
NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
24/11/23

Present: Chair: Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn (Cyngor Gwynedd)

Councillors: Jason McLellan (Denbighshire County Council), David Bithell (Wrexham County Borough Council), Gary Pritchard (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Christine Jones (Flintshire County Council) and Charlie McCoubrey (Conwy County Borough Council).

Observer: Councillor Barry Mellor (Denbighshire Council).

Chief Officers: Dafydd Gibbard (Cyngor Gwynedd), Dylan Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Rhun ap Iaroth (Conwy County Borough Council), Neal Cockerton (Flintshire Council), Linda Roberts (Wrexham County Borough Council), Gary Williams (Denbighshire Council) and Emyr Williams (Eryri National Park Authority).

Statutory Officer

Iwan G Evans (Monitoring Officer)

Other officers present

Alwen Williams (Interim Chief Executive of the CJC), Sian Pugh (Assistant Head of Finance) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Service Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

- Councillor Llinos Medi Huws (Isle of Anglesey County Council) with Councillor Gary Pritchard deputising;
- Councillor Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council) with Councillor David Bithell deputising;
- Councillor Ian Roberts (Flintshire County Council) with Councillor Christine Jones deputising;
- Councillor Annwen Hughes (Eryri National Park Authority);
- Graham Boase (Denbighshire Council) with Gary Williams deputising;
- Ian Bancroft (Wrexham County Borough Council) with Linda Roberts deputising;
- Dewi Morgan (Chief Finance Officer).

The Board's best wishes were sent to Councillor Ian Roberts (Flintshire County Council) who was in hospital.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 27 October 2023, as a true record.

5. STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

The report was presented by Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED:

1. To adopt amendments to the Standards Sub-committee's Terms of Reference as noted in Appendix 1 of the report.
2. To adopt the criteria for appointing independent members to the Standards Committee and establish an Interview Panel in line with Appendix 2.
3. To delegate the appointment process to the Monitoring Officer.

DISCUSSION

The Monitoring Officer noted that he was disappointed about the change in appointing independent members via the statutory process since that meant going through an advertising process, interviewing, and appointing, and that it was not an easy process to get applicants.

The observation was reiterated, and it was noted that the legislative changes would mean extra costs and an extra workload.

In response to a question, the Monitoring Officer noted that it would be possible to adapt the criteria so that it would be possible for the Chair or Vice Chair to nominate another member of the Joint Committee to deputise for them on the Interviewing Panel.

It was suggested to omit the sentence '*Only an independent member (Lay) of the Standards Committee would be able to be Chair or Vice Chair*' from the Terms of Reference since all the members of the standard committee members would be lay members already.

6. DRAFT ACTION PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN FOR NORTH WALES

The report was submitted by Alwen Williams, Interim CJC Chief Executive.

RESOLVED to approve the proposed draft Action Plan to be submitted to the Welsh Government.

DISCUSSION

It was questioned whether it would be practically possible to present the final version of the Regional Transport Plan to the Welsh Government by the end of March 2025, considering the amount of work needing to be completed and the expertise needed to complete a project of this size and type, especially in light of the UK Government's announcement regarding the work of electrifying the North Wales Coast railway, which was also a huge amount of work. In response, the interim CJC Chief Executive noted:-

- That other regions had also expressed concern regarding the timetables, and although he had not seen the final report, the Transport Commission had achieved a great deal of the work in North Wales over the last 18 months and that there would be a great deal of data as the basis for the report's conclusions that would be useful, especially in regard to creating the case for change.
- She believed that work must be commissioned for advisors with expertise, especially surrounding the Environmental Impact Assessment, as well as maintaining an individual review of the plans in North Wales. Obviously, that would depend on availability and timetables within the agencies that could respond to this kind of work.

- She believed that the timetables would have to be adapted as the work went on and as we reached milestones, but at this moment in time he was optimistic that the requirements would be achieved by March 2025.
- She would report back to the Joint Committee regularly regarding progress, highlighting any risks, and in regard to approving the Action Plan, the Transport Sub-committee would be established to lead the work.
- She believed that it would also be a critical element as well as ensuring that we kept to the timetable and to the budget and reported back to the CJC as required.

In response to the series of questions, the Interim CJC Chief Executive explained:-

- That the Transport Sub-committee would guide the plan and guide the officers to lead on creating the plan and preparing the work.
- That the Government had been through the process of internal approval of draft plans for 4 regions and that they would award, and inform us, hopefully within the coming weeks regarding the funding that would come forward.
- Up to £125,000 was expected to help with the work of developing the plan.
- A portion of the money would be spent on advisors. A public consultation would need to be held, and therefore associated costs would be likely. There would also be costs associated with the work of creating the Environmental Impact Assessment.
- She had been in liaison with officers from every authority in the North to create the draft plan in the first place, and she foresaw that once the Transport Sub-committee had been established and was operational, that there would also be a committee of officers available to help.
- That there was transport expertise within the councils and that it was important that they felt they had ownership as well as the ability to lead the plan.

The meeting commenced at 14:00 and concluded at 14:30.

(Chair)