
**NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE
06/05/2025**

Present:

Councillors: Nicola Roberts (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Hugh Jones (Wrexham County Borough Council), Christopher Bithell (Flintshire County Council), Alan James (Denbighshire County Council), Craig ab Iago (Cyngor Gwynedd), Chris Cater (Conwy County Borough Council) and Edgar Wyn Owen (Eryri National Park Authority).

Chief Officers: David Fitzsimon (Wrexham County Borough Council), James Harland (Conwy County Council), Emlyn Jones (Denbighshire County Council), Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Planning and Environment), Jonathan Cawley (Eryri National Park Authority), Dewi F Jones (Isle of Anglesey County Council).

Officers present:

Alwen Williams (North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Chief Executive), Claire Incledon (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Andy Roberts (Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer), David Hole (North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Implementation Programme Manager), Sian Pugh (Assistant Head of Finance), Misbah Mahmood (North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Democratic Services Lead Officer).

Others in attendance: Chris Smith (Wrexham County Borough Council).

Apologies:

Dewi Morgan (Chief Finance Officer).

1. ELECT CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Nicola Roberts as Chair of the Sub-Committee for 2025/26.

2. ELECT VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Hugh Jones as Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee for 2025/26.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dewi Morgan (Chief Finance Officer).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent matters were raised.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

The report was submitted by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED

To adopt the Terms of Reference.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Sub-Committee must implement those rules and procedures as adopted by the CJC and set out in the Terms of Reference – these are the powers delegated to the Sub-Committee. Any amendment to these terms must be approved by the Corporate Joint Committee.

DISCUSSION

It was approved by the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) to establish the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee, in order to discharge the function of developing and producing a Delivery Agreement and Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for the CJC. It was confirmed that the power of adoption or revision of the plan would be reserved to the CJC.

It was delegated to the Sub-Committee to carry out the functions as outlined in the Terms of Reference. It was noted that these functions mirrored the responsibilities set out in the Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021. It was highlighted that the strategic nature of the Sub-Committee's role enabled plan development on a regional basis, in collaboration with other Local Authorities and partners, including the Welsh Government, constituent Local Authorities, the National Park, and other key stakeholders.

It was explained that a key part of delivering the plan was the Sub-Committee's role in providing strategic advice to the Corporate Joint Committee to coordinate the planning, development, and delivery of the plan, in line with the functions set out in the Terms of Reference. It was further noted that the Sub-Committee was also responsible for monitoring and reviewing progress and making recommendations to the CJC.

It was confirmed that the Sub-Committee would be supported by an officer-led Planning Officer Group (POG). It was outlined that this Advisory Group would be led by an officer from the Council represented through the elected Chair. It was stated that this lead officer would liaise with the Chair to provide updates on work programming and project delivery, supported by officers from the CJC.

It was questioned, in relation to overseeing the production of the SDP, whether consultation was envisaged to take place across the whole of North Wales or only in those areas where plans were being proposed or envisaged. In response, it was noted that as the plan would be produced on a regional basis, the consultation would also be carried out on a regional basis. It was explained that this would ensure a fair and open process, giving all individuals and communities the opportunity to engage.

It was questioned whether the consultation process would include face-to-face meetings or be held exclusively online. In response, it was noted that all available and practical methods of communication would be considered during the consultation process, with the aim of reaching as many relevant individuals and stakeholders as possible. However, it was clarified that digital technology and online methods would likely play a key role in facilitating consultation on a region-by-region basis, depending on the resources available to each local authority. It was emphasised that all methods of communication would be available, with proportionality guiding their use.

7. STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN

The report was submitted by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED

To agree on the Forward Work Plan.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Forward Work Plan sets out a calendar of meetings for the period up to December 2025 and aligns with the dates of the CJC meetings and the current timetable adopted to produce a Delivery Agreement and the initial planning stages.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that members would, in due course, be canvassed for potential future Sub-Committee meeting dates. It was explained that as the programme developed, the forward work programme would be led by the Chair and members, in line with the responsibilities of the Sub-Committee.

It was questioned whether items within the forward work programme would be determined by the members of the Sub-Committee. Concern was expressed regarding the topic of housing, particularly in relation to the relationship between future housing market growth and the application of Article 4 in Cyngor Gwynedd and Eryri National Park. It was expressed that there was a desire to discuss this topic as soon as possible due to the pressing nature of the issue.

In response, it was noted that the plan remained at a preliminary stage. It was agreed that decisions regarding where and how much growth should take place were central to the development of the Strategic Development Plan. It was emphasised that such growth must be strategic in nature, targeting specific areas for appropriate development.

It was expressed that concern existed over the potential consequences of Eryri National Park's adoption of Article 4, specifically that it may increase pressure on Conwy Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council to permit the development of new summer houses. It was noted that this could have a detrimental impact on the local economy and schools, and may contribute to the displacement of the local population.

It was questioned when members would have sight of the draft Delivery Agreement for the SDP. It was further questioned whether local authorities were designated as key consultees. In response, it was noted that the Delivery Agreement was currently in its first draft stage and that significant progress had been made to reach this point. It was noted that informal consultation had commenced during the past week, following the requirement for the Welsh Government to review the plan initially. It was further noted that the document would soon be circulated to each of the local planning authorities, as well as directly to Sub-Committee members and policy officers within each respective Council. It was confirmed that Local Authorities are key consultees, and that collaboration would be essential in the successful production of the SDP.

It was expressed that a document outlining the relationship between SDPs and Local Development Plans (LDPs) would be of value to members, in particular to help clarify their synergy and any legal implications arising between the two. In response, it was noted that this was a helpful recommendation and would be prioritised going forward, with electronic documentation to be circulated with the aim of informing a future agenda item for discussion.

It was questioned whether the stated five-year timeframe for producing the SDP was realistic. In response, it was noted that this was the estimated timeframe included in the guidance by Welsh Government.

8.

THE APPROACH TO PRODUCE THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP) FOR NORTH WALES

The report was submitted by the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Chief Executive and Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer.

RESOLVED

To accept the report.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To ensure that the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee is fully aware of the approach to be taken with the SDP and the main steps involved in the process of drafting plans.

DISCUSSION

It was explained that the purpose of the report was to provide the Sub-Committee with an initial overview of the process, outlining the current position and the reasons why progress had already been made ahead of this first meeting. It was hoped that members would appreciate the value of doing so, particularly as this CJC was one of only four across Wales, with only the Cardiff region having progressed far enough to develop and consult on a draft Delivery Agreement. It was noted, therefore, that this region was approximately 9 to 10 months behind Cardiff, although it was acknowledged that progress in other CJC areas had proven even more challenging.

It was noted that the report included the legislative background as well as the broader context for producing a SDP, which dates back to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 but was not enacted through regulation until 2021 under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act. It was emphasised that the principal driver for commencing work on a draft Delivery Agreement was the requirement set by Welsh Government for all CJsCs to submit such an agreement by the end of 2024.

It was noted that a seven-point timeframe existed for producing, agreeing, and submitting the Delivery Agreement, and that the current stage fell between points two and four. It was confirmed that this remained broadly in line with the indicative timeline. It was explained that the draft Delivery Agreement had already been produced and submitted to Welsh Government, and that it would be circulated to key stakeholders within the coming weeks. It was noted that this would be followed by a wider consultation during May and June, with the intention of seeking approval to submit the agreement, subject to funding and resource considerations, by July. It was further noted that the proposed timetable indicated submission to Welsh Government in August.

It was noted that two key meeting markers had been identified within the forward work programme: the first in late June or early July, to coincide with the feedback received from the consultation on the Delivery Agreement; and the second in October or November, when a further update would be provided regarding Welsh Government approval and the initiation of the SDP production process.

It was highlighted that the report included a broad overview of the eight-stage programme for developing the plan, which was shaped by the relevant regulations that govern the production of SDPs. It was also noted that the report identified a number of positive aspects and opportunities available to the Sub-Committee through producing the SDP collaboratively as a region, over a longer timeframe and at a higher strategic level.

It was questioned, in relation to the formal examination of the soundness of the SDP, whether this process would be public in nature, similar to that of LDPs. In response, it was confirmed that this was correct. It was explained that the process would follow the same procedures as those applied to an LDP.

The meeting began at 15:00 and ended at 15:40

Chair