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

Report for:	ACTION
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO

For Consideration By	South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee
Report Title	Innovation Partnership - Terms of Reference & Member Recruitment Proposals
Report of	Colan Mehaffey, Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnerships Mark Watkins, Strategic Director of Law & Governance
Contact Details	colan.mehaffey@cardiffcapitalregion.gov.uk mark.watkins@cardiffcapitalregion.gov.uk
Date to be Considered	26th January 2026
Implementation Date	Immediate
Affected Council Areas	All
Keywords / Index	Innovation Partnership; Local Innovation Partnership Fund; UK Research & Innovation; governance

Reason for this Report

1. To provide an update on the development of the Local Innovation Partnership Fund (LIPF) and to confirm the governance arrangements for the establishment of the regional Innovation Partnership which will support both the LIPF and Investment Zone (IZ) programmes.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEWCJC)**:**

   a) **Approve** the Terms of Reference for the Innovation Partnership at Appendix A.

b) **Approve** the proposed membership profile and appointment process for the Innovation Partnership (Appendix B), including the approach to co-opting additional experts where required for specific programmes.

c) **Delegate** authority to the Monitoring Officer to update the Constitution in order to incorporate the Innovation Partnership.

d) **Note** and endorse the proposed timetable for establishing the Innovation Partnership and convening its first meeting in advance of key LIPF milestones.

Background

3. The Local Innovation Partnership Fund (LIPF) is a UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) backed programme designed to strengthen local innovation systems and accelerate commercialization. It enables regions to build stronger innovation partnerships, identify priority clusters of strength, and deliver portfolios of projects that can leverage national and private investment.

4. CCR has been selected as a delivery partner to work with UKRI and must prepare and submit a readiness check including governance, strategy, and evidence of regional innovation capacity. The Innovation Partnership will act as the formal regional decision making forum required by UKRI and Welsh Government. It will also fulfil the advisory board role required under the Investment Zone (IZ) Memorandum of Understanding, ensuring consistency and avoiding duplication of governance structures.

5. In November 2025, the SEWCJC endorsed the approach to the development of the Local Innovation Partnership Fund (LIPF) and supported, in principle, the formation of a regional “Innovation Partnership” to provide the required local partnership function.

6. In parallel, the Cardiff Capital Region is developing and delivering other innovation-related programmes (including Investment Zone and related initiatives) which will benefit from a consistent regional advisory structure and avoid duplication of boards and panels.

Proposal: establishment of the Innovation Partnership

7. As per the earlier decision of the SEWCJC on 24 Nov 2025, the Innovation Partnership is intended to stand as both advisory and decision making group to and under the SEWCJC, providing strategic advice, challenge and assurance to support innovation programmes across the region (including LIPF), and to act as the recognised ‘local partnership’ required by UKRI for LIPF.

8. The Innovation Partnership will not be a committee of the SEWCJC. It will provide both decisions and advice which will be reported through officers to the SEWCJC (and, where relevant, to UKRI) for decision, sign-off or ratification.

Role and functions

9. The Innovation Partnership will:

9.1 Provide advice and make recommendations on innovation activity and interventions for CCR
9.2 Support the development, continuous refinement and delivery of the regional innovation strategy for the CCR region.
9.3 Provide long term stewardship of multiple programmes and initiatives
9.4 Review and interpret evidence to inform strategic choices and programme design
9.5 Support the acquisition and development of place-based innovation funds
9.6 Support individual programme: LIPF:

- consider and challenge the evidence base for proposed clusters of strength and advise on cluster selection for LIPF;
- Review, advise and decide on criteria, processes and assurance for inviting, assessing and prioritising project proposals;
- decide on the recommended LIPF portfolio prior to submission to UKRI, including value for money, feasibility, deliverability and impacts;
- support alignment across related programmes (e.g., Investment Zone) and help shape a regional innovation strategy;
- provide an external perspective and 'critical friend' challenge to reduce delivery and reputational risks.
- provide oversight of portfolio delivery

10.1 Support individual programme: Investment Zone:

- Provide advice on innovation activity within the investment zone portfolio

Membership and composition

11. To reflect the triple/quadruple helix approach required for LIPF and good practice, the proposed core membership profile is:

    - 1x independent Chair;
    - 3x Higher Education representatives;
    - at least 1x Further Education representative;
    - up to 6x private sector representatives;
    - up to 4x public sector / place / third sector representatives (ensuring societal/place representation is included); and
    - UKRI representation for LIPF-relevant matters (as observer/participant, without local voting rights where applicable).

12. The initial appointments should be as sector/cluster-agnostic as reasonably practicable, recognising that early advice will influence cluster selection and programme design. Additional specialists may be co-opted on a time-limited basis where specific expertise is required.

Appointment, tenure and conduct

13. Appointments will be made following an open and transparent process, using a role profile and selection criteria, with appropriate due diligence and declaration of interests. The proposed process is set out at Appendix B.

14. Membership will be time-limited, with an expectation of rotation to refresh perspectives and manage conflicts.

15. As the Innovation Partnership will decide on clusters and project proposals that may attract public funding and private investment, strong safeguards are essential. Members will therefore be be required to not only comply with the Terms of Reference but also the Member Code of Conduct. This is to ensure that there are:

    - upfront declarations and an up-to-date register of interests;
    - declarations at each meeting and appropriate recusal where a conflict (actual or perceived) arises;
    - satisfactory confidentiality arrangements and information handling controls.

Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Terms of Reference (Innovation Partnership)

Appendix B - Membership profile and appointment process

Timeline

Key milestones with indicative dates include:

Action	Due date
(CJC meeting): ToR + recruitment approach approved.	26 Jan 26
Finalise recruitment pack (role profile, eligibility, time commitment, skills matrix).	27 Jan – 30 Jan:
Go live with the advert(4-week window):	2 Feb – 27 Feb
Longlisting/eligibility checks + sift.	2 Mar – 6 Mar
Interviews	W/c 9 Mar
Pre-appointment checks (references, eligibility, declarations).	16 Mar – 27 Mar
induction + mandatory training (Code of Conduct, confidentiality, data protection etc).	30 Mar – 10 Apr

First meeting window: (to allow time to prepare papers and comply with notice requirements).	16 April 2026 - 23 April 2026

Financial Implications

16. Any costs associated with establishing and supporting the Innovation Partnership (including meeting administration and reasonable expenses) will be managed within existing resources and/or relevant programme budgets.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

17. No direct contractual commitments arise from the establishment decision itself; however, the Partnership will inform recommendations and make decisions that may have future financial and delivery implications for innovation programmes, and therefore robust governance and assurance are required.

18. The Terms of Reference (Appendix A) should be read as a critical control document. They define the Partnership's advisory status, reporting lines to the SEWCJC, and the arrangements for managing real and perceived conflicts of interest (particularly for private sector and academic members). The appointment process (Appendix B) should be operated transparently and proportionately, with due diligence and declarations of interest completed before members participate in discussions on clusters or project proposals. Officers should ensure that the SEWCJC retains clear decision-making and accountability for any recommendations progressed, and that information governance and confidentiality controls are applied to protect personal data and commercially sensitive information.

Well-being of Future Generations

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

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

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

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

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

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

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

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

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

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

26. The characteristics protected under the Act are:

- age;
- disability.
- gender reassignment.
- marriage and civil partnership.
- pregnancy and maternity.
- race.
- religion or belief.
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

27. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

(a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
(b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
(c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

34. CCR is committed to advancing the economic development of the Region, through its investments and projects across key portfolio areas and its additional statutory powers. The LIPF programme will adhere to the objectives and measures as established in the CCR Strategic Equality Plan and there will be controls around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across the programme and for individual projects.

Welsh Language Implications

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

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

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

Risk Management

39. This fund is ultimately owned by UKRI, requiring their final sign off on portfolio project choices. This shares risk with UKRI in terms of programme and project delivery, and transfers risk to them for some elements.

40. The need to carefully manager reputational risk is clear, related to both our regional stakeholders and UKRI. This is an opportunity to solidify our position, role and capability within the region through this work. It is also an opportunity to set the mechanism that more UK Government money will flow through.

41. To mitigate this, CCR will deliver the programme professionally and in a considered manner. UKRI currently have strongly supported and approved CCR's set up and planning through our inclusive approach and being data/ evidence driven.

Colan Mehaffey
Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnerships

Mark Watkins
Strategic Director of Law & Governance

9 January 2026

Appendix A: Innovation Partnership

Terms of Reference

1. Status

1.1 The Innovation Partnership ("the Partnership") is a group established by the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee ("the CJC").

1.2 The Partnership is not a committee or sub-committee of the CJC.

1.3 The Partnership provides advice and recommendations. It will also take decisions when it comes to innovation priorities and portfolio choices involving UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the arms-length body sponsored by the Department for Science, or anybody that replaces it.

2. Purpose

2.1 To provide independent strategic advice and constructive challenge and decision making to support the development and delivery of innovation-related programmes and investment across South East Wales.

2.2 To help ensure that programme governance is conducive to the delivery of innovation, including meeting any advisory capacity requirements associated with relevant programmes (for example, Investment Zone arrangements).

3. Functions

3.1 Provide advice on priorities, opportunities, programme design and delivery models and to decide on innovation priorities and portfolio choices

3.2 Provide informed challenge on pipelines, business cases and proposals, including benefits, deliverability, value-for-money, risk and dependencies.

3.3 Support collaboration and alignment across public, private, higher education and further education partners.

3.4 Advise on stakeholder engagement and learning/evaluation.

3.5 Consider any other matters referred to it by the CJC or the Investment Board

4. Membership (Core Voting Members)

4.1 The Partnership comprises a "core membership" appointed for fixed terms.

4.2 Core membership will be maintained at a size that is effective and quorate in practice; normally up to 12 members. This will consist of no more than 10 lay members and no more than 2 elected members drawn from the CJC itself.

4.3 The core membership profile will, as far as practicable, include balanced representation and expertise across:

- Further Education representative
- Higher Education representative
- Private sector/industry representative(s) aligned to priority clusters where possible
- Innovation ecosystem / R&D commercialization expertise
- Public/place-based innovation delivery expertise (as appropriate)

- 4.4 The core membership profile will also include two elected members (with voting rights) who will normally consist of the Portfolio Holders for Research & Innovation and Economic Development.

5. Chairing

5.1 The Partnership will be chaired by a member of the "core membership" and will normally be chosen from the lay membership. of the Partnership

5.2 A Vice-Chair may be appointed from among the core voting members which, normally, would be chosen from the lay membership. of the Partnership

6. Attendance – Subject Matter Experts (Non-Voting)

6.1 The Partnership may co-opt subject matter experts ("SMEs") to attend meetings on an ad hoc basis to advise on specific agenda items.

6.2 Co-opted SMEs will have no voting rights, and are not counted for quorum purposes.

7. Quorum and Voting (Core Members)

7.1 Quorum consists of four members which is made up as follows: three core voting lay members, one of whom must be the Chair or Vice-Chair and one elected member.

7.2 The Partnership will seek to reach recommendations by consensus. Where a vote is required, decisions are by simple majority of core voting members present and voting.

7.3 In the event of a tie, the Chair has the casting vote.

8. Reporting Routes and Governance Gateways (IZ and LIPF)

8.1 How the Partnership reports depends upon the category of proposition that it is considering and will be split as follows:

8.1.1 Category A– Investment Zone (IZ) recommendations: where advice relates to IZ investment propositions, the Partnership will endorse a recommendation which officers will submit to the Investment Board for consideration.

8.1.2 Category B– LIPF decisions for UKRI

END

Appendix B: Innovation Partnership

Recruitment and Co-option Process

1. Purpose

1.1 This Appendix sets out (a) the recruitment process for core voting members of the Innovation Partnership and (b) a lighter-touch process with regards to non-voting co-opted subject matter experts (SMEs)

1.2 The objective is to ensure transparency, fairness and good governance while enabling timely access to expertise, particularly for time-critical programme requirements (including Investment Zone and LIPF).

2. Core Membership Recruitment (Voting Members)

2.1 Role profiles and skills matrix: officers will maintain a brief role profile for core members (including Chair) and a skills matrix to ensure balanced representation (HE/FE, industry, innovation ecosystem, delivery/public sector).

2.2 Recruitment approach: core appointments will normally be made through open recruitment/advertisement, supplemented by targeted outreach to widen the field.

2.3 Selection panel: a small panel will shortlist and interview/assess candidates. The panel should include (as a minimum) an appropriate senior officer, the Monitoring Officer (or nominee), and a member/Chair representative as determined by the CJC.

2.4 Due diligence: successful candidates will complete a declaration of interests, confirm availability, and acknowledge confidentiality/information governance expectations.

2.5 Appointment: appointment letters will confirm term (normally two years, extendable once), expected attendance, conduct/conflicts requirements, and expenses/remuneration arrangements (if applicable).

2.6 Induction: officers will provide an induction pack covering governance routes, conflicts, programme context (IZ/LIPF as relevant), and meeting procedures.

3. Ad Hoc Co-option of Subject Matter Experts (Non-Voting)

3.1 The Chair (or officer lead) identifies a need for specialist input and prepares a short ‘expert brief’ (topic, questions, expected outputs, and whether any information is confidential).

3.2 Identification and selection: officers may propose candidates with a short written justification. The Chair (supported by officer advice) approves invitations.

3.3 Before attendance, the SME must provide (a) a Declaration of Interests Form and (b) an acknowledgment of being bound by the Member Code of Conduct.

3.4 Invitation communication: an email/letter will confirm membership, non-voting status and expenses arrangements.

4. Expert Advisory Pool (Optional)

4.1 To reduce delay, officers may maintain an Expert Advisory Pool: a list of potential SMEs mapped against priority expertise areas (e.g., advanced manufacturing, digital tech, semiconductors; infrastructure/transport/planning; evaluation).

4.2 Pool inclusion does not confer membership. It enables rapid invitations under section 3, subject to item-specific conflict checks.

END