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

South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee

09.30am on Monday 13 July 2026
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 Ann Crimmings	Leader, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Councillor James Pritchard	Leader, Caerphilly County Borough Council
Councillor John Spanswick	Leader, Bridgend County Borough Council
Councillor Stephen Thomas	Leader, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Councillor Christopher Weaver (Deputy Chair)	Leader, Cardiff Council
Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Officers	
Kellie Beirne	Chief Executive
Colan Mehaffey	Strategic Director of Policy, Impact and Partnerships
Mike Brough	Strategic Director, Regional Growth and Investment
Jill Byron	Strategic Director, Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
James Howse	Interim Strategic Director of Finance & S151 Officer
Cliona May	Democratic Services Manager
Jonathan Deacon	Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Cllr Anthony Hunt, Leader, Torfaen County Borough Council and Deputy Chair of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC). He was substituted by Cllr Richard Clark.

2. Declarations of Interests

2.1 Cllr Richard Clark declared, in respect of Item 14 on the agenda, that he is a director of CSC Foundry Limited.

3. Minutes

3.1 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting of the CJC held on 8 June 2026 as a true and accurate record.

4. Report of the Appointments Sub-Committee

4.1 Kellie Beirne, presenting the report, referred to the comprehensive recruitment process which had been undertaken, including psychometric testing and interview of the candidates, prior to it being unanimously agreed by the interview panel that Mike Brough should be considered for the permanent role of Strategic Director of Regional Growth & Investment at the CJC Appointments Sub-Committee on 11 June 2026. Mr Brough had held the post previously on a secondment arrangement.

4.2 Ms Beirne stated that the Members on the Appointments Sub-Committee who had interviewed Mr Brough were Cllrs Mary Ann Brocklesby, Stephen Thomas and James Pritchard. They had subsequently recommended to the CJC the permanent appointment of Mr Brough.

4.3 The Chair advised that the Appointments Sub-Committee panel was given assurance by Mr Brough's interview and the evidence of the work he had previously delivered for the organisation. Councillor Thomas described him as an outstanding candidate.

4.4 It was **RESOLVED** that Mike Brough be appointed to the role of Strategic Director of Regional Growth & Investment.

NOTE: Mike Brough left the meeting whilst the matter was being considered and took no part in the discussion prior to the decision being taken.

5. Job Description and Remuneration Review - Chief Executive Officer

5.1 Members received a report setting out the process to review the job description and remuneration package for the current CCR Chief Executive Officer. James Howse, presenting the item, mentioned that the CJC had delegated authority to the Appointments Sub-Committee to review the job description and remuneration package for the current CCR Chief Executive Officer at the previous meeting in June.

5.2 Next steps were that following agreement on the revised job description this would be submitted to Korn Ferry for an independent re-evaluation. They would produce

a full report setting out scoring and rational. An external independent HR consultant had been commissioned to undertake an independent review of Senior Leadership Pay. Following the completion of the independent review and re-evaluation outcome they would be considered in detail by the Appointments Sub-Committee who would make a recommendation to the CJC.

5.3 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC noted the process set out in the report to review the job description and remuneration package for the current CCR Chief Executive Officer.

NOTE: Kellie Beirne left the meeting whilst the matter was being considered and took no part in the discussion.

6. Annual Report of the South East Wales CJC 2025-26

6.1 The CJC received a report seeking approval of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2025/2026. Colan Mehaffey, presenting the report, stated that its title was 'Building Momentum' reflecting increased delivery across all functions of the CJC. It documented major investments, policy developments, engagement activity and governance improvement and also demonstrated the transition from an investment focused organisation through the City Deal to a maturing regional public body.

6.2 Mr Mehaffey mentioned that for the first time in the Annual Report, a major chapter had been included on Governance, explaining to external audiences what the legal powers and statutory responsibilities are and what the mechanisms were to ensure compliance. It was a goal to help public understanding about the role of CJCs.

6.3 Mr Mehaffey also gave a brief summary of the other chapters in the report. Chapter 1 was an overview of the CJC, Chapter 2 was entitled 'Strategy and Performance', set out emerging policy and messaging included the Chief Executive's forward look which focused on building a stronger, fairer and greener region. There were also reports from each of the major teams forming new policies. Chapter 3 entitled 'Investment and Innovation' highlighted the major investments across the region from the CJC's impact funds, including the setting up of new funds, as well as an update on the Investment Zone. The Investment Zone and the new Local Innovation Partnerships Fund were key features as new additions to CJC funds.

6.4 The Chair stated that the Annual Report was substantially different from last year's as it was more reflective and more concerned with where it achieved an impact and was also conscious of the fact that CCR was strengthening communications with residents and key stakeholder groups in the area.

6.5 Cllr Spanswick commented that the Annual Report was a good quality report but requested an amendment as on page 10 of the Annual Report and page 35 of the Agenda Pack there was a feature on grant funding for a regeneration project at Maesteg and included a photograph of Goat Mill Road Development next to it.

6.6 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC approved the Annual Report and Accounts 2025/2026 for the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

7. Child Poverty Strategy

7.1 Members received a report to consider and approve the CCR Child Poverty Strategy. Colan Mehaffey advised that there was a legal requirement for CJCs to produce a Child Poverty Strategy. The scale of the challenge was shown in that around 84,000 children live in poverty in South East Wales, a third of all children in the region, defined as living in households with incomes below 60% of the UK median household income after housing costs. Poverty had also deepened over the past decade, with a growing proportion of households already living in poverty falling below more severe thresholds of 50% and 40% of the UK median household income after housing costs.

7.2 Mr Mehaffey also referred to the report setting out the long term consequences of child poverty, including in relation to education and health. The CJC was able to add unique value regionally in terms of its core economic development remit, namely the three statutory duties of Economic Well-being, Regional Transport and Spatial Plan. There were causes and consequences of child poverty that were able to be linked to the economy such as in-work poverty and low pay, economic inactivity and unemployment, insecure work and also low mobility and connectivity, especially in terms of transport.

7.3 Mr Mehaffey stated that the Strategy identified the vision of "A South East Wales where every child, young person and family is supported to live well, get on in life and achieve their full potential, regardless of their background or where they live." This was supported by three priority areas, Good Work, Good Pay - Creating good, inclusive jobs and maximising incomes; Access to Opportunity - Creating pathways out of poverty for children, young people and parents and Conditions for Shared Prosperity - Strengthening the regional economy and maximising social impact.

7.4 Members were also advised by Mr Mehaffey that there had been an engagement undertaking as part of the Strategy, including with the public, private and 3rd sector. In terms of delivery implications, much of the Strategy would involve applying a child poverty lens to existing and future programmes and investments delivered by the CJC. A financial allocation would support activities including exploring new opportunities to promote South East Wales as a Real Living Wage region.

7.5 Members welcomed the report. Councillor Carter commented that it links with the strategic priorities of Merthyr Tydfil CBC. Councillor Weaver considered that it set out clearly the role CCR can play in helping to tackle child poverty. He also emphasised the importance of promoting the area as a Real Living Wage region. Councillor Spanswick requested that there was more focus on the provision of quality housing. Councillor Batrouni asked that addressing wealth inequality/disparity was included as part of the overall analysis of this issue.

7.6 Colan Mehaffey, in response to Cllr Spanswick's point, referred to the low rates of new dwellings in Wales and that the CJC was taking the Housing Viability Gap Fund and a Spatial Development Plan forward. In response to Cllr Batrouni's point he mentioned there was also increasing data available which reflected the structural, economic and social factors which influence poverty and officers needed to be aware of all this information in the formation of the Strategy.

7.7 Kellie Beirne addressed Members on the Economic Wellbeing Dashboard which brought together the data available, including the low rates of new housing in Wales. She added that there was an opportunity for a demonstration of the Dashboard at the next meeting of the CJC. There was also the potential for the Dashboard to be rolled out to local authorities so that they would be able to access the information.

7.8 It was **RESOLVED** that Members of the CJC approved the CCR Child Poverty Strategy.

8. Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2025-26

8.1 Jill Byron clarified that the report in the Members' pack was the CJC's second 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). CCR was engaging with the Welsh Language Commissioner, including in relation to its Welsh Language Grants Policy. Ms Byron confirmed that a report on this policy would be made available to Members later in the year.

8.2 Members were also advised that the Staff Welsh Language Skills table would be updated prior to publication and that a number of CCR staff were looking to improve their Welsh language skills over the coming months.

8.3 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC noted and agreed the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2025 -26.

9. Final Outturn (Month 12) Revenue Budget 2025-26

9.1 Members received a report setting out the CJC's Revenue Budget position as at 31 March 2026. James Howse, presenting the report, advised that the position reflected a solid performance. He referred to the 2025/26 Revenue Budget, totalling £6.699 million, being approved by the CJC in January 2025. Whilst the revenue spend budget was significantly overspent in 2025/26 (actual expenditure incurred to the 31 March 2026 amounted to £11.109 million, representing a notional overspend of £4.409 million), £4.326m of this notional overspend was related to the Investment Zone. The Investment Zone Programme had been established since setting the 2025/26 budget and the CJC had subsequently been successful in in its application for Investment Zone funding (of some £160m over a 10-year period). The notional overspend was fully funded.

9.2 Mr Howse emphasised that the net impact of all revenue spend and income had seen a reduction in the CJC Accumulated Interest Balance Reserve of circa £1.281m against a budgeted for reduction of £1.289 million. He made the point that in overall terms the CJC had operated within the budget parameters set for the 2025/26 financial year.

9.3 Mr Howse reflected that the organisation was evolving with the likes of the Investment Zone, the Local Growth Plan and the creation of the Strategic Development Plan and this needed to be featured in the operational budget. He was seeking to update the presentation of the revenue budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy to be more detailed on specific project spend.

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

1) the Revenue Budget position as at the 31 March 2026 (Month 12) as set out in the report; and,
2) that the final outturn revenue position is currently being finalised as part of the Statement of Accounts closedown and audit process.

10. Quarter 4 2025-26 Performance Report

10.1 Kellie Beirne introduced the report. She spoke of the progress made regarding CCR's projects in Q4, which included Investment Zone and the Local Investment Partnership Fund. She also highlighted the engagement in events which included Fintech, housing and AI, Wales Week London in February (which was very well attended) and MIPIM in March (which provided investment traction for the region).

10.2 In terms of key investment highlights, Ms Beirne brought to Members' attention the Strategic Sites & Premises Fund being fully committed at £50m and there was a focus on identifying future opportunities within the portfolio. Amongst the companies in the investment portfolio, both Creo Medical and Whisper had both demonstrated strong performance and fully repaid their loans with interest. The work relating to the Northern Valleys Initiative had significantly increased during the quarter and the Aberthaw programme remained on schedule.

10.3 The Performance Report also highlighted investment activity, recycled funds, job creation and the quality of the jobs. The Chair welcomed the success of the 'evergreen' investments and the companies in the investment portfolio which had paid back their loans ahead of time.

10.4 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC noted the 2025/26 Q4 Performance report.

11. Local Growth Fund

11.1 The report was presented by Simon Gale, Director of Housing and Regeneration at RCTCBC. Mr Gale provided a summary of the LGF. This included that it is a 3 year £547m fund in Wales with the allocation for the region this year being £82.4m (RCTCBC was the Lead Body). The LGF replaced the UK Shared Prosperity Fund but unlike its predecessor, responsibility for the LGF had been devolved to the Welsh Government (WG). The LGF was 70% capital and 30% revenue which contrasted with its predecessor the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which was 70% revenue and 30% capital. From years 2 and 3 (2027 onwards), it was intended to move the LGF to a regional delivery model with CCR becoming the regional planning lead.

11.2 Mr Gale explained that it had not been plain sailing to obtain approval from WG in Year 1. The Transition Plan was required to be developed and prepared by RCTCBC in collaboration with each local authority. The first iteration was submitted to WG on 25 February 2026. Final formal approval of the updated regional plans by the WG was yet to be received but it was anticipated this would happen shortly.

11.3 Mr Gale set out the potential risks of delay to the commencement of projects and a possible underspend. Members expressed concerns about the impact of delays,

particularly in the event that approval of the regional plans was not received until after the Summer recess. Mr Gale advised that Paul Mee, Chief Executive of RCTCBC, was in discussion with all the Constituent Council Chief Executive Officers and they were making representations to WG at a senior level. They would be seeking to have more regular discussions with WG when the CJC became the regional planning lead in Years 2 and 3.

11.4 Colan Mehaffey confirmed that the CJC was working closely with RCTCBC on managing the transition to Years 2 and 3. It was proposed that in Years 2 and 3, RCTCBC would continue to administer the fund, working with the CJC on the investment plan. He also drew Members' attention to the requirement to produce a Regional Growth Plan which arose from LGF although the Plan itself was not limited to LGF. Final guidance was yet to be released. However, expectations included that it would require a long-term, 10-year vision for the economy.

11.5 Mr Mehaffey mentioned the WG's timetable to provide a draft version of the Plan by September and the final version by November. However, it was being proposed that there was a revised timetable for submissions to WG with an Interim Delivery Plan by end of November and final version by March 2027, as set out in the report. This would enable the CJC to demonstrate project readiness, set indicative priorities and establish the governance framework. There was an opportunity to develop a significant piece of work in relation to the 10-year vision.

11.6 Mr Mee spoke of the risks of the formula-based local allocation model in Years 2 and 3 in addition to the compressed timetable in Year 1. He added that the Chief Executives were content to put their concerns regarding Year 1 in writing to WG. The Chair stated that the concerns were shared by the Leaders of the Constituent Councils and they were discussing the challenges caused by the delays with their Chief Executives.

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

1) Noted the approach adopted by RCTCBC for the LGF transitional year (2026/27);
2) Approved the approach to the development of an overarching Regional Growth Plan, including timelines for submission to WG as set out in the report;
3) Approved in principle the proposal for RCTCBC to continue administering the fund in Years 2 & 3;
4) Delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Policy, Impact & Partnerships to (a) continue to develop the Interim Delivery Plan & Regional Growth Plan described in the report and (b) implement the next steps described in the report; and,
5) Noted the risks and mitigation for the ongoing delivery of LGF in the transitional year and future years and recommend that the CJC Chairs establish regular engagement with WG on the programme.

Exclusion of Press and Public

The 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.

EXEMPT SESSION

12. Investment and Intervention Framework

12.1 Mike Brough presented the report.

12.2 It was **RESOLVED** that the CJC approved recommendations at the meeting which included one amendment to the original report.

13. CCR Investment Zone Update

13.1 Mike Brough presented the report.

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

14. CSC Foundry Limited – Transfer to the CJC

14.1 James Howse presented the report.

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

Meeting end: 11.10am