
**NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
27/10/23**

Present: Chair: Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn (Cyngor Gwynedd)

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

Chief Officers: Geraint Owen (Cyngor Gwynedd), Dylan Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Rhun ap Iarthen (Conwy County Borough Council), Andrew Farrow (Flintshire Council), Ian Bancroft (Wrexham County Borough Council), Graham Boase (Denbighshire Council) and Iwan Jones (Snowdonia National Park Authority)

Statutory Officers

Iwan G Evans (Monitoring Officer) and Dewi Morgan (Section 151 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. CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn as Chair for 2023/24.

2. VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Mark Pritchard as Vice-chair for 2023/2024.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the following:-

- Councillor Llinos Medi Huws (Isle of Anglesey County Council) with Councillor Gary Pritchard deputising;
- Councillor Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council);
- Dafydd Gibbard (Cyngor Gwynedd) with Geraint Owen deputising;
- Neal Cockerton (Flintshire County Council) with Andrew Farrow deputising;
- Emyr Williams (Snowdonia National Park Authority) with Iwan Jones deputising.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Alwen Williams, CJC Interim Chief Executive, declared a personal interest in item 8 as the report involved extending the period of her secondment to that role. She was of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and withdraw from the meeting during the discussion.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 26 May 2023, as a true record.

7. NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE PROJECTED EXPENDITURE 2023-24

The report was presented by Sian Pugh, Assistant Head of Finance.

RESOLVED to note and accept the Corporate Joint Committee's projected expenditure for 2023/24 as submitted in Appendix 1 to the report that was presented to the Joint Committee.

8. EXTENDING THE SECONDMENT TO THE ROLE OF INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

The report was submitted by Geraint Owen, Cyngor Gwynedd.

Further to the content of the report, it was noted that the NWEAB had agreed at its meeting earlier that day to release Alwen Williams from her role for the period in question.

RESOLVED to extend the appointment of Alwen Williams as the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee's Interim Chief Executive, on a temporary secondment basis, until the end of March 2024.

DISCUSSION

It was asked whether the secondment meant that there was underspend on Alwen Williams' salary as Portfolio Director for the NWEAB. In response, it was explained that the amount transferred to the NWEAB for releasing Alwen Williams on a part-time basis created an underspend, but that this money was being used for another officer in the Portfolio Officer who was deputising for Alwen Williams for the two days that she worked for the Corporate Joint Committee.

The Leader of Flintshire Council expressed his concern that it appeared, therefore, that there was back-filling of the role in the NWEAB whilst the work of the Corporate Joint Committee was being fulfilled, and he added that he had no recollection of this ever being discussed in the NWEAB. In response, it was explained that part of the arrangement when the secondment was approved originally, was to give assurance to the NWEAB that there would be stepping up in terms of the role of the Portfolio Director in order to support the Growth Deal, and that this had been reported to the NWEAB at the time.

It was noted that the report referred to the fact that another item on the meeting agenda elaborated on the additional resource identified to support the Interim Chief Executive with the work of establishing the Corporate Joint Committee finally by 1 April 2024, but that no reference to this could be seen in the papers. In response, it was suggested that this was a question to ask the Interim Chief Executive after she returned to the meeting for the next item as it was she who had put this arrangement in place.

Following the vote on the item, the Leader of Flintshire Council noted that he wished to record that he had voted against the secondment as he had no recollection of a report being submitted to the NWEAB regarding who would be filling in for the Portfolio Director.

The Chair noted that the question could be put to the Interim Chief Executive after she returned to the meeting, and he asked the member whether he wished to continue to note his objection.

The Leader of Flintshire Council noted that he wished for his concern to be noted and that he was asking for a report to the NWEAB and to the Corporate Joint Committee explaining who was filling in in the NWEAB for the two days when the Portfolio Director was not available, and how and when that appointment/those appointments had been made.

Alwen Williams was called back to the meeting, and was asked to explain the situation. In response, she noted that, as both Governments wished to have confirmation that the secondment to the Corporate Joint Committee would not affect the ability or resources to deliver against the Growth Deal, arrangements had been put in place for the two days to be filled by resources from within the existing Portfolio Office team.

The Chair asked whether there was any additional expenditure as a result. The Assistant Head of Finance noted that she did not have the exact figure, but that the information could be relayed to the members.

The Chair noted that there was a request for clarity, clearly, but that this was a matter for the NWEAB, rather than the Corporate Joint Committee, and he suggested that at the next meeting of the NWEAB reference could be made to the decision made to fill in and to provide additional support to the Portfolio Office.

The Interim Chief Executive further noted:-

- When discussions commenced with both Governments regarding the arrangements to establish the Corporate Joint Committee and making the request to allocate some of her time to the CJC, Welsh Government had been quite positive, but wanted assurance that this would not have a negative impact on the Growth Deal as a priority.
- That UK Government also wanted to make quite sure that there would be no negative impact on our ability or on the resources to reach the objectives of the Growth Deal.
- That it was not as simple as moving resources from one place to another and that there had been fairly lengthy discussions at the beginning to build on the relationship and give assurance that we would be able to move ahead to establish the Corporate Joint Committee and continue to reach the requirements of the Governments in relation to the Growth Deal.

The Leader of Flintshire reiterated his concerns and expressed that he was extremely disappointed at what appeared to him as a lack of transparency from the Host Authority.

The Chair confirmed that a detailed report would be submitted to the next NWEAB in order to have full clarity.

9. NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE BRANDING

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

RESOLVED to approve the proposed branding for the Corporate Joint Committee.

The meeting commenced at 15:30 and concluded at 16:00.

(Chair)