
NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
06/09/24

Present: Chair: Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn (Cyngor Gwynedd)

Councillors: Gary Pritchard (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Dave Hughes (Flintshire County Council), Charlie McCoubrey (Conwy County Borough Council), Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Edgar Owen (Eryri National Park Authority).

Chief Officers: Dylan Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Matthew Georgiou (Conwy County Borough Council), Neal Cockerton (Flintshire County Council), Linda Roberts (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Iwan Jones (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), David Hole (Corporate Joint Committee Implementation Programme Manager), Sian Pugh (Assistant Head of Finance), Iain Taylor (AMION Consulting Consultant), Claire Incedon (Solicitor), Jack Latkovic (Corporate Joint Committee Democracy Officer) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Team Leader).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:-

- Councillor Jason McLellan (Denbighshire County Council)
- Dafydd Gibbard (Cyngor Gwynedd)
- Rhun ap Iarheit (Conwy County Borough Council) with Matthew Georgiou deputising.

Councillor Dave Hughes, Flintshire County Council was welcomed to his first meeting of the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee expressed its appreciation to Ian Roberts, former Leader of Flintshire County Council for his contribution over the years and wished him well. A formal letter would be sent by the Interim CJC Chief Executive expressing the Joint Committee's best wishes to him.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 June 2024 as a true record.

5. CJC ESTABLISHMENT UPDATE AND PROPOSED GOVERNANCE MODEL

The report was submitted by Alwen Williams, Interim CJC Chief Executive, and Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED:

1. **To accept the update on the progress made to prepare for the proposed transfer of the Growth Deal, its funding and the PMO to the CJC.**
2. **To support the suggested governance structure as a basis for discussion with partners pending a further report subject to revising the elected membership of the proposed Economic Well-being Sub-committee to Council Leaders representation.**

DISCUSSION

David Hole, new Implementation Programme Manager for the Corporate Joint Committee was welcomed to the meeting. It was noted that the Joint Committee had the power rather than a duty to promote economic well-being in the region. He highlighted that the original in-principle decision had predicted that an Economic Ambition Board Sub-committee would be established, but since then the Corporate Joint Committee had adopted the North Wales Ambition brand. In light of this it was proposed to establish an Economic Well-being Sub-committee to support the Joint Committee's work and to carry out the functions of the Ambition Board.

It was noted that the key supporting arguments for adopting the structure were contained within the report, but briefly, developing the structure based on the proposed version would facilitate the Joint Committee's strategic role and would create the capacity to give the deserved attention and leadership to wider issues and opportunities than the Growth Deal through the Economic Well-being Sub-committee.

The Joint Committee was asked to accept the update on the progress made to establish the CJC, noting that this work included the transfer of the Growth Deal, the funding and the Portfolio Management Office to the CJC as an independent entity and to introduce the draft principles underpinning the proposed governance model for the CJC.

It was highlighted that the target date for transferring the Growth Deal which was a specific priority within the remit of the work to establish the CJC was 1 November. He reported that to achieve this was dependent on securing approval by the partners of the Ambition Board and the two Governments, as well as having a large number of operational matters in place.

He explained that the report also asked the Joint Committee to support the development of a proposed governance model that offered a first glimpse of the governance arrangements in order to facilitate discussions with partners on the Growth Deal. A revised version of the structure was presented, highlighting the main changes which were:

- The leaders of the six authorities to sit on the Economic Well-being Sub-committee
- The responsibilities of Monitoring Performance, delivery and risks and Approving Growth Deal FBC projects referred because of unusual risks to be placed on the Economic Well-being Sub-committee rather than the CJC. It was noted that these were functions associated with the CJC but could be referred down to the Economic Well-being Sub-committee.

The Monitoring Officer added that the aim was to garner support to the proposed model which would give confidence to partners that the fundamental model of the Economic Ambition Board will be kept on in the transfer to the CJC. He noted that there was no legal or constitutional reason not to have a Sub-committee with Leaders as members on it.

He expressed that the Leaders were keen to keep in touch with all the work of the Economic Ambition Board and were therefore happy to be members of the Economic Well-being Sub-committee as they were all familiar with the work. He believed that the report simplified the arrangements by providing better clarity of responsibilities. He noted that further discussions were due, and that a further report would be presented.

Members gave thanks for the work, acknowledging that the issue of transferring the responsibilities of the Economic Ambition Board and establishing the CJC had been a complex process.

6. CONSTITUTIONAL UPDATES

The report was presented by Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To adopt:**
 - i) Sections 1 – 3**
 - ii) the scheme of delegation**
 - iii) financial procedure rules**
- 2. To delegate to the Monitoring Officer the power to make the following minor variations to the Constitution:**

- (a) legal or technical amendments that do not materially affect the Constitution;**
- (b) changes required to be made to remove any inconsistency, ambiguity or typographical error;**
- (c) wording so as to put into effect any decision of the CJC or its sub-committees or officer exercising delegated powers;**
- (d) changes required to reflect any changes to job or role titles.**

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, which provided an update on the process of creating a Constitution for the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee, stating that the CJC must have a comprehensive Constitution in place to carry out its functions. It was noted that this report set out the final key elements to be adopted. Claire Incedon was thanked for the work and for compiling the documentation. Attention was drawn to section 4.3 of the report, namely the table showing the progress made on the Constitution and the matters to be adopted.

Reference was made to the recommendation and the key document in terms of bringing the CJC into operation, namely the Scheme of Delegation which would allow officers to begin making decisions, and the Financial Procedure Rules report which contained the Chief Finance Officer's input.

It was explained that this was a further step in drawing up the Constitution, and should these matters be adopted today it would enable us to move ahead and publish an on-line Constitution for the CJC, which was an important step for the Body's governance and public image.

The officers were thanked for their work.

7. FLINTSHIRE AND WREXHAM INVESTMENT ZONE

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

RESOLVED:

- 1. To authorise the Interim Chief Executive to continue to work collaboratively with the Welsh Government, UK Government, Flintshire and Wrexham Councils and local stakeholders to prepare the remaining Gateway documents in draft form, under the direction and advice of the proposed Investment Zone's Senior Responsible Officer, the CJC's Interim Chief Executive. The appointment of the SRO will be formalised in Gateway 3 which will be presented to the CJC in due course.**
- 2. To support, in principle, the proposed Governance Model which sets out the proposed form of the decision-making structures for the Investment Zone.**
- 3. To submit the proposed Gateway documentation for approval, by the CJC at its November meeting, prior to the formal submission to the UK and Welsh Governments.**

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted which provided information on progress with the new investment Park in Flintshire and Wrexham which focused on Advanced Manufacturing. Iain Taylor, AMION Consulting Consultant, was welcomed to the meeting. It was noted that Iain had experience of working with the Liverpool City region on developing their case for an Investment Park.

It was explained that the process of developing Investment Zones was collaborative in nature and relied on the sharing of documentation for review across local stakeholders, the Welsh Government and the UK Government. Reference was made to the intention to share draft Gateway documents as they were prepared, for feedback and agreement as these developed.

The officer stated that the CJC had been identified as the accountable body for the Investment Zone, and highlighted the nature of the function, the duties and the responsibilities that the CJC would bear in developing and delivering the Investment Zone. She referred to the decisions that would be required by the CJC in developing the Investment Zone. She shared a model of the proposed governance structure (Appendix A of the report) as a basis for preparing for the process of taking the Gateways through the Governments and securing approval for the Investment Zone.

The AMION Consulting Consultant elaborated on the proposed Governance Structure, noting that the aim was for the structure to align with the established Governance structure to avoid duplication. He noted that the work was a combined effort and extended thanks to Flintshire and Wrexham Councils for their support, their work and their willingness to work together. He talked about the aim of increasing the number of Manufacturing jobs in north-east Wales, noting that the structure demonstrated how the Welsh and UK Governments were involved in the development of the process. He added that the CJC would be responsible for reporting on delivery and responsible for the grant investments.

The Leader of Wrexham County Council thanked the officers for their work and thanked Flintshire County Council for their cooperation, noting that this was a major scheme and investment. The Flintshire County Council representative reiterated similar comments, noting that they were looking forward to working jointly with Wrexham Council. The members expressed appreciation to the Interim CJC Chief Executive and her team for their work.

A member enquired whether the November deadline for submitting the proposal would be reached. In response, it was noted that the documentation required for submission to the Government was still being developed. It was reported that the Government would then

review the gateway documents and provide feedback and confirm whether they met the requirements of the investment zone. It was added that after the Autumn Statement and confirmation of the budget on 30 October, the CJC were preparing to be in a position to submit the proposal as soon as possible. It was explained that the Government could not begin the process of officially reviewing the documents until after the budget. It was confirmed that the CJC were confident that they would be in a good position to make the submission in November.

A member enquired whether the CJC would be accountable if something went wrong. The progress was welcomed, but it was assumed that there was further work to be done in terms of the accountable Body's obligations, be it the Joint Committee or Wrexham and Flintshire. They elaborated that it made sense for Wrexham and Flintshire to make the decisions since these would be their projects, but there was concern that there was no definite clarity as regards who bore the responsibility for the decisions and possible outcomes.

In response, it was noted that corporate responsibility had been noted in the Memorandum of Joint Understanding. It was confirmed that there would be a further discussion on this aspect in November and details would be provided at that time on how the responsibilities assumed by the CJC would be borne in earnest by partners within the investment zone. It was reiterated that clear ownership and accountability were important as well as aspects such as challenge and scrutiny; we needed to be clear who was responsible for this.

It was agreed that this was an important issue, and that clarity was crucial for the Joint Committee members to be able to move forward as one. The members looked forward to receiving further details in November.

8. NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE PROJECTED EXPENDITURE 2024/25

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

RESOLVED to accept the Corporate Joint Committee's projected expenditure for 2024/25 as submitted in *Appendix 1*.

DISCUSSION

The August 2024 financial review was submitted, and a table corresponding to Appendix 1 of the report was shown. It was explained that the budget was shown on the left-hand side and an outlook of the situation to the end of the financial year on the right-hand side, with the final column showing the over/under-spend per heading.

It was noted, based on the information currently available, that a net underspend of £200,000 was forecast by the end of the financial year. An underspend of £289,000 was projected against the Employees heading. It was noted that the anticipated expenditure included the costs of the Chief Executive's secondment, the support of the Executive Assistant plus the secondment costs of the Implementation Programme Manager, one planning position and a part-time Language Officer.

It was explained that although a net overspend of £54,000 was indicated against the supplies and services heading, the net position was a £26,000 underspend after taking into account the grant income from the Welsh Government which funds the overspend on the external consultants heading.

It was reported that the underspend on the legal heading would be used to fund part of the overspend on the legal costs shown under Set-up Costs. The £83,000 expenditure on legal

under this heading included the costs of an external law firm as well as two legal consultants who had been commissioned to provide specialist advice and support on the establishment of the Joint Committee. It was added that there was also expenditure of £103,000 on external consultants which related to the CJC's project management costs.

It was noted that there was a £100,000 expenditure on the Investment Zones, and it was hoped that this would be funded from the administration allowance of the Government's Investment Zone grant, but without formal confirmation, both Wrexham and Flintshire County Councils have between them underwritten £50,000 of this expenditure with the remaining £50,000 to be funded from the CJC's reserve.

The members gave thanks for the report. Further clarification was sought on the £54,000 overspend against the supplies and services heading. It was explained that the £54,000 included £81,000 of overspending on external consultants – this expenditure related to a grant that had been approved last year. In the income part we see the £81,000 Welsh Government grant which funded it, which then boils down to an underspend of £26,000.

9. REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN: PROGRESS UPDATE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

RESOLVED:

- 1. To note that, in accordance with CJC approval given on 21 June 2024, the following have been appointed by the CJC Monitoring Officer as co-opted members of the Transport Sub-Committee:**
 - Cllr Goronwy Edwards (Conwy County Borough Council)
 - Cllr Barry Mellor (Denbighshire County Council)
 - Cllr Dave Hughes (Flintshire County Council)
 - Cllr Dafydd Meurig (Cyngor Gwynedd)
 - Cllr Dafydd Rhys Thomas (Isle of Anglesey County Council)
 - Cllr David A Bithell (Wrexham County Borough Council)
- 2. To note the update included in *Appendix 1* which includes a copy of the draft:**
 - North Wales Regional Transport Plan Vision statement
 - SMART objectives
 - Cross-cutting themes
- 3. To agree that the next phase of work to develop the RTP will be guided by the Transport Sub-committee and will include recommendations on the above and the following components required to progress the RTP:**
 - Detailed project plan (building on the RTP's Implementation Plan)
 - Integrated Well-being Appraisal (Statutory Assessments) Scoping Report
 - Stakeholder Engagement Plan
 - List of policies, programmes, and projects
 - Preparation for public consultation
- 4. To agree to hold the inaugural meeting of the CJC's Transport Sub-Committee on the 1st October. A comprehensive timetable and forward plan will be presented at this Sub-committee meeting. The Sub-Committee is responsible for key policy development and preparation of the RTP, which delivers a co-ordinated and integrated strategic transportation service in north Wales.**
The Sub-committee will report its recommendations regularly to the CJC on:
 - steps taken to develop the Regional Transport Plan;
 - timetable and progress towards its submission to Welsh Ministers for approval;

- **development of policy aligned to the Wales Transport Strategy and the Regional Transport Delivery Plan for implementation by the local transport authorities;**
- **monitoring and review of the Regional Transport Plan and other strategic regional functions as set out in its terms of reference.**

DISCUSSION

The report was presented which gave a further update on the work to develop the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) which included establishing the necessary governance structures to enable the CJC to carry out its statutory duty.

Attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the report which provided an update and included a draft copy of the North Wales Regional Transport Plan vision statement, the SMART objectives and the Cross-cutting themes. It was noted that there were four SMART objectives and five cross-cutting themes.

It was explained that the next key step was to present these items to the Transport Sub-committee, noting that members had already been nominated to this Sub-committee. It was explained that these three items, together with further items which were noted in part 2.3 of the report, would be included on the Agenda of the first meeting which would be held on 1 October. It was added that a comprehensive timetable and forward plan would be presented to the Transport Sub-committee at this meeting. It was noted that this Sub-committee would be responsible for key policy development and for preparing the transport plan, and that the Transport Sub-committee would be reporting regularly to the CJC.

Members gave thanks for the report, noting that this was an important step on the journey of establishing the Joint Committee.

10. THE WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS: COMPLIANCE NOTICE

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

RESOLVED:

- 1. To accept the Welsh Language Standards that have been set for the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) (*Appendix 2*).**
- 2. To request that the interim Chief Executive develops a proposal that sets out the options and costs to commission the officer resource required for implementation, monitoring and reporting on the Welsh Language standards.**

DISCUSSION

The report was presented which introduced the final Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice for the Corporate Joint Committee. It was explained that the draft Compliance Notice had been submitted previously, and a period of consultation had followed. It was noted that no challenges or questions had been received from members regarding the standards that had been set for the Joint Committee. Nonetheless, it was noted that the report did highlight a couple of standards that had been removed for all the Joint Committees nationally.

It was noted that the Joint Committee was a public body, therefore according to the regulations the CJC was required to accept and comply with the standards. The date set by the Language Commissioner for the CJC's compliance was the end of February 2025. It was noted that it was a requirement for the Interim CJC Chief Executive to submit a further

report highlighting how the arrangements will be set out, and the options for supporting the Joint Committee to comply with the standards.

11. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES (IRPW) – REMUNERATION OF LAY MEMBERS OF CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES REVIEW

The report was presented by Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To note the Determination of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW).**
- 2. To adopt an hourly rate for the payment of claims by lay members.**

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, with the aim of updating the Members on the decision by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in respect of remuneration for lay members of the Corporate Joint Committee. The officer noted that the report closed the gap in moving to establish a Standards Sub-committee and a Governance and Audit Sub-committee within the CJC. He highlighted that the report recommended adopting a system of paying an hourly rate to lay members rather than payment in blocks of four hours.

Concern was expressed about how attractive these arrangements would be in reality when attempting to attract a third of members to sit on the Governance and Audit Sub-committee, given how short some of the Committee meetings were.

Everyone was thanked for their contributions, noting that the meeting had been an important step in formalising the work of the Corporate Joint Committee.

The meeting commenced at 13:30 and concluded at 14:30.

(Chair)