
**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
06/02/26**

Present:

Councillors: Councillor Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council) (Chair)
Councillor Jason McLellan (Denbighshire Council) (Vice-chair)

Dave Hughes (Flintshire County Council), Nia Jeffreys (Cyngor Gwynedd), Gary Pritchard (Isle of Anglesey County Council) and Edgar Owen (Chair of Eryri National Park Authority).

Chief Executives of Constituent Councils: Dafydd Gibbard (Cyngor Gwynedd), Rhun ap Iwan (Conwy County Borough Council), Helen White (Denbighshire County Council) and Richard Weigh (Wrexham County Borough Council).

Other officers present: Alwen Williams (CJC Chief Executive), Hedd Vaughan Evans (Head of Operations), Dewi Morgan (Chief Finance Officer), Sian Pugh (Assistant Head of Finance), Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Mark Watkins (Interim Head of Legal Services), Claire Incledon (Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

- Councillor Julie Fallon (Conwy County Borough Council)
- Dylan Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council)
- Alwyn Jones (Wrexham County Borough Council) with Richard Weigh deputising.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

A declaration of personal interest for Item 4 was received from the Interim Head of Legal Services. It was noted that it was a prejudicial interest and he withdrew from the meeting for the discussion.

It was confirmed that it was not appropriate for the Monitoring Officer to declare an interest during this meeting as he had formally stepped down from the post prior to this meeting. It was explained that he would be available to provide advice during the meeting should any legal issues arise as part of the discussion.

The Monitoring Officer was thanked for his detailed and fair work. Thanks were expressed to him for being balanced, impartial and consistent and it was noted that his contribution had been very valuable to the development of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee. It was acknowledged that the role of the Monitoring Officer can be a challenging one, and he was thanked for being firm in his stance and legal knowledge on all occasions.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

The report was submitted by the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED:

To approve the appointment of Mark Watkins as interim Monitoring Officer.

DISCUSSION

It was reported that the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee had a duty to appoint a Monitoring Officer in accordance with Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended by Regulation 7 of the Corporate Joint Committees (General)(No.2)(Wales) Regulations 2021).

It was explained that the role had been carried out by Iwan Evans on a part-time basis since 2019, as he was also a Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services at Cyngor Gwynedd. However, it was stressed that this arrangement was no longer sustainable as the responsibilities and operation of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee had grown significantly resulting in an increase in the legal support and advice required.

Potential risks that may arise if the current arrangement were to be modified were highlighted such as; lack of overall capacity, the potential for conflicts of interest as well as risks in ensuring independence, accountability, resilience and impartiality.

It was noted that the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee had secured a budget for this role when agreeing the 2026/27 budget at its meeting on 23 January 2026. It was proposed that an experienced individual undertake the post on an interim basis, to ensure continuity of activities and to ensure that risks would be managed, until a permanent appointment was made. It was confirmed that Mark Watkins had been identified as an appropriate individual for the interim role as he had fulfilled the same role for the Cardiff Capital Region Corporate Joint Committee. It was noted that he had been contracted with the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee since 2 February 2026 as a locum to ensure the smooth transfer of statutory responsibilities and functions.

Sincere thanks were expressed to the Monitoring Officer for his continued and tireless support in all aspects of the work of the Joint Committee.

During the discussion, the following observations were noted:

Thanks to the Monitoring Officer for all his support were reiterated.

It was noted that the report asked members to consider the appointment of Mark Watkins as Monitoring Officer, and that it did not confirm that it was an interim appointment. In response, it was stressed that it was an interim appointment that was to be considered during this discussion and meeting, with a permanent appointment to be made in the future.

Reference was made to the job description, emphasising the importance of having a discussion on language skills when a permanent appointment was made in the future. It was agreed that this discussion was an important one ensuring that it would be a consideration in the appointment of a Monitoring Officer on a permanent basis. The Chief Executive added that creating the job description would be one of the responsibilities of the interim Monitoring Officer, stressing that the linguistic element would be an important part of it. It was also clarified that the appointment of a permanent Monitoring Officer was planned relatively quickly, noting that this temporary appointment gave the freedom to ensure time so that the correct appointment was made for the benefit of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

The meeting started at 11:45 and ended at 12:00.

(Chair)