

# Complete Agenda



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Meeting

**NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE**

Date and Time

**3.15 pm, WEDNESDAY, 1ST JULY, 2026**

Location

**Virtual Meeting**

Contact Point

**Jasmine Jones**

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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 Incedon  
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. ELECT CHAIR**

To elect Chair for 2026 / 2027.

**2. ELECT VICE CHAIR**

To elect Vice Chair for 2026 / 2027.

**3. APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

**5. URGENT BUSINESS**

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

**6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

4 - 10

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the meeting held 26/01/26 be signed as a true record.

**7. SDP POSITION UPDATE REPORT AND NEXT STEPS**

11 - 22

**8. SDP FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

23 - 25

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**NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**26/01/2026**

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**Present:** Councillor Nicola Roberts (Isle of Anglesey County Council) (Chair)  
Councillor Hugh Jones (Wrexham County Borough Council) (Vice-Chair)

**Councillors:**

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

**Chief Officers:**

Adrian Walters (Flintshire County 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 Corporate Joint Committee), Claire Incledon (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Andy Roberts (Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer), Dewi Morgan (Chief Finance Officer), Jasmine Jones (Democracy Services Officer) and Courtney Leigh Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from:-

- Councillor Alan James (Denbighshire County Council)
- Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer)

**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 4 September 2025 as a true record.

**5. FORMAL SUBMISSION OF SDP DELIVERY AGREEMENT**

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

**RESOLVED**

## **To note the outcome of the reports to the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) held on 23rd January 2026 and the next steps for the Strategic Development Plan.**

### **REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

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.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer presented a report summarising the outcome of the Corporate Joint Committee meeting held on 23 January 2026 and the steps leading to the recommendation to formally submit the Strategic Development Plan Delivery Agreement to Welsh Government for ministerial approval. It was explained that the report sets out a comprehensive audit trail which brought the Sub-Committee up to date and evidenced the stages the Delivery Agreement had progressed through. Reference was made to the background section of the report, which included signposts to the meetings at which the Sub-Committee had previously considered the Delivery Agreement and the basis on which recommendations had been made.

It was reported that September 2025 had been a key milestone, as the Sub-Committee had considered a draft version of the Delivery Agreement and its appropriateness to be submitted to Welsh Government for formal approval, subject to confirmation that the Corporate Joint Committee could set the 2026 to 2027 budget and identify the additional funding required to commence the Strategic Development Plan and sustain delivery across the five year programme. It was noted that the Corporate Joint Committee had subsequently endorsed the same conditional position on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2025, recognising the financial concerns raised, and that the Delivery Agreement could not progress further until the 2026 to 2027 budget had been set.

It was explained that, through the autumn budget-setting process, work had been undertaken with the Chief Finance Officer and finance officers to identify options which aligned with the previously stated requirements, namely that the additional resources required for the Strategic Development Plan should, where possible, be found from within currently available resources and should not place a substantial additional burden on local authority budgets through a significant increase to the levy. It was reported that the budget-setting process had identified a means of meeting the year one funding requirement without creating an additional levy pressure attributable to the Strategic Development Plan, and it was noted that the levy increase for 2026 to 2027 had been limited to an inflationary uplift of 3.5%.

It was stated that the estimated average annual funding requirement for delivery of the Strategic Development Plan over the five-year programme was approximately £655,000 per year. It was noted that the year one budget had been set at £597,000, reflecting the anticipated requirement for the first year rather than seeking the full average amount, and that the budget would be reviewed and set annually through the normal budget cycle.

It was reported that the ability to set the year one budget without a significant levy impact had been achieved through the use of internal resources, including an underspend against the Strategic Development Plan revenue budget in 2025 to 2026 and the securing of a Welsh Government performance grant of £200,000 during the

year. It was noted that these elements had mitigated potential cost pressures on the constituent authorities and could provide similar mitigation into year two, and potentially beyond, depending on future circumstances.

In discussion, it was questioned whether Welsh Government grant funding would be available in the coming year to support the Strategic Development Plan. In response, it was noted that no prescriptive information had been issued by Welsh Government, and it was noted that certainty regarding future grants was unlikely given the proximity to the election period. It was stated that, despite there having been no funding available nine to ten months earlier, a performance grant of £200,000 had been secured, which formed part of a £400,000 allocation across the four Corporate Joint Committees, and this demonstrated the benefit of demonstrating good progress with the plan. It was further noted that the Strategic Development Plan was one of the areas of Corporate Joint Committee work which did not automatically attract an annual grant supplement. It was noted that representations to Welsh Government would continue, with progress being used to strengthen future cases for funding, particularly post-election depending on policy priorities.

It was questioned whether interest on funds held could be used to support the Strategic Development Plan and reduce levy pressures. In response, the Chief Finance Officer reported that this had been considered within the corporate plan and budget process. It was noted that the Corporate Joint Committee remained a relatively young body and that some posts had not been filled as quickly as expected, resulting in underspends accruing. It was reported that this position had enabled the levy charged on the six councils and the National Park Authority to be kept down for 2026 to 2027. It was noted that, whilst the underspend had not been planned, the position had allowed a significant portion of funds to be applied to Strategic Development Plan delivery, helping to minimise levy increases in a context where future Welsh Government funding could not be guaranteed.

It was emphasised that the significance of submitting the Delivery Agreement to Welsh Government was not only the ability to fund year one, but the commitment to fund delivery across the full five-year programme. It was noted that the Corporate Joint Committee had held a detailed discussion regarding balances and reserves, and it was reported that maintaining reserves was a prudent approach which mitigated future financial risk and provided assurance in the event of variable funding year on year. It was noted that this approach supported a positive recommendation to proceed with formal submission, and it was reported that the financial position was considered sufficiently robust for at least the first two to three years, noting that underspends would not necessarily arise every year.

It was questioned whether a significant levy increase should be anticipated the following year if there was no further underspend and no additional Welsh Government funding. In response, it was reported that no guarantees could be provided but no large increase was expected in the levy the following year. It was noted that the approach taken created flexibility and mitigation, as the £200,000 grant would either fund revenue expenditure in-year or flow into balances as an underspend, with either route supporting the subsequent budget-setting position. It was reiterated that the Strategic Development Plan was a statutory requirement, and it was noted that funding would need to be identified through the Corporate Joint Committee's budget process rather than relying on grants, alongside ongoing efforts to secure additional external funding. It was emphasised that the project was in the best position possible financially at the start of a project of this nature.

Further information was requested in relation to the Welsh Government Strategic Performance Grant of £200,000. In response, it was clarified that the Welsh Government Performance Grant of £200,000 related to 2025 to 2026, was claimed in arrears, and it was noted that approximately £50,000 had been claimed to date with the remaining claim to be submitted at the end of the financial year. It was noted that this income would appear in the 2025 to 2026 accounts and within the strategic planning income lines in the relevant revenue monitoring information, and it was further noted that any associated underspend could be carried forward into reserves for use in 2026 to 2027.

It was reported that a mid-term financial plan covering a three-to-five-year forecast would be brought forward around September 2026 and it was noted that this would provide clearer visibility of anticipated funding and likely levy changes, with the intention that future impacts would be understood in advance of the annual budget-setting stage.

A member acknowledged that, where possible, unspent money would ordinarily be recovered given the financial strain placed on many local authorities, but it was noted that carrying funds forward into reserves to support the five-year Strategic Development Plan programme was appropriate given the statutory nature of the work, the need to minimise levy impacts, and the benefit of having mitigation available for future years. In response, it was reported that, over time, a Strategic Development Plan should reduce duplication and lead to a more streamlined and efficient approach to local development plan reviews and begin to accrue financial savings in the longer term.

## **6. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN TIMETABLE 2026/27 AND KEY TASKS**

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

### **RESOLVED**

**To note the content of this report and that the task list presented will inform the development of the Sub-Committee work programme and co-ordination of meetings.**

### **REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

Responsibility to implement the SDP 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.

### **DISCUSSION**

A timetable of the Strategic Development Plan work programme for 2026 to 2027 was presented, and it was explained that the purpose of the report was to provide an early forward look, on the assumption that Welsh Government approval of the Delivery Agreement would be received, setting out the key tasks and milestones in year one of the five-year programme. It was reported that the first five or six actions in the table related mainly to procedural steps following approval of the Delivery Agreement, including approval, commencement and publication arrangements. It was also noted that recruitment formed part of these early steps, and it was reported that the approved Strategic Development Plan budget enabled the recruitment of at least one additional

planner to support delivery in year one. It was emphasised that adding capacity within the Corporate Joint Committee was important to maintaining deadlines within the overall timetable.

It was reported that the later items within the timetable, particularly points seven to ten, represented more substantive stages in the year one process and would be the areas most likely to require reports to the Sub-Committee for consideration, discussion and steer, prior to matters being reported onwards to the Corporate Joint Committee. It was explained that an early substantive output would be the preparation of a Main Issues Report. It was noted that preparatory work had already commenced to put a consultancy contract in place to assist in developing the evidence base, and it was reported that this would begin with an audit of existing evidence bases that supported local development plans within each constituent authority area. It was noted that the approach was intended to avoid duplication and avoid reinventing the wheel, recognising that local authorities had already invested significant time and money in developing evidence bases, and that where evidence remained current it would be utilised rather than repeated.

It was reported that the audit would also identify evidence gaps and areas requiring updating, particularly where evidence was dated, and that this would inform where limited funding might need to be targeted to ensure a consistent regional picture. It was noted that the approach would include working with authorities who were already planning to refresh evidence bases, in order to align activity and secure best value from limited public resources. It was reported that the Main Issues Report would draw out the regionally significant issues emerging from this evidence audit, to inform the scope and direction of the Strategic Development Plan.

It was noted that, alongside assembling the evidence base, work would also be undertaken to test emerging issues with local and regional preferences. It was reported that this would include the development of an issues vision and strategic objectives, and it was noted that this would require facilitated engagement with Sub-Committee members and other stakeholders to identify what was considered most significant for North Wales and what the Strategic Development Plan should prioritise. It was stated that this was an important conversation and that it was likely to be most effective if held face to face, although it was noted that this would be progressed in whichever format was most practical. It was further noted that the same discussions would also take place officer-to-officer with planning policy leads within each authority to understand local priorities, where local development plan reviews were progressing, and how locally significant issues combined to form a regional perspective.

It was reported that work would also be required to define a settlement hierarchy and to develop growth and spatial options. It was explained that this would include consideration of the appropriate scale of growth for North Wales over a 25-year period, including housing requirements, employment land needs, and other development considerations such as town centre retail, alongside the infrastructure needed to support growth. It was noted that the approach would seek to align with what was emerging through local development plan reviews to avoid early conflicts, and it was explained that, rather than assessing every settlement within local hierarchies, a high-level regional settlement structure would be developed, identifying the most important settlements regionally and their strategic role. It was noted that options would be developed and discussed to establish areas of agreement and consensus.

It was reported that candidate sites would be an early stage of the Strategic Development Plan process and that this would require the development of a clear

methodology to define what would constitute a strategic site. It was noted that this would need to cover, for example, thresholds for strategic housing sites, mixed-use sites, employment land sites and other regionally significant forms of development. It was reported that this would lead to a call for candidate sites, with an indicative six-to-eight-week window for submissions supported by evidence, enabling landowners and parties with an interest in land at the relevant scale to put forward sites for consideration.

It was noted that, taken together, the timetable represented a full and ambitious year one programme. It was reported that the intention was for the substantive stages identified to inform a sequence of Sub-Committee meetings through the year, potentially on a quarterly basis, although it was noted that dates had not yet been set. It was also reported that meeting dates would need to be arranged in a way that dovetailed with the Corporate Joint Committee timetable, so that Sub-Committee consideration and recommendations could feed into subsequent Corporate Joint Committee decisions. It was noted that the Corporate Joint Committee meeting calendar was awaited before finalising the Sub-Committee schedule. It was reported that a formal work programme would follow, to be drafted and circulated, with an intention to settle meeting dates as early as possible.

It was questioned whether any risks had been identified which could impact on the timetable, with specific reference to recruitment and retention difficulties affecting local authorities and potential implications for the Strategic Development Plan programme. In response, it was reported that recruitment had been deliberately limited to mitigate pressure on the North Wales pool of experienced senior planners, and it was noted that, although the delivery programme referenced an internal team of four additional planners, a single additional senior support officer was being pursued for year one to balance resource needs with the risk of drawing staff from local authorities. It was reported that significant reliance would therefore be placed on consultancy support to mitigate risk and to enable progress against ambitious timescales. It was noted that the year one budget included provision of nearly £300,000 for consultancy support, and it was reported that this was intended to secure a virtual team rather than creating direct recruitment impacts on local authorities. It was further noted that a flexible approach would be maintained, including the possibility of future secondment opportunities where appropriate, recognising both the potential benefits to the Corporate Joint Committee and the professional development opportunities for planners.

Concerns were raised regarding sustainability of consultancy use given the cost, and the risk of competing recruitment activity across authorities and the Corporate Joint Committee within the same labour market. In response, reassurance was provided that the consultants engaged were Arup, described as a national multidisciplinary consultancy, and it was noted that they had already undertaken substantial work for the Corporate Joint Committee in support of the Regional Transport Plan, including early work to build an evidence base which could also support the Local Development Plan. It was reported that this meant the programme was not starting from a blank position, and it was noted that the brief issued was to build on that earlier evidence rather than revisiting or duplicating it. It was reported that this existing dataset and prior engagement with authorities would support more efficient progress, enabling the evidence audit and Main Issues Report to move forward more quickly. It was also noted that evidence developed through this work would not be closed to the Corporate Joint Committee, and that the intention was for relevant evidence outputs to be available to local authorities to support their own work, enabling potential efficiencies and reducing the need for duplicated local consultancy commissions.

It was questioned whether the Strategic Development Plan would impose policy changes on individual councils and the National Park Authority, and whether it could be used to support specific local challenges, with an example raised in relation to managing holiday homes and second homes and the use of thresholds across different communities compared to an area-wide approach. In response, it was noted that the Strategic Development Plan should be viewed as an opportunity to shape regionally relevant and, where appropriate, sub-regional policies through discussion and agreement. It was reported that the approach would not be for the Corporate Joint Committee to impose policy on authorities, but to work collaboratively to develop policies that worked positively for relevant areas and could be interpreted and applied through local policy contexts once the Strategic Development Plan was adopted. It was noted that the type of issue raised would be an example of a matter to bring forward into those discussions, to inform how an effective policy could be developed.

Following the discussion, additional proposals were raised to support effective working arrangements: -

1. It was agreed that the meeting scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 be held in person to facilitate more informal discussion and strengthen working relationships.
2. It was proposed that a member training programme be developed in the background alongside the formal meeting cycle, potentially delivered virtually four to five times per year, to build understanding of process, context and key topics. It was suggested that an initial session could include input from Welsh Government by inviting the head of the development plans branch to provide an overview of the Strategic Development Plan process and the role of members, potentially scheduled ahead of the in-person meeting in March. It was noted that a library of materials could be maintained so that sessions could be revisited and accessed by those unable to attend. Agreement was indicated that training would be beneficial, and it was requested by members that the training be flexible and responsive to topics arising through the programme, rather than fixed too far in advance.
3. It was proposed that regular informal updates be provided outside formal meetings, for example through a short monthly email update or newsletter-style or blog format, to keep members sighted on progress and next steps, and to create an accessible audit trail of updates over time. Support was indicated for receiving such updates.

The meeting commenced at 14:06 and concluded at 15:10.

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Chair

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**STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2026**

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**TITLE:** Strategic Development Plan Position Update and Next Steps

**AUTHOR:** Andy Roberts, Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1. To provide Members with an update on the position reached with the Strategic Development Plan (SDP); to consider some of the milestones and next steps in the year ahead; and to provide feedback from the workshop session held with this Group in March 2026.

**2. DECISION SOUGHT**

- 2.1. That Members note the content of this report and the key milestones in the SDP programme, which will form the forward work programme for this Committee (see separate report on this agenda).

**3. REASON FOR THE DECISION**

- 3.1. To bring Members up to speed with the progress with the SDP given the last workshop took place in March 2026, and the Senedd Elections resulted in the cessation of formal Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) business during the pre-election period.

**4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1. This report will provide an update for Members on each of the following matters:

- Welsh Government approval of the SDP Delivery Agreement
- Securing of a £200k Performance Grant from Welsh Government
- Milestones for year 1 of the SDP programme
- Reporting Progress to Members
- Feedback from the SDP workshop held in March 2026

**Approval of the Delivery Agreement**

- 4.2. Members may recall that they considered the draft final Delivery Agreement back in September 2025 and made a recommendation to the CJC Board that the draft Delivery Agreement should be approved by the CJC for submission to Welsh Government, pending the outcome of the CJC budget setting process for 2026/27. The CJC agreed this at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025, with the proviso that submission would only take place once an appropriate budget had been approved for SDP preparation in 2026/27, with a commitment to consider the SDP budget in subsequent years of the five-year programme for plan production.
- 4.3. The budget for the CJC (inclusive of the SDP) was approved by the CJC on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026 and at the same meeting the CJC also agreed to formally submit the SDP Delivery agreement

for approval to the Welsh Government. The document was formally submitted on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and Welsh Government confirmed its agreement to the Delivery Agreement timetable in a letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026 (see appendix 1).

- 4.4 Whilst this allowed for commencement of work on the SDP, the pre-election period relating to the Senedd elections commenced soon after this date, although the time has been used productively to establish a support contract with consultants Arup to assist the CJC with the first key tasks that relate to the preparation of an evidence base to support preparation of the plan.

**Welsh Government Performance Grant**

- 4.5 Members have previously been made aware of the availability of a one-off performance grant offered by Welsh Government to CJs who demonstrated progress towards plan preparation within the 2025/26 financial year. To be able to claim the full grant of £200,000 the CJC needed to have submitted and had its Delivery Agreement agreed by Welsh Government before the end of the financial year.
- 4.6 Given the preceding update, that deadline was achieved and the CJC has both claimed and received the performance grant. There is no information available as yet from the new Welsh Government about the likelihood and/or availability of any future performance or support funding for SDP preparation.

**Programme milestones for the year one work programme**

- 4.7 The SDP timetable is divided into eight specific and sequential stages in the production of the plan – see table 1 below.

Table 1: Key SDP preparation stages

Key Stage		Opportunities for involvement
Stage 1	Delivery Agreement Preparation and submission	Stakeholder and informal public consultation
Stage 2	Pre-deposit preparation and recruitment	Updates provided on Ambition North Wales website
Stage 3	Preferred strategy preparation & public consultation	6-week formal public consultation
Stage 4	Deposit Plan preparation & public consultation	6-week formal public consultation
Stage 5	Submission to PEDW & Welsh Government for EIP	Updates provided on Ambition North Wales website
Stage 6	Examination	Opportunity to attend and participate in the examination hearing sessions
Stage 7	Inspector’s Report	Updates provided on Ambition North Wales website
Stage 8	Adoption	Updates provided on Ambition North Wales website

- 4.8 Stage one related to the preparation and submission of a Delivery Agreement and this has been completed as per the update above. The work has now moved to stage two – Pre-deposit preparation and recruitment. In relation to recruitment, Members will recall that the estimated costs of producing the SDP included an allowance for the appointment of several planner posts

within the CJC, although this was also caveated on being able to attract suitable candidates without simply attracting people from existing Local Planning Authority Policy teams in North Wales, which would impact on LDP preparation and be counter intuitive.

- 4.9 This is why a support contract with Arup has been signed as this allows their resources to act as a virtual team to support SDP preparation without having the local impact set out above. The CJC has prepared a Principal Planner job description which is currently being evaluated, to provide the Regional Strategic Planning Officer with a level of necessary internal support and assistance. Once evaluated this will go out to advert soon.
- 4.10 In terms of what Pre-deposit preparation involved, this is predominantly the development of a suitable evidence base to inform the vision, strategy, policies and proposals within the plan. In line with the approved timetable stage two should be undertaken between now and the end of 2026, with an overlap to move into stage three which involves the preparation of a Preferred Strategy by September 2027 to then allow a public consultation on that.
- 4.11 The next twelve months therefore will involve a lot of background evidence gathering, visioning and the development of strategic objectives, then preparation of growth and spatial options, to bring together in a Preferred Strategy. The following expands on the list of key tasks in the Delivery Agreement timetable, to give Members a sense of the nature of each task:
- a. **Evidence base preparation** – Work is already underway to prepare an evidence base for the SDP. Initially this primarily involves an audit of the information that already exists in the evidence gathered by Local Planning Authorities for the preparation and review of their LDPs, alongside other relevant housing, employment and transport data and forecasts. A scoping meeting has already been held with officers from each Local Planning Authority and individual meetings are also diarised to review and discuss each authority's evidence in turn. This will include an assessment of how up to date the information is as well as whether gaps exist in the evidence needed. Recommendations including proposed scope, methodologies and programme for additional evidence base work will allow the CJC to focus resources accordingly, for example on the preparation of any new evidence needed to fill these gaps on a regional basis, or work with Local Planning Authorities to co-ordinate updates of local evidence bases. This is likely to be undertaken alongside the corresponding data collection exercise, with the CJC working closely with national and local stakeholders, which will inform development of the SDP and its impact assessments.
  - b. **Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Scoping Report** – This is an integral part of the plan preparation process, and the scope and methodology need to be developed early in the programme for the IIA process to be applied on an iterative basis at key stages in the plan. In essence as key stages of the plan are developed, the IIA process is applied to that stage to assess the level of sustainability and environmental impact the plan may have, using the process to suggest how the plan can be improved to reduce those impacts. This work will be brought forward and carried out by Arup, who have had the experience already of preparing this for the Cardiff Capital Region, thereby presenting economies of time and potentially cost for the CJC. There will also need to be a focused consultation on the scoping document with statutory stakeholders including Natural Resources Wales and Cadw.
  - c. **Main Issues and Growth and Spatial options** - To identify the key issues and drivers of change that will enable a comprehensive and shared vision for the region to be developed, the CJC needs to look ahead to the longer-term and conclude what the region should look like in response to the issues it is seeking to address. This will be informed by the production of a main issues report following the audit of evidence where the key themes from the evidence that have a regional implication will be drawn out and summarised. This will feed into further work with Members and stakeholders to develop the vision and strategic

objectives for the plan, building on the initial workshop held in March, the outcome of which is reported later.

- d. **Call for Sites** - This stage enables all interested parties to submit potential sites and wider strategic locations (areas of search) for inclusion in the plan. It will assist the CJC to identify potential development sites and inform the SDP Spatial Strategy in consultation with the Specific Consultation Bodies. A key part of this will be to determine the scale of what is meant by 'strategic' based on the potential different land uses that sites are sought for – employment, housing etc – and this will form part of the work above on options development. A register of candidate sites will also be created and a methodology to use to assess and select sustainable sites or locations.
- e. **Development and Assessment of Growth and Spatial Options** – A core part of preparing a Preferred Strategy is to firstly develop and assess options for the level of growth the plan should promote (housing, jobs, employment land) and the most sustainable way to locate that future growth via a settlement structure or hierarchy. The SDP needs to take account of these matters as they are identified in existing or emerging Local Development Plans as well as then projecting potential for growth forward over the 25-year plan period. Spatially, this involves looking at growth on a regional perspective but also how this will be distributed to each constituent Local Authority area within the region. Of all of the tasks set out above, it is arguably this element that will require closest working and collaboration with Local Planning Authorities to ensure that a consensus view is reached on overall growth and its dissemination.

#### **Reporting Progress to the Sub-Committee and Corporate Joint Committee**

- 4.12 A calendar of all meetings of the CJC and its sub-committees was approved by the CJC at its meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026. Future meetings of this sub-committee are programmed within that report and are also set out in a forward work programme that is part of the agenda for this meeting and follows this report. Whilst it is difficult at this stage to assign specific topics to update reports for those meetings, I have nevertheless tried to indicate likely update topics based on the SDP timetable and its alignment to the proposed meeting dates. These may be subject to change, and the forward work programme will be monitored and updated as required, and Members updated. The main request of Members at this stage is to ensure the meeting dates are secured within diaries. Once the CJC approves the Meetings schedule, diary invitations will be sent out as place holders for sub-committee meetings. Sub-committee meetings have been aligned to facilitate the onward reporting of progress to the CJC.
- 4.13 Officers are also aware that Local Government Elections will take place in May 2027, and within the timeframe of this work programme. As much of the work involves evidence gathering and the development of options, much of this is background work that will feed into the development of a Preferred Strategy, which isn't scheduled for publication and consultation until the summer of 2027, and is subject to CJC approval before this takes place. Hopefully this allows for good progress can be maintained, including the cross referencing of work with the position and progress of respective LDPs.
- 4.14 Following the success of the Member workshop in March 2026, consideration will also be given to arranging further sessions, particularly where the development of a vision or growth and spatial options is an iterative approach that necessitates broad discussion, before a formal report is presented to the sub-committee. Members views are invited on this matter, and these can be added into to FWP.

#### **Feedback from the SDP workshop held in March 2026**

- 4.15 Members will recall an informal in-person workshop that was held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at the Welsh Government offices in Llandudno Junction. This was to facilitate getting Members of the sub-committee together in person and to also hear from keynote external speakers (Mark Newey from Welsh Government and Lisa Fairmaner from Arup) on the approach to strategic planning. The session also allowed time for a high-level exercise to gather Members thoughts an insight in relation to the issues for the SDP to tackle, the key drivers for the plan, and what they want the region to look like in 2051.
- 4.16 An online post it notes system was used to record the conversations that took place, and the outcomes have been summarised in appendix 2 to this report. Several clear themes have emerged from the information collated and these provide a very useful starting points for future development work on a vision for the plan and strategic objectives.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Costs will be drawn from existing North Wales CJC budgets where provision has been made to support this work, with the necessary support from the CJC's Legal and Finance teams. The CJC will also seek to secure all opportunities for further funding support from Welsh Government.

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. 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.

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### APPENDICES:

- Appendix 1:** Welsh Government Approval Letter  
**Appendix 2:** SDP Member Workshop Outcomes

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### STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

**i. Monitoring Officer:**

“As noted above, the CJC has a statutory duty to prepare a Strategic Development Plan and the statutory framework is identified in the report. The recommendations are for noting only and do not approve any substantive policy position, preferred strategy, site allocation or consultation document.

As the SDP progresses, future reports will need to further identify the relevant statutory stage, consultation requirements, assessment duties, etc. Informal Member workshops may assist the development of the SDP, provided they are used for engagement and discussion only, with any material outputs fed into the formal reporting and decision-making process.”

**ii. Statutory Finance Officer:**

“I have no objection to the decision sought and the estimated costs of delivering the Strategic Development Plan is under continuous consideration. It will be included in our work as part of the regular budget reviews, annual budget process as well as in the medium-term financial plan.”



Ein cyf/Our ref: qA1495798

Andy Roberts  
Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer  
Ambition North Wales  
Government Buildings  
Sarn Mynach  
Llandudno Junction  
LL31 9RZ

Dear Andy,

24 February 2026

**North Wales Corporate Joint Committee: Delivery Agreement Strategic Development Plan**

**The Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021**

Thank you for your email dated 11 February requesting agreement to your Delivery Agreement (DA) for your Strategic Development Plan (SDP) following confirmation by resolution of the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) on 23 January. This letter is in response to the formal confirmation of the DA by the CJC for an SDP plan covering the period 2026-2051.

The preparation of an SDP is a statutory duty placed on all Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) in Wales. Having an up-to-date strategic development plan in place underpins the very basis of the planning system in Wales and reinforces the Government's commitment to a plan-led approach to development. Effective project management and up-to-date evidence is essential to ensure the plan can be prepared in accordance with the timescales set out in Table 1 (paragraph 6.2) and Appendix 5 of the DA. This timescale set out in the DA aligns with requirements in the Draft Strategic Development Plans Manual.

The Government notes the financial costs identified to each aspect of plan preparation (paragraphs 7.2, 7.5 & 7.6) and recognises the importance of the CJC commitment to these funds being made available to prepare the plan, through the agreement of this DA. It will be

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi

for the CJC to disaggregate these overall costings to each respective Local Authority and National Park Authority within the SDP geographical extent. It is also noted the staffing resources identified to prepare the SDP (paragraphs 7.4 & 7.7) and the CJC's commitment to resource the staffing requirements, or equivalent.

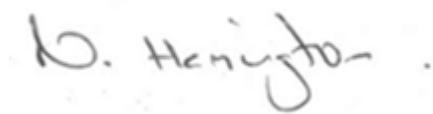
A test of 'soundness' against which the plan will be considered through the examination is whether it adheres to the agreed DA including the Community Involvement Scheme (CIS). The plan will also need to demonstrate 'general conformity' with Future Wales: The National Plan 2040.

The Welsh Government welcomes the commitment shown by the North Wales CJC to prepare an SDP. Your submitted DA contains a detailed breakdown on the timings of each SDP stage (Appendix 5) with an indicative adoption date March 2031.

After considering your DA submission, I can **confirm agreement** to the timetable set out in Table 1, paragraph 6.2 and Appendix 5, as provided for by Section 60N(4) & 63(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 11 of the Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021.

The published version of your DA should now be made publicly available in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulation 12.

Yours sincerely,



**Neil Hemington**  
**Prif Gynllunydd**  
**Chief Planner**

## Summary from online SDP visioning session

### REGIONAL ISSUES

1. Provision for Growth
  - a. Locations for growth – future Wales Growth Areas, spatial hierarchy
  - b. Scale of Growth – same across region?
  - c. Holistic approach inclusive of rural areas – not just about urban areas
  - d. Key types of growth to consider:
    - i. Employment
    - ii. Housing (including affordable)
    - iii. Energy
    - iv. Tourism
    - v. Role of settlements?
  
2. Accommodating Growth
  - a. Make the plan infrastructure-led
  - b. Infrastructure capacity:
    - i. Physical – Transport, drainage, power, water
    - ii. Social – Education, health
  - c. Plan needs to facilitate Resilience in N. Wales communities
  - d. Viability
  - e. Aging population – prevent young people leaving/attract back
  - f. Treat region holistically vs recognising sub-regional differences NW – NE
  - g. Addressing specific needs:
    - i. Environmental limits/protection
    - ii. Affordable housing provision
    - iii. Gypsies and Travellers
  - h. Relationship of rural to urban areas – connectivity
  
3. Related Factors
  - a. Capacity of decision makers and relationship with Local Plans
  - b. Engagement with key groups:
    - i. Infrastructure providers
    - ii. House builders and RSLs
    - iii. Young people/hard to reach groups
  - c. Sub-regional differences and how to accommodate – economies, Welsh language, Strategic roles

## DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

1. Primary Focus – Economic growth and well-being
  - a. Creating job opportunities BUT...
    - i. Right jobs in the right place
    - ii. Sufficient workers?
    - iii. Sufficient skills e.g. AI, nuclear, renewables, digital
  - b. Accessibility
  - c. Sustainability
  
2. Supporting Growth
  - a. Government policy context
  - b. Funding opportunities:
    - i. Growth Deal and Investment Zone – what happens after these?
    - ii. Long term framework for continued economic growth
    - iii. Work collectively to maximise opportunities and benefits
  
3. Strategic Opportunities/Assets
  - a. Defining North Wales in a global context and its USPs e.g. resilience to climate change, sustainable food production, energy capacity, quality of place
  - b. Nuclear offer – Wylfa, micro-generation – sites?
  - c. Offshore renewables including tidal
  - d. Significance of Ports
  - e. Ne and NW 'gateways' to markets, labour force, investment
  - f. Tackling climate change via investing in nature, nature-based solutions, land management
  - g. Viewing nature as an asset
  - h. Align infrastructure upgrades to growth trajectory

## **2051 VISION FOR NORTH WALES**

1. The Place
  - a. Primary location to live, work, and study
  - b. A location of better-quality places – healthy, resilient, vibrant, attractive
  - c. Well-connected physically and digitally
  - d. A place of quality, identity, integrity, distinctiveness, linguistic and cultural diversity
  - e. Well-connected communities with equal opportunities
  
2. The People
  - a. A future where young people have a real choice to stay, or return having moved away
  
3. The Assets/infrastructure
  - a. Shared regional objectives and collaboration – clear narrative for investors
  - b. Better transport connectivity especially in rural areas
  - c. Quality and affordable housing stock
  - d. Energy self-sufficiency (renewables, nuclear)
  
4. The Opportunity
  - a. Be the first choice for investment – not the poor relation to S Wales
  - b. Dynamic, innovative, open for business
  - c. Creating prosperity through opportunities
  - d. Being a key driver for the Welsh Economy

## Strategic Plan Messages

### Arup

- SDP manual resolves many issues – detail? - intentionally more prescriptive plans
- Clarity on levels of granularity?
- Linking of operational frameworks across government tiers
- Free-hand or outputs pre-determined?
- Shared vision – what about disagreements – rules for prioritising what goes in the plan and where? - plan ownership
- Recipe for a good plan - **critical ideas expressed simply**
- Accommodating uncertainty (25-year plan) - enabling policy framework vs prescription (former makes sense)
- Defining housing markets
- Setting housing targets
- Top-down vs bottom up – strategic growth vs cumulative local growth
- Deliverability and viability – regional scope
- Affordable housing
- Place making and design standards

### Mark Newey WG

- Need to clearly define and express a vision for the plan and what it wants to achieve
- Be brave – see the plan as an opportunity to define a positive framework for the region, rather than be concerned about getting it right
- Assess the regional as a whole and identify what is strategically significant, why, and where
- Identify the key issues that the plan should aim to tackle/facilitate solutions to – housing, jobs, transport, energy, climate change, demographics, infrastructure capacity
- A different scale of thinking – settlement hierarchy, principal transport network, strategic investment sites
- Key questions:
  - What do we want North Wales to look like in 2051?
  - What scale of issues do we want the SDP to consider?
  - Focus on strategically important locations rather than say something about everywhere
  - Key issues to address?
  - Relationships with areas outside the region?
  - What if plan not progressed?
  - Missed opportunity – links to future funding?



**NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB COMMITTEE  
FORWARD WORK PLAN 2026/27**

The North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Strategic Planning Sub-Committee is responsible for preparing the Strategic Development Plan, setting out objectives for land use and development across the region. It ensures the policies needed to implement these objectives are effective and keeps development factors under regular review.

Meeting date	Report Title	Report Purpose	Report Author	Exempt
<b>1 July 2026 3.15pm formal meeting</b>	Position Update on the SDP	Summary of the position reach with the SDP and look ahead to the work programme for the next twelve months	Andy Roberts	N/A
	Draft Forward Work Plan	Identify the planned series of sub-committee meetings as diary markers for Members with a preliminary outline of potential content for progress reports to those meetings	Andy Roberts	N/A
Need for Position update to next JC meeting DATE				
<b>14 Sept 2026 2pm formal meeting</b>	Position Update on the SDP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress with Evidence gathering</li> <li>• IIA scoping report</li> <li>• Call for sites</li> </ul>	Summary of the position reach with the SDP and alignment to the Delivery Agreement timetable	Andy Roberts	N/A

	Draft Forward Work Plan	FWP amendments and updates	Andy Roberts	N/A
Need for Position update to next JC meeting DATE				
<b>9 Nov 2026 2pm formal meeting</b>	Position Update on the SDP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision and Strategic Objectives</li> <li>• Main Issues Report</li> </ul>	Summary of the position reach with the SDP and alignment to the Delivery Agreement timetable	Andy Roberts	N/A
	Draft Forward Work Plan	FWP amendments and updates	Andy Roberts	N/A
Need for Position update to next JC meeting DATE				
<b>18 Jan 2026 2pm formal meeting</b>	Position Update on the SDP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth options</li> <li>• Spatial strategy options</li> </ul>	Summary of the position reach with the SDP and alignment to the Delivery Agreement timetable	Andy Roberts	N/A
	Draft Forward Work Plan	FWP amendments and updates	Andy Roberts	N/A
Need for Position update to next JC meeting DATE				
<b>19 July 2027 3.15pm formal meeting</b>	Position Update on the SDP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the Preferred Strategy</li> </ul>	Summary of the position reach with the SDP and alignment to the Delivery Agreement timetable	Andy Roberts	N/A
	Draft Forward Work Plan	FWP amendments and updates	Andy Roberts	N/A
Need for Position update to next JC meeting DATE				

The Sub-Committee reports performance to the Corporate Joint Committee quarterly, as outlined in the Strategic Development Plan Delivery Agreement. Following the adoption of the Strategic Development Plan, it presents an Annual Monitoring Report to track progress and, if necessary, prepares a Review Report if revisions are needed based on statutory regulations or the Annual Monitoring Report findings.

**General: Sub - Committee Responsibilities – Deliverables:**

- The Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021 – delivery specific steps as set out in TORs.
- Provide strategic advice/updates to CJC
- Provide responses to WG on spatial planning matters.
- To co-ordinate and present a statutory Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to the CJC upon adoption of the SDP
- Monitor & Review Deliverables (to make recs to CJC as necessary)
- Co-opted Members (voting) – to be kept under review
- Co-optees (non-voting)