brough.

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

12. Any Other Business

12.1 The Chair stated that the next scheduled meeting of the CJC was the Extraordinary meeting on 15 December 2025.

Meeting end: 11.10am

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