

Complete Agenda

Meeting

NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

Date and Time

2.00 pm, THURSDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER, 2025

Location

Virtual Meeting

For public access, please contact us

Contact Point

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NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

Voting Members

Councillors

Craig ab Iago
Richard Jones
Chris Cater
Alan James
Hugh Jones
Nicola Roberts

Cyngor Gwynedd
Flintshire County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Denbighshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Isle of Anglesey County Council

Eryri Member

Edgar Wyn Owen

Eryri National Park Authority

Constituent Council Link Officers

Andrew Farrow
David Fitzsimon
James Harland
Dewi Jones
Paul Mead
Gareth Jones

Jonathan Cawley

Flintshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Conwy County Council
Isle of Anglesey County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Assistant Head of Planning and Environment
Department
Eryri National Park Authority

Officers in Attendance

Alwen Williams
Iwan Evans
Claire Incledon
Dewi Morgan
Sian Pugh

Chief Executive of the Corporate Joint Committee
Monitoring Officer
Deputy Monitoring Officer
Chief Finance Officer
Assistant Head of Finance

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chair for consideration.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4 - 8

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the meeting held 06/05/25 be signed as a true record.

5. THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN DELIVERY AGREEMENT 9 - 18

The Chief Executive and the Regional Strategic Planning Officer to present the report.

6. ISSUES AND OPTIONS RELATING TO THE FUNDING OF THE PRODUCTION OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 19 - 27

The Chief Executive and the Regional Strategic Planning Officer to present the report.

**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 CJCs 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

REPORT TO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

4th September, 2025

TITLE: The Strategic Development Plan Delivery Agreement

AUTHOR: Alwen Williams, Chief Executive
Andy Roberts, Regional Strategic Planning Officer

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This report provides an update for the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee following a consultation exercise carried out for the Delivery Agreement (DA) for the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for North Wales. It highlights the consultation process followed, any comments received (at the time of writing the report) and the next steps involved in submitting the DA to Welsh Government.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. To consider the draft Delivery Agreement following consultation, and to recommend to the Corporate Joint Committee that it is ready for approval and submission to Welsh Government, subject to the resolution of the funding of the SDP.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. Responsibility to prepare the draft Delivery Agreement rests with the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee. The sub-committee has co-ordination and planning functions regarding each step towards delivery of the SDP.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. Members of the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee were briefed on the SDP draft Delivery Agreement at an informal Member's briefing session held on Friday, 27th June, 2025. Members were briefed on the content of the draft Delivery Agreement for the purposes of subsequently publishing it for consultation, in line with the requirements of the SDP regulations. The members were also advised on the funding position with the SDP and sought further information on the options available to fully fund the SDP. The feedback from this briefing session has been captured and brought to this meeting for formal consideration. The position on funding and options is the subject of a separate paper presented to this meeting.
- 4.2. The draft Delivery Agreement and procedural steps for (non-statutory) consultation was considered by the CJC at its meeting on 18th July, 2025 - [link to report](#).

- 4.3. The consultation process began following the CJC meeting on Friday, 18th July and will run until Friday, 29th August, 2025. This allows for a six-week period for consultation. The document was published on the Ambition North Wales website, along with contextual information about the purpose of the document and the means to make comments on it. Link to Delivery Agreement consultation on the website: [Ambition North Wales | Strategic Planning](#). The consultation was also promoted via social media.
- 4.4. The SDP Regulations specify types of stakeholders that the CJC should seek to engage with as part of the SDP process defines as either 'Specific Consultees' or 'General Consultees'. In terms of Specific Consultees, the regulations are prescriptive in terms of who these should comprise and the CJC has compiled a contact list that includes all those referenced in the Regulations, and additional bodies whom the CJC feel are relevant to include. Specific Consultees include all Members from constituent CJC Local Authorities, all Town and Community Councils within the CJC area, statutory undertakers such as Water and Power companies, Natural Resources Wales, Government departments and Local Authority officers. This group has been extended to incorporate Members of the Senedd and Members of Parliament, and a range of key corporate colleagues that the CJC already engage with.
- 4.5. The SDP regulations are much less prescriptive in relation to General Consultees, simply referencing categories of consultees that the CJC should attempt to engage with. These include groups who provide voluntary services to communities, various religious groups, groups whose main function relates to language and culture, business groups, and those involved in construction and development. A comprehensive list of contacts was compiled from the lists already used by North Wales Local Authorities as part of their Local Development Plan processes, and this formed the basis for a comprehensive email shot that went out on the 18th July raising awareness of the SDP process, the Delivery Agreement, and providing the opportunity to be involved in subsequent stages in the SDP process.
- 4.6. There is also the opportunity for any member of the public to comment on the Delivery Agreement, and this is made clear as part of the information provided on the website. Clearly, as the SDP progresses there will be specific public consultations held at key stages in the process, such as Preferred Strategy and the Deposit SDP.

5. CONSULTATION PROGRESS

- 5.1. At the time of writing this report, the consultation is in its final (sixth) week. Given the procedural nature of the Delivery Agreement document, it is not anticipated that there will be a significant response, and this has been the consistent experience with local authorities when they have published their LDP Delivery Agreements. That said it is important for the CJC to be open from the outset of the preparation of the SDP and an important part of this consultation has been to raise awareness that the CJC has begun the SDP process, and that there is an opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders to be involved in the process as it progresses.
- 5.2. This has been reflected in the responses received to date, as there are only three specific comments that related directly to the Delivery Agreement per se, and these are shown in **Appendix 1** along with the responses to those comments. These comments did not seek to amend the DA but wanted clarification on some key points.
- 5.3. There has been a significant level of acknowledgement of the contact that the CJC has made with stakeholders promoting the opportunity to be involved in the SDP process, and these have all been positive in thanking the CJC for the opportunity. It has also helped to clarify and update contact details from the lists provided by the Local Authorities, some of which are several years

old now. This will assist in a general rationalisation of the contact lists following the finalisation of the Delivery Agreement and its preparation for submission to the Welsh Government.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1. As this report has had to be prepared in advance of the end of the consultation period, due to the August recess and longer lead-in times for the resumption of CJC committees in September, any further comments that are received, **together with any recommendations for changes**, will be presented to the meeting on the 4th September. Whilst it is not anticipated that there will be anything fundamental that will arise, it does tend to be the practice that comments are received at the very end of consultation periods, even though six weeks has been allowed for comments.
- 6.2. Subject to the reporting of any further comments, the sub-committee is asked to confirm that the Delivery Agreement is ready for submission to Welsh Government and to recommend this on to the CJC at its next meeting. The ability to formally submit the DA to Welsh Government for approval is also subject to the CJC determining how the SDP will be fully funded (see separate report on this agenda).

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. Costs will be drawn from existing North Wales CJC budgets with the necessary support from the CJC's Legal and Finance teams. The CJC will also seek to secure further funding support from Welsh Government. In terms of the present CJC budget for 2025-26 relating to the SDP, this budget would need to be increased by 50% of the current level annually, over the 2026-2031 plan production period, to meet the full costs of the SDP. A more detailed assessment is part of a further report on this agenda.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. The Corporate Joint Committee has a statutory duty to prepare a Strategic Development Plan further to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The specific requirements and steps to produce a Strategic Development Plan are set out in The Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Specific Comments and Responses

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer:

"There are a series of key decisions which lead ultimately to the adoption of a Strategic Development Plan. Although a technical document in many respects the approval of the Delivery Agreement for submission to Welsh Government is a significant decision. It sets out the proposed process and commitment of the CJC to deliver the plan. The

recommendation draws attention to the issue of funding of the Plan process and the need for the CJC to ensure resolution of this issue as a pre-condition for the submission of the Agreement to Welsh Government. The related report on finance sets out the key issues which are still outstanding and will need to be considered by the CJC as part of its overall position on the budget and approaches to Welsh Government.”

ii. Statutory Finance Officer:

“The submission of the Delivery Agreement is a key step in the development of the Strategic Development Plan.

Members will note that the funding of the SDP is a separate item on the agenda of this meeting. As noted in the report, there is a budget in place to fund this work in 2025/26, and the budget for 2026/27 will have to be approved before the end of January 2026.”

Appendix 1: SDP Delivery Agreement: Comments received and Responses

Ref	Comment by	Comment Details	CJC Response to Comment	Changes to DA
1	Cllr Geraint Wynn Parry Cyngor Gwynedd	<p>Thank you for sending me this information. As a new Councillor, I have a great interest in your organisation (CJC) and the delivery of Strategic Plans (where Transport is an important part of the main Strategic Plan itself).</p> <p>I'll read the Delivery Agreement in more detail and let you know.</p> <p>One issue that immediately stands out is your program with a very short timeline to agree a draft of the Delivery Agreement. Collaboration must be shown to accept everyone's comments if you want to avoid complaints. If you have lost time providing the Agreement, you really need to avoid squeezing the approval timing. I say this in the best spirit.</p>	<p>Thank you for your recent email in response to the notification of the publication of the SDP draft Delivery Agreement. In addition, its good of you to set out the interest you have in the plan going forward. Clearly you are an important stakeholder and will be kept informed as the plan progresses.</p> <p>Transport as you refer is a key element of the plan, both in terms of the SDP recognising specific transport schemes and projects where the land they need to happen may need protecting for example, but also in terms of recognising the importance of transport infrastructure to support the spatial strategy and main locations for future growth and development. A key source to inform this will be the Regional Transport Plan.</p> <p>In terms of the timing of the Delivery Agreement, there is no intention to rush its preparation and in fact the consultation that has been commenced for six weeks is not a statutory requirement but one the CJC has recognised as important in the spirit of openness and of sharing each stage of the process. In addition, the delivery agreement is a procedural document only, a plan of how the plan will be produced if you like and does not contain anything that relates to plan policy formulation or the identification of the location of development, for example. Welsh Government are aware of the stage reached with the plan and are supportive of</p>	None

			the positive progress made by the CJC to prepare for the commencement of the SDP.	
2	Cllr Jina Gwyrfai Cyngor Gwynedd	A new Strategic Development Plan - I would like to see what attention will be given to the Welsh Communities Report and also to the Welsh Language.	<p>Thank you for your email in relation to the Strategic Development Plan. As the SDP is an almost identical process to that used for LDPs such as your own in Gwynedd, the requirements to take account of the impact to the Welsh Language are the same as for the local Plan. This included considering the impact on the Welsh Language as part of a wider Integrated Impact Assessment to ensure that the plan is as sustainable as possible, and in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations objectives. The CJC is already planning work to identify the scope of this assessment and the key aspects of Welsh Language impact to include within that.</p> <p>To inform the above, all material evidence will be referred to and that will clearly include the recent publication you refer to. Whilst the publication refers in the main to changes needed to national policy and guidance, it clearly is of relevance to the SDP process and particularly so where its recommendations result in changes to national policy and guidance which the SDP will then need to fall into line with.</p>	None
3	Jenny Emmett Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology	Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology is not currently mentioned in the lists of consultees, but the pre-merger organisations of Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust and Gwynedd Archaeological Trust do appear in the lists provided by Gwynedd, Flintshire and	The CJC will ensure the contact list is updated to reference Heneb and not the old trusts – the list was compiled from those each local authority uses for its LDPs so the CJC will make the same point to the LPAs that they need to update your details.	Update the CJC SDP contact list with the amended details

		Denbighshire. To avoid confusion, Heneb should be listed as a consultee for all six of the local authorities and Eryri NPA, and references to the former regional Trusts should be removed.		
4	Jenny Emmett Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology	Heneb has a statutory role in maintaining the statutory Historic Environment Record on behalf of the Welsh Ministers, which public bodies are obliged to use in carrying out their functions, and are the archaeological planning advisors for each of the local planning authorities. To ensure we are consulted at the relevant points in the process, alongside other organisations delivering public services, it may be appropriate for us to be grouped for consultation purposes with the Specific Consultation Bodies rather than with the broader suite of special interest groups and voluntary / community organisations.	Whilst the SDP regulations are quite specific in terms of the type of consultee and who should form part of the Specific Consultee list, the CJC has nevertheless added Heneb to that list.	Add Heneb to the SDP Specific Consultee list
5	Jenny Emmett Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology	There is little mention of cultural heritage and the historic environment in the DDA, and the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023 is missing from the outline of relevant policy and legislation. Both the physical historic environment and intangible cultural heritage should be included in the ISA, in accordance with the integrated approach of the WBFGA 2015 and the SEA Regulations 2004.	In terms of the Delivery Agreement, it is a procedural document and not one that represents perse, actual plan content. The CJC will certainly address the lack of reference to the legislation you refer to but in terms of your point about reference to cultural heritage and historic environment, it should be borne in mind that the Delivery Agreement is a procedural document that sets out how the plan will be produced, who will be involved, and how long it will take. On this basis nothing is ruled in or out and there are key processes contained within the SDP regulations	Amend the draft Delivery Agreement to refer to the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023

			and a draft SDP Manual that relate to things like assembling an evidence base and scoping the content for an Integrated Impact Assessment where these issues will be considered. The SDP must also reference Future Wales The National Plan and how it deals with the issues you highlight, in order to determine how these issues may convert to policy at the strategic regional level. That is where the benefit of you now being a unified body can really help, and understanding how you feel the issues you raise could be referenced at a regional strategic planning policy level.	
6	Jenny Emmett Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology	The list of Evidence Base Documents in Appendix 1 includes a Landscape Character Assessment and Special Landscape Designation Assessment. You may be aware that Natural Resources Wales undertakes regular reviews of this nature which will be relevant, and are presently working with Heneb to look particularly at change in areas designated on the non-statutory Register of Landscapes of Historic Interest. As and when these strategic assessments are being prepared, we would like to be consulted so that we can contribute any relevant information arising from this work.	Appendix 1 of the Delivery Agreement includes a broad basis for the likely evidence that may be required to inform production of the SDP and a large part of this will be to examine what exists already, both in terms of the evidence each Local Authority has collated for their respective LDPs, and sources such as those you mention. It would however be useful if NRW were more proactive in promoting this work and that they also presented it in a wider than local context. In a recent discussion with an experienced NRW officer they referred to their frustration that it was difficult to get an overriding strategic picture of key environmental work and policy areas that form part of NRW's remit, which would be helpful to SDP work. The CJC do not see that it is the role of the SDP to collate such work or carry out strategic studies to inform NRW if that work is only being done at a local or piecemeal level by NRW, and	

			the lessons from the way the whole issue of phosphates has been handled need to be learnt also. This will form part of early engagement in terms of evidence gathering as well as informing how we scope work on things like landscape assessment as the CJC certainly do not want to simply expend public money on 'reinventing the wheel' if these assessments are already available and/or the responsibility of others to prepare.	
7	Jenny Emmett Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology	It should also be noted that, increasingly, specific assessment (known as ASIDOHL) is being required by Heneb and Cadw for Candidate Sites affecting Registered Historic Landscapes, to inform site allocation in local development plans. It is reasonable to anticipate that this may be needed when considering strategic level proposals, which have a commensurate large scope for historic landscape impact, as a complement to the LCA and SLDA.	In terms of ASIDOHL, when you say that Heneb and Cadw are 'requiring' these for candidate sites, The CJC is unclear as to how that work links to the CJC (and respective LPA) responsibility to produce LDPs and the guidance they follow in terms of PPW and the LDP manual in terms of the candidate sites process and how they select sites? What role does Heneb and Cadw play in site selection? The CJC cannot find reference to ASIDOHL in either of the national guidance mentioned? It would be helpful for Heneb to clarify how these assessments will apply to SDP candidate site assessment process.	None Heneb to clarify reference to ASIDOHL

REPORT TO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

4th September, 2025

TITLE: Issues and options relating to the funding of the production of the Strategic Development Plan

AUTHOR: Alwen Williams, Chief Executive
Andy Roberts, Regional Strategic Planning Officer

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This report provides information for the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee relating to the matter of funding the production of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP). This is part of the CJC's statutory duty to prepare the SDP, and the report identifies the costs of production, the present budget provision, and the level required to meet the full costs, including options to mitigate costs.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. To consider the funding issues and options set out in the attached briefing note **Appendix 1**, and to recommend to the Corporate Joint Committee that it considers all options to fund the SDP, including making further representations to Welsh Government.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

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

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. The Strategic Planning Sub-Committee considered the issue of funding for the SDP at an informal briefing session held on Friday, 27th June, 2025. This report is a formal appraisal on the issues and options available to fully fund the SDP.
- 4.2. The attached briefing note (**Appendix 1**) provides a full breakdown of the estimated overall cost of producing the SDP, resulting from detailed work carried out by the North Wales Planning Officers in 2021. Allowing for price increases since that work was done, the overall cost of producing the SDP is assessed to be £3.276m.
- 4.3. The other CJCs in Wales have made similar estimates, ranging from the figure above to £4m in one case, and concerns about funding the level of costs involved is the subject of a draft letter under consideration from CJC Chairs that is intended to go to Welsh Ministers.

- 4.4. The SDP Regulations clearly set out that the production of an SDP is a statutory duty for the CJC, and implicit with that is the responsibility to meet the full costs of doing so. Apart from some early modest start-up grant funding, there is no identified funding for the SDP from Welsh Government, unlike a published commitment to support Regional Transport Plan work. As things stand, it is therefore up to the CJC to meet the full costs of the SDP.
- 4.5. Through prudent budgeting, the CJC has already made provision for, and funded early work on the SDP evidence base, alongside parallel work for the RTP. The 2025/26 CJC budget allocates a budget of £0.431m for SDP work, mostly comprising early salary costs for CJC staff, and an allocation for consultancy support. The constituent Local Authorities in the North Wales region and the National Park Authority, currently meet these budget costs via contributions to the CJC, apportioned based on population size.
- 4.6. From a resource's perspective, the CJC has engaged a lead officer internally to co-ordinate progress and to date:
- A draft Delivery Agreement has been produced and is currently being consulted on.
 - Early consultancy support work has been scoped and is being costed at present.
 - The Strategic Planning Sub-Committee has been convened with a Chair and Vice-Chair elected.
 - A review of the budget position and funding requirements for the SDP has been undertaken.
 - In terms of the budget position, the Delivery Agreement has set out a five-year SDP plan production programme, 2026-2031, with an overall estimated cost of £3.276m.
- 4.7. Taking the current 2025/26 budget allocation for SDP (£0.431m) and projecting it forward over the five-year SDP programme from 2026, would provide a total budget of £2.158m.

5. MEETING THE FULL SDP COSTS

- 5.1. Compared to the estimated total cost of the SDP (£3.276m) this leaves a potential budget shortfall of c£1.1m over the five-year programme, or £0.223m per year. This represents an average annual additional requirement of £32k per Local Authority each year for the five-year programme (over and above current SDP contributions), although this will vary when apportioned by population size. NB: the average contribution to the SDP in the 2025/26 budget was £61.6k. - so an increase of c.50% of the present contribution is required. It is only relevant for Members to note that as part of the calculations made by North Wales Chief Planning Officers in 2021, higher average and/or apportioned costs to local authorities were identified, than the above figures.
- 5.2. Whilst the CJC has reached a significant first milestone with the SDP in producing and consulting on the Delivery Agreement, it will not be able to formally submit the Delivery Agreement to Welsh Government for approval until it can demonstrate how it will meet all the SDP production costs. It can only do this via the 2026/27 budget setting process by demonstrating that it has set a proportionate budget to meet the year 1 costs fully, and then to provide a commitment statement to match that provision for the remaining four years of plan production.

5.3. The CJC has several options available to it to mitigate the budget shortfall:

- Secure an in-year (2025/26) one off grant of up to £200k that Welsh Government are currently offering, which is performance related, which would depend on CJs approving a draft Delivery Agreement post –consultation (Sept 2025 CJC Target for DA sign off - £100k), and formal submission within this financial year (i.e. before 31st March, 2026 - £100k). The latter depends on setting a full budget as per paragraph 5.2 above.
- Increasing the Local Authority levy for SDP in the 2026/27 financial year and making a commitment to maintain that level for a further four years.
- Explore use of balances or reserves from previous prudent budgeting.
- Further dialogue with Welsh Government (e.g. Chairs letter).
- Collaborative working with local authorities that may allow salary savings to be made and used to reduce contributions in year.
- Maximise cost-effective consultancy support.
- Efficient interpretation of SDP Regulations to speed up plan production and reduce overall costs.

5.4. Ultimately, the CJC must demonstrate it can fund the production of the SDP and until it can do so, it cannot submit the DA for formal approval or make any further progress with the plan production.

6. NEXT STEPS

6.1. Members are asked to consider and endorse the issues and options paper attached to this report and recommend to the CJC that it considers these options.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Costs will be drawn from existing North Wales CJC budgets with the necessary support from the CJC's Legal and Finance teams. The CJC will also seek to secure further funding support from the Welsh Government and explore all other relevant funding options. In terms of the present CJC budget for 2025/26 relating to the SDP, this budget would need to be increased by 50% of the current level annually, over the 2026-2031 plan production period, to meet the full costs of the SDP.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1. The Corporate Joint Committee has a statutory duty to prepare a Strategic Development Plan further to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The specific requirements and steps to produce a Strategic Development Plan are set out in The Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: SDP Funding Issues and Options Briefing Note

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer:

“The report underlines the issue of funding of the Plan process and the need for the CJC to ensure resolution of this issue as a pre-condition for the submission of the Agreement to Welsh Government. The report sets out the key issues which are still outstanding and will need to be considered by the CJC as part of its overall position on the budget and approaches to Welsh Government.”

ii. Statutory Finance Officer:

“Setting the strategic planning budget is a decision made as part of the overall budget-setting process for the Corporate Joint Committee, as is its apportionment among the constituent councils and the national park authority. Budgeting is an iterative process, and the estimated costs of delivering the Strategic Development Plan over the next five years is under continuous consideration, whilst the estimates provided by the North Wales Planning Officers is a useful and informed basis to undertake the work.

Although paragraph 4.7 of the report and the tables in the appendix demonstrate a shortfall should the budget allocation for the Strategic Development Plan remain static over the five-year period of the programme, this has not yet been agreed by the Corporate Joint Committee. The budget for 2026/27 will be set in January 2026.

The options in paragraph 5.3 can be summarised as increasing income, reducing costs, or a combination of both. The Corporate Joint Committee has no tax raising powers therefore the only increase in income it can expect would be additional Welsh Government grants or an increase in the levy charged on the six constituent councils and Eryri National Park Authority. Welsh Government is unlikely to offer additional funding unless representation is made by the Corporate Joint Committees for an additional contribution.”

BRIEFING NOTE

SDP Funding Issues and Options

Andy Roberts, Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer

Context

The CJC has a statutory duty to produce a Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and as part of this, it should assess the resources required to complete this duty, including the means to fully fund the production of the plan.

The Welsh Government Explanatory Note 1 (Strategic Development Plans- the transition to Corporate Joint Committees) produced in 2021 states at paragraph 5.2 that *“a key link needs to be made between the Delivery Agreement (DA), the scale and scope of a plan preparation team and financial planning, as without all three being in place progress may be impeded”*.

Work was undertaken by the North Wales Planning Officers Group (NWPOG) in 2021 to assess both the scale and scope of a plan preparation team, and to assess the scope and likely costs of producing an SDP overall. This exercise calculated that the overall costs for producing the SDP would be £3,120,461 which assuming a reasonable 5% for increases/inflation since then would now be £3,276,484.

Whilst the North Wales CJC has prudently set a budget for commencement of work on the SDP in its first budget for 2025/26 (£431,500) when projected over the anticipated 5-year plan production timetable (2026/27 - 2030/31), this would (if kept static) not meet the full costs of the SDP, estimated by NWPOG.

Resourcing and funding for the SDP is a key issue being raised by all four of the CJs in Wales at present, as whilst most CJs have engaged consultants to lead on producing Regional Transport Plans (RTP), the lengthier and more complex requirements for an SDP require the CJC to consider employing its own staff to co-ordinate the SDP in a cost-effective manner.

The chairs of all four CJs are considering making an approach to the Welsh Government to say that without significant funding support from WG, they will be unable to adequately resource the preparation of an SDP for their respective regions.

Welsh Government have (informally at present) intimated that there is potentially £400k available in year to incentivise work on DAs by all CJs. This would provide £100k per CJC if distributed equally, but it is understood that it is more likely to be offered to those CJs who have already begun work on their DA. At present the Cardiff Capital Region has prepared a draft DA and carried out a consultation, but it has not submitted this to Welsh Government. Ambition North Wales have a first draft DA that will be consulted on over the summer. The other two CJs have not begun work on their DAs. This means that there is potentially £200k available to Ambition North Wales - £100k when a draft DA is agreed by the CJC (September 2025) and £100k when a final DA is submitted to Welsh Government (NB: the final DA need to identify how the SDP will be fully funded by the CJC, and be submitted by 31.03.2026 to be able to claim the second £100k grant).

The CJC budget allocation for SDP 2025/26

The CJC agreed its budget for the 2025/26 financial year at its meeting on 17 January, 2025. The agreed revenue expenditure and income for the SDP is as follows:

North Wales Corporate Joint Committee's 2025/26 revenue budget.						Appendix 1
	Strategic Planning	Transport	Investment Zone	Corporate Joint Committee	Total Budget	
Expenditure	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	
Employees						
Employee expenditure (Pay, N.I. & Superannuation)	226,230	112,970	0	428,880	768,080	
Lay members allowance	0	0	0	1,230	1,230	
Employees Total	226,230	112,970	0	430,110	769,310	
Travel						
Travel and subsistence	940	400	0	1,660	3,000	
Travel Total	940	400	0	1,660	3,000	
Supplies and services						
Tools and equipment	3,440	1,470	0	5,090	11,000	
Miscellaneous supplies	940	400	0	1,660	3,000	
Engagement and meetings	930	1,160	0	2,780	4,870	
Audit Wales' fees	0	0	0	30,000	30,000	
External consultants	132,500	66,340	0	10,000	208,840	
Insurance	15,000	15,000	0	30,000	60,000	
Systems	4,770	5,960	0	14,310	25,040	
Supplies and services Total	157,580	90,330	0	94,840	342,750	
Support Services						
Finance Services Support (Includes S151 Officer)	11,630	10,920	0	47,100	69,650	
Legal (Includes Monitoring Officer)	12,940	12,940	0	27,330	53,210	
Democratic Support	14,220	17,770	0	42,650	74,640	
Corporate Services	4,750	4,920	0	12,710	22,380	
Information Technology	3,210	1,380	0	5,690	10,280	
Support Services Total	46,750	47,930	0	135,480	230,160	
Set-up costs						
Legal	0	0	0	50,000	50,000	
External consultants	0	0	0	72,000	72,000	
Investment Zone	0	0	180,000	0	180,000	
Set-up costs Total	0	0	180,000	122,000	302,000	
Total Expenditure Budget	431,500	251,630	180,000	784,090	1,647,220	
Investment Zone Contribution from reserve	(56,460)	(67,450)	(180,000)	(440,830)	(180,000)	
Total Net Expenditure Budget	375,040	184,180	0	343,260	902,480	
	Strategic Planning	Other functions		Total Levy	2024/25 Levy	(Increase) / Decrease
Income	(£)	(£)		(£)		
Partners Contributions through a levy						
Conwy County Borough Council	(59,630)	(87,190)		(146,820)	(123,880)	(22,940)
Denbighshire County Council	(52,660)	(74,050)		(126,710)	(107,300)	(19,410)
Flintshire County Council	(84,450)	(118,820)		(203,270)	(172,610)	(30,660)
Cynfor Gwynedd	(53,860)	(90,830)		(144,690)	(121,130)	(23,560)
Isle of Anglesey County Council	(37,540)	(52,800)		(90,340)	(76,710)	(13,630)
Wrexham County Borough Council	(73,770)	(103,750)		(177,520)	(150,420)	(27,100)
Eryri National Park Authority	(13,130)			(13,130)	(12,770)	(360)
Total Income Budget	(375,040)	(527,440)		(902,480)	(764,820)	

The gross expenditure budget for SDP work is £431,500 which includes all staffing, consultancy, supplies and services, and other support costs. The funding source for this is the proportionate contribution from each local authority which amounts to £375,040 plus a contribution from reserves of £56,460.

If the present budget were to remain static for the duration of the SDP, then the total budget would be £2,157,500 from the 2026/27 financial year (i.e. £431,500 x 5). When compared to the revised NWPOG cost estimate this would leave a funding shortfall of £1,118,984 (or £223,796.81 p.a.). This represents an average annual requirement for an additional £31,970.97 from each local authority.

To complete the DA for submission to Welsh Government the CJC must set out the costs for producing the SDP, and the figures provided by NWPOG are the only reasonable estimates available for this purpose. They are also in line with similar costs calculated by the CCR in their draft DA and broader estimates made by other CJs that put the potential costs between £3.5-£4.5m. Even more critical is the fact that the CJC must also be able to demonstrate that it has allocated sufficient budget to meet

these costs over the life of the SDP project, prior to the submission of the DA to Welsh Government for approval.

Ways to meet the funding shortfall

When NWPOG prepared the costing estimates for producing the SDP (table 5 below) the apportionment of costs per local authority was also set out, based on population size of each LPA (table 7 below).

Table 5 - Annual Budget for the 5 Year Delivery Programme (skeleton staff year 1 only)

COST	Year 1 2022/23	Year 2 2023/24	Year 3 2024/25	Year 4 2025/26	Year 5 2026/27
Project start-up	£50,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
SDP Team	£82,070	£448,848	£448,848	£448,848	£448,848
SDP Team Start-up	£13,000	£0	£0	£0	£0
Evidence Base	£0	£265,000	£265,000	£265,000	£0
Examination costs	£0	£0	£0	£50,000	£200,000
Translation	£0	£12,500	£12,500	£12,500	£12,500
Printing	£0	£13,750	£13,750	£13,750	£13,750
IT/Database costs	£0	£20,000	£3,333	£3,333	£3,333
Total Annual Budget Cost	£145,070	£760,098	£743,431	£793,431	£678,431

Table 7 – Local Planning Authority cost apportionment (skeleton staff year 1)

Local Authority	Population	Proportion	SDP Cost Year 1 (£)	SDP Cost Year 2 (£)	SDP Cost Year 3 (£)	SDP Cost Year 4 (£)	SDP Cost Year 5 (£)	Total SDP Cost (£)
Anglesey	70,000	10.02%	14,533	76,145	74,476	79,484	67,964	312,602
Gwynedd	103,000	14.74%	21,391	112,076	109,619	116,991	100,035	460,112
Snowdonia National Park	25,400	3.63%	5,270	27,613	27,007	28,823	24,646	113,359
Conwy	113,000	16.18%	23,476	123,002	120,305	128,396	109,786	504,964
Denbighshire	95,300	13.65%	19,803	103,757	101,482	108,307	92,609	425,957
Flintshire	155,600	22.28%	32,321	169,347	165,633	176,773	151,152	695,226
Wrexham	136,100	19.49%	28,277	148,159	144,910	154,656	132,240	608,242
North Wales	698,400	100.00%	145,070	760,098	743,431	793,431	678,431	3,120,461

Whilst the distribution of costs year on year may vary, the overall budget estimate is robust enough to use for the purposes of submitting the DA. The main difference is that it may be simpler to average out the budget required year on year. Another difference is that the original calculations were done in 2021, and it is prudent to estimate an uplift due to increased costs and inflation since then. A reasonable 5% uplift has been applied which brings the total budget required for the SDP to £3,276,484. This is compared below with the budget available for SDP in the 2025/26 approved SDP budget.

Budget comparison:

a) 2025/26 CJC SDP Revenue Budget and 5 years projected (2026/27-2030/31)

£	2025/26	5 Year Projected
Employees	226,230	1,131,150
External consultants	132,500	662,500
Travel	940	4,700
Materials and Services	25,080	125,400
Support Services	46,750	233,750
Total	431,500	2,157,500

b) Estimated SDP budget prepared by NWPOG

£	5 Year
SDP budget	3,120,461
Plus allowance for increased costs (5%)	3,276,484

c) **Projected Budget less Estimate costs (shortfall)**

£	5 Year	per year
	-1,118,984	-223,796.80

Distribution of Shortfall:

Welsh Government have advised that it is appropriate to apportion costs to constituent local authorities within the CJC, based on their population. This approach was adopted by the CJC and this is how the contributions to the 2025/26 CJC SDP revenue budget have been calculated. Using this approach to apportion the annualised shortfall shown above, the CJC will need to find the following annual contribution (column d) in addition to that already made to the 2025/26 budget (column f), for the five-year duration of the SDP project, to fully fund the SDP. This does not prevent all other sources of funding from being investigated but does provide a 'worst case scenario' from the perspective of strategic financial planning by the CJC.

Apportionment of SDP budget shortfall by LPA							
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h
LPA	Population	%	Population % applied to annual budget shortfall	Annual shortfall x5	2025/26 Strategic Planning Budget Contribution*	2025/26 Contribution plus annualised shortfall	Total Annual Contribution x 5
Anglesey	70,000	10.02%	22,430.95	112,154.75	37,540	59,970.95	299,854.75
Conwy	113,000	16.18%	36,209.96	181,049.82	59,630	95,839.96	479,199.82
Denbighshire	95,300	13.65%	30,538.14	152,690.69	52,660	83,198.14	415,990.69
Flintshire	155,600	22.28%	49,860.80	249,304.00	84,450	134,310.80	671,554.00
Gwynedd	103,000	14.75%	33,005.54	165,027.71	53,860	86,865.54	434,327.71
Snowdonia National Park	25,400	3.64%	8,139.23	40,696.15	13,130	21,269.23	106,346.15
Wrexham	136,100	19.49%	43,612.18	218,060.89	73,770	117,382.18	586,910.89
	698,400		223,796.80	1,118,984.00	375,040	598,836.80	2,994,184.00
					56,460	282,300	3,276,484.00
					<p>* NB: there was a contribution from reserves of £56,460 in year</p>		
					<p>Assumes contribution from reserves will be repeated for 5 years</p>		

This would result in the total annual contributions shown in column g above which if sustained over the five years of the SDP timeframe, would provide sufficient funding to cover the estimated total costs (plus 5% uplift) (column h). This is also caveated by the fact that the contributions from LPAs to the 2025/26 revenue budget did not meet the whole expenditure budget, and the difference was made up by a contribution from reserves. It is not clear, but it has been assumed that this contribution could continue for the five years of the LDP project timeframe. If this is not the case, then there would be an additional £282,300 would need to be found for the SDP i.e. 5 x £56,460.

Implications for the CJC:

The above cost calculations and apportionment represent an average 60% increase on the provision made in the 2025/26 CJC Strategic Planning revenue budget. Whilst this increase is significant it is the case that only the initial costs of producing the SDP were taken into account in setting the 2025/26 CJC budget. It is particularly relevant to note that even with the required increase in contribution set out above to meet the budget shortfall, the apportioned total contributions shown in column g and h above, would still be less than those set out in the work done by NWPOG back in 2021 (see table 7 above).

The above assessment therefore has been prepared to brief senior officers and Members, with a view to influencing the budget setting process going forward from 2026/27, and until adoption of the SDP in 2031, as well as facilitating further discussions about funding with Welsh Government.

Possible ways to reduce the budget shortfall:

Welsh Government have indicated that funding is potentially available this year as a one-off grant of up to £200k. This would potentially cover around 20% of the overall shortfall thereby reducing the level of additional requirement for LPAs in subsequent years. The ability to carry forward unused budget from 2025/26 will also help lower the future additional costs for LPAs. An assessment should also be made of the level and availability of any further reserves or balances that may have accrued from unspent budget in previous years to assist with this.

Simultaneously, a review of the NWPOG work is underway to establish if there is any scope to reduce the costs downwards.