
NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
26/01/24

Present: Chair: Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn (Cyngor Gwynedd)

Councillors: Jason McLellan (Denbighshire Council), Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council), Gary Pritchard (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Ian Roberts (Flintshire Council), Charlie McCoubrey (Conwy County Borough Council) and Tim Jones (Snowdonia National Park Authority).

Chief Officers: Geraint Owen (Cyngor Gwynedd), Dylan Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Rhun ap Iarthen (Conwy County Borough Council), Neal Cockerton (Flintshire Council), Ian Bancroft (Wrexham County Borough Council), Gary Williams (Denbighshire Council) and Emyr Williams (Eryri National Park Authority)

Statutory Officers

Dewi Morgan (Chief Finance Officer) and 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;
- Graham Boase (Denbighshire Council) with Gary Williams deputising;
- Dafydd Gibbard (Cyngor Gwynedd) with Geraint Owen deputising;

Deputies were welcomed to the meeting.

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 24 November 2023, as a true record.

5. NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE 2024/25 BUDGET AND LEVY ON CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES

The report was submitted by Dewi Morgan, Chief Finance Officer.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the Budget for 2024/5 for the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) as presented in the appendix to the report. To approve the budget as noted below:-

Strategic Planning	Transport	Corporate Joint Committee	Total Budget
£	£	£	£
371,250	182,750	210,820	764,820

2. To approve the levy on the constituent authorities, as noted below:-

	Strategic Planning	Other Functions	Total Levy
	£	£	£
Conwy County Borough Council	(58,510)	(65,370)	(123,880)
Denbighshire Council	(52,080)	(55,220)	(107,300)
Flintshire County Council	(83,780)	(88,830)	(172,610)
Cyngor Gwynedd	(53,870)	(67,260)	(121,130)
Isle of Anglesey County Council	(37,230)	(39,480)	(76,710)
Wrexham County Borough Council	(73,010)	(77,410)	(150,420)
Eryri National Park Authority	(12,770)		(12,770)
Total Levy	(371,250)	(393,570)	(764,820)

DISCUSSION

1. The Budget

It was noted that a significant amount of money had been earmarked for the Strategic Planning element and it was asked if that meant doing away with some of the work that the councils currently carried out individually, thereby creating savings for the councils, or would it mean more work and more cost to the councils. In response, it was noted:-

- That it was important to find a way to be able to represent value for money for the authorities locally from the existence of the CJC.
- It was not yet entirely clear what the long-term objective to aim for in terms of Welsh Government would be, but there were certainly opportunities here to collaborate more effectively regionally on certain elements of work. E.g. there were discussions in place about the possibility of regional collaboration on matters such as energy procurement to see whether there was a way of being more financially effective, so that the savings would feed back to councils locally for core services.
- That it was difficult to say at the moment, particularly from the Strategic Planning perspective, what the benefits would be for the particular stakeholders, but that there were elements of work that were currently being duplicated across the counties on an evidentiary basis for their own individual plans.

- That it was hoped that, in centralising some parts of that evidence, it would then be easier to obtain evidence at a local level by working regionally.
- That time would tell what the knock-on effect of that would be in terms of any particular efficiency in the areas within the region, but that would certainly be the ambition, that we would be in a position of being able to share information and evidence to make the local processes easier.

It was noted that it was important to keep track of this element.

Concern was raised about the proposed 6% inflation estimate for wages in 2024/25, but it was explained that that was funded out of reserves and that there would be no increase in partner contributions.

It was noted that there was a sense within the councils that the Corporate Joint Committee was optional, rather than a legislative responsibility, and it was warned that many councillors would be keeping a close watch and asking questions as the work of the Joint Committee progressed.

The Chair noted that that was perfectly understandable. He added that a meeting would be held shortly between the chairs and vice-chairs of all corporate joint committees across Wales and ministers to discuss progress on establishing the joint committees, which would be an opportunity to convey the nature of the discussion at this meeting.

2. Levy

It was questioned when it was intended for the financial contributions to be changed in line with population changes. In response, it was explained that:-

- The same population figures as were in the settlement for 2024/25 had been used.
- The projections of the last year and the previous year had been used because the Park Authority had not been included in the settlement figures, but as the projections had not been updated this year, the only option was to use the settlement figures, adjusting the figures pro-rata for the Park Authority, which would be the case hereafter as well.

In response to a further question, it was explained that settlement figures that were set and adjusted each year were used by the Office for National Statistics.

The meeting began at 14:00 and ended at 14:35.

(Chair)