

**NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**04/09/2025**

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**Present:** Councillor Nicola Roberts (Isle of Anglesey County Council) (Chair)

**Councillors:**

Craig ab Iago (Cyngor Gwynedd), Richard Jones (Flintshire County Council), Chris Cater (Conwy County Borough Council), Alan James (Denbighshire County Council) and Edgar Wyn Owen (Eryri National Park Authority).

**Chief Officers:**

Adrian Walters (Flintshire County Council), James Harland (Conwy County Borough Council), Dewi Jones (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Paul Mead (Denbighshire County Council), Gareth Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd) and Keira Sweeney (Eryri National Park Authority)

**Officers present:**

Alwen Williams (Chief Executive of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee), Claire Incledon (Deputy Monitoring Officer), David Hole (North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Operational Programme Manager), Andy Roberts (Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer), Dewi Morgan (Chief Finance Officer) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

**Others present:**

Adam Graham (Transport for Wales)

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from:-

- Councillor Hugh Jones (Wrexham County Borough Council) (Vice-Chair)
- Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer)
- Sian Pugh (Assistant Head of Finance)

**2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

There were no declarations of personal interest.

**3. URGENT ITEMS**

No urgent matters were raised.

**4. MINUTES**

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 May 2025 as a true record.

**5. DELIVERY AGREEMENT OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The report was submitted by the Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer.

**RESOLVED**

**To recommend to the Corporate Joint Committee that it is ready to approve the draft Delivery Agreement following consultation and submit it to the Welsh Government, subject to the SDP funding decision.**

## **REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

The Strategic Planning Sub-Committee is responsible for preparing the draft Delivery Agreement. The sub-committee has co-ordination and planning functions relating to each step towards delivering the SDP.

## **DISCUSSION**

Members were reminded that they had approved to hold a public consultation on the Strategic Development Plan Delivery Agreement in draft form for a six-week period, at an informal meeting of this Sub-committee held on 27 June 2025. It was updated that the public consultation had now concluded confirming that this report presented the feedback and responses received from the public and stakeholders.

It was reported that the Strategic Development Plan Delivery Plan had been approved by the Corporate Joint Committee at its meeting on 18 July 2025 and that the responses received as part of the consultation contributed to an update of that document.

It was noted that Officers had invited a large number of stakeholders and partners to participate in the public consultation, in order to ensure an open process. It was updated that 16 formal responses had been received to the public consultation from a number of organisations such as Local Authorities and specific officers within them, the Welsh Language Commissioner, community groups and Heneb. It was acknowledged that the number of responses that had been received was not high, but it was assured that the comments received were of a high standard and that this process was key to raising awareness of the Strategic Development Plan as a whole.

It was noted that a revised version of the responses received as part of the public consultation had been circulated to Members following the publication of the Agenda for this meeting. It was clarified that the consultation had not ended when the documentation of this meeting was being published and a number of the responses had reached Officers on the last day of the consultation. It was considered important that members received all the information that had come to hand and therefore a revised version of the responses was shared with Members, with the consent of the Chair.

It was highlighted that the responses asked whether sufficient time had been earmarked for consultative exercises. It was explained that the statutory requirements of ensuring that public consultations were held for a six-week period were adhered to in order to ensure legislative compliance. It was also noted that the Joint Committee had powers to extend the periods of public consultations if it wished to do so.

It was emphasised that a number of responses to the consultation highlighted Welsh language considerations. They were thanked for their comments and assured that the Welsh language received ongoing consideration within the work of the Joint Committee.

It was explained that a number of respondents had highlighted the duration of the Delivery Plan, which was a five-year period, considering whether this timeframe was too challenging and whether additional time would be required to deliver the Strategic Development Plan. In response to these considerations, the Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer confirmed that the timetable for the Plan was in line with statutory requirements emphasising that officers received guidance and advice to ensure that this timetable did not slip.

It was reported that several Local Authorities that had submitted comments to the public consultation had considered how the Plan was funded and what impact this would have on Local Authority budgets and resources. It was recognised that the funding of the Plan was a matter for the Corporate Joint Committee and that it was receiving constant consideration. It was elaborated that Officers were keen to ensure that resources were used in the most effective manner to ensure a collaborative process across the region. It was detailed that jobs would have to be created and secondments offered to ensure that the Plan was delivered, making every effort to ensure that that process was effective and not negatively disrupting Local Authority resources.

## **6. ISSUES AND OPTIONS RELATING TO FUNDING THE PRODUCTION OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)**

The report was submitted by the Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer.

### **RESOLVED**

**To approve the funding issues and options set out in the attached briefing note and to recommend that the Corporate Joint Committee considers all options for funding the SDP, including making further representations to the Welsh Government. The officers were asked to revise the wording of the Report to highlight budgetary expectations between the Government and the CJC and encourage a steady financial contribution from the Government in order to avoid the need for temporary grants when setting the long-term budget.**

### **REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

Ensure that the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee is fully aware of the funding issues and options relating to the SDP to inform their recommendations to the CJC.

### **DISCUSSION**

It was explained that the report highlighted options relating to funding the production of the Strategic Development Plan, prior to the preparation of budgets for the autumn term. A group of North Wales' chief planning officers were thanked for their work in investigating various financial issues associated with the Plan. It was noted that further consideration could be given to the financial issues that had been prepared by Officers to date, as Members had approved the submission of a draft version of the Strategic Development Plan to the Corporate Joint Committee earlier during this meeting.

Members were reminded that the Corporate Joint Committee had a legal duty by statute to develop a Strategic Development Plan as well as its funding. It was noted that officers had received a number of comments considering whether the Welsh Government should fund the Plan and the process of setting it up but in response, it was confirmed that no long-term plan had been submitted by the Government for the funding making it a requirement for the Joint Committee to comply with the statutory requirements.

Although no long-term budget had been earmarked by the Welsh Government, it was reported that they had identified a budget of approximately £400,000 which applied to all Welsh Corporate Joint Committees. It was noted that this funding would not be shared equally between the Joint Committees, , it would be allocated in accordance with the performance of the Joint Committees to develop their Delivery Plan for approval. It was explained that the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee was keen to ensure that progress was made on the Strategic Development Plan Delivery Plan during this financial year to be able to attract this funding to contribute to the funding of the Plan. It was

estimated that approximately £100,000 of this funding could be applied for following the 19 September 2025 meeting of the Corporate Joint Committee, if members approved the draft Delivery Plan. It was explained that if an additional financial commitment to contribute to the Plan's budget could be confirmed within the current financial year, it would be possible to apply for an additional £200,000 of this grant funding offered by the Welsh Government.

Pride was expressed that the Joint Committee's budgeting work had been very effective to date and although a significant amount of money had been earmarked to support the Plan, approximately £1.1million of the budget remained to be sourced from alternative sources. It was elaborated that considerations on how to address this funding gap would take place when considering budgets over the autumn term.

One budgetary option was explained, which was to increase contributions from the Local Authorities of the north Wales region by 5%. It was reported that this would equate to approximately £3.27million to £3.3million to fund the Plan.

It was noted that a Strategic Development Plan and the information on its funding would be submitted to the Welsh Government for approval if it were supported by this sub-committee and the Corporate Joint Committee.

It was reported that there was an estimated gap of around £1.1 million in the Strategic Development Plan budget over a five-year period. Concern was expressed that this would equate to a 50% increase in Local Authorities' contributions to the budget, as this placed significant additional pressure on the Authorities. It was added that the contributions varied between the Authorities according to the size of the population which would have a detrimental effect on those Authorities. In response to the concerns, the Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer stressed that this was only one of the budgetary options and gave assurance that no decision had been taken on the matter so far. It was elaborated that the Joint Committee would be going through a process of looking at budgets over the coming months and hopefully funding would be sourced from other sources, while also recognising that asking for additional input from the Local Authorities was an option that would have to be considered as part of that process – noting that this would be around an additional £30,000 annually from the 7 Authorities.

Furthermore, the Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer noted that if the Corporate Joint Committee was to successfully attract grant funding of approximately £200,000 as previously discussed, it would be equivalent to the additional contribution required by the Local Authorities for the first year of the Plan. The Chief Finance Officer stressed that this would be effective and also noted that the situation would need to be looked at annually when preparing budgets. Members were reminded of the need to submit budgets and contribution levies for all Local Authorities by January, giving them assurance that officers would work with them to endeavour to keep the levies as low as possible. The members were assured that approving the options submitted as part of the report to fund the Plan would not bind the Local Authorities to contribute additional budgets to the development, noting that further discussions would take place following confirmation of the budget.

In response to the discussion, concern was expressed that the Local Authorities would be able to meet any requirements for additional contributions, whilst also considering that no long-term financial commitment had been announced by the Welsh Government to support the development of the Plan. The officers were asked to highlight future budgetary expectations between the Government and the CJC and to encourage a consistent financial contribution from the Government to avoid the need for temporary grants in setting the long-term budget, proposing and seconding to strengthen this wording by the time the document was submitted to the Corporate Joint Committee on 19 September 2025.

Consideration was given to whether a decision on funding the production of the Strategic Development Plan could be postponed until the Senedd elections were held in 2026, to ensure that the Welsh Government's plans continued with the current arrangements and to consider whether the Government could contribute more significantly to the development. In response to the considerations, the Chief Executive explained that she hoped that continuing with the existing arrangements would attract additional funding from the Welsh Government in due course, and ensure that the Joint Committee successfully developed the Plan in a timely manner. Similarly, it was added that the Corporate Joint Committee would fail to meet statutory targets and expectations if there was any such delay in decisions.

The meeting commenced at 14:00 and concluded at 15:00.

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Chair