

Complete Agenda



Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Meeting

NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

Date and Time

2.00 pm, MONDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2026

Location

Virtual Meeting

Contact Point

Jasmine Jones

jasminejones@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

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

Ifor Glyn Lloyd

Eryri National Park Authority

Constituent Council Link Officers

David Fitzsimon
Chris Smith
James Harland
Dewi Jones
Paul Mead
Gareth Jones

Keira Sweeney

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
Mark Watkins
Helen Edwards
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 01/07/26 be signed as a true record.

5. SDP UPDATE REPORT 9 - 15

To provide Members with an update on the position reached with the Strategic Development Plan (SDP).

6. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS 16 - 21

To share advice provided to Denbighshire County Council by the Corporate Joint Committee, responding to a number of questions relating to the relationship between the emerging Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and its emerging Local Development Plan (LDP) review.

NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE 01/07/2026

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), Chris Cater (Conwy County Borough Council), Edgar Wyn Owen (Eryri National Park Authority) and Alan James (Denbighshire County Council)

Chief Officers:

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

Officers present:

Mark Watkins (Monitoring Officer), Andy Roberts (Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer), Ffion Haf Williams (Senior Operations Officer), Elen Wyn Owen (Corporate Support Officer), Dewi Morgan (Chief Finance Officer), Jasmine Jones (Democracy Services Officer) and Sera Whitley (Democracy Services Officer).

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

1. ELECT CHAIR

DECISION

To elect Councillor Nicola Roberts as Chair of the Sub-Committee for 2026/27.

2. ELECT VICE CHAIR

DECISION

To elect Councillor Hugh Jones as Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee for 2026/27.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:-

- Councillor Richard Jones (Flintshire County Council)
- Councillor Ifor Glyn Lloyd (Conwy County Borough Council)

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent matters were raised.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January 2026 as a true record.

7. SDP POSITION UPDATE REPORT AND NEXT STEPS

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

RESOLVED

To note the content of this report and the key milestones in the SDP programme.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To bring Members up to speed with progress on the SDP, given that 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.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the report's purpose was to inform members and refresh members on where we are currently within the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and where we intend to go in the next year. It was emphasised that this year is an important one politically and electorally, and therefore how and what work takes place in this period is of particular importance. It was explained that much of the work intended for this period involves evidence gathering and background work, which is opportune given the criticality of the year and the onset of the elections next May.

It was noted that the report contains five key parts, with the first part focusing on reflection on the key milestone of the approval of the delivery agreement for the SDP. It was noted that the delivery agreement was submitted formally in February 2026 and an endorsement was received by the Welsh Government soon after. It was noted that work has started in earnest in taking the delivery agreement forward.

The second part of the report focused on reflecting on the performance of last year and deciding on whether it was possible to claim a Welsh Government one-off in-year performance grant of up to £200,000 for recognition of the work and progress made. It was confirmed that given that the milestones were reached, the claim of the full £200,000 has been successful, which will go into the general balances of the CJC to support further budget pressures whenever they may occur, particularly in relation to the SDP.

The third part of the report focused on starting work in earnest on the SDP. It was noted that milestones had been set out within the report. It was highlighted that the SDP was currently in stage two of the plan-making process, termed the 'pre-deposit preparation and consultation phase', which includes a recruitment phase. It was emphasised that the current stage was an evidence-gathering stage. It was noted that the first part of this stage would include auditing what pre-existing information is available. Within this first part, it was noted that a Regional Scoping Meeting was held with Arup and all local authority representatives and various other bodies, including

Natural Resources Wales, and then further individual policy meetings were held with each local authority to identify the scope, timelines, and breadth of the evidence bases currently held. It was explained that Arup would then take these evidence bases and consolidate, update, and bolster them for use in the SDP. It was noted this work would take until the end of the summer period at the very earliest.

It was noted that an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) would be woven in as a thread in the plan-making process. It was noted that members who were a part of steering their respective Local Development Plans (LDP) would need to carry out the same process. It was explained that a Scoping Report would need to be used to define the scope of what the Integrated Impact Assessment would be by defining a series of criteria across a range of issues, in order to test the emerging plan against these to see if it has a positive or negative impact on said criteria. It was highlighted that the outcome of this process would then be used to go back and improve upon the plan and rewrite any necessary policies.

It was noted that the outcome of this evidence audit and gap analysis would be the production of a Main Issues Report. It was explained that this Report would be given back to the local authorities as a summation of the key information and key evidence drawn from the pool available. It was noted that this report would enable the production of the background detail data, with the hope being that through Arup a regional data portal could be created in a centralised location for local authorities to access data on a regional basis.

In terms of recruitment, a structure for recruiting an internal team had been set out within the costing of the SDP in order to take the plan forward. Nervousness was expressed in going ahead too quickly in appointing an internal team due to the fact that the pool of planners within a North Wales context is very small, and as such it might place pressure on the local authorities. It was noted that a single job description has been written for a Principal Planner, as it was felt that support in this area was sorely required. Within the report, it was noted that plans had been made to appoint a virtual team in addition, which would comprise consultants from Arup.

In terms of 'Calls for Sites', it was noted that this process involves defining what type of sites and what scale we are looking for, whether housing, retail, employment, or other. It was emphasised that it is important to try and dovetail this into either existing or emerging 'Call for Site' processes. It was confirmed that conversations had been held with certain local authorities on this matter in order to ensure that the CJC and local authorities don't overlap and conflict, but work in a parallel and consistent way.

It was noted that the final part of this stage of the plan involves the development and assessment of growth and spatial options, with the SDP needing to take account of these matters as they are identified in existing or emerging Local Development Plans as well as projecting potential growth forward over the 25-year plan period.

In discussion, the importance of not taking Planning Officers from local authorities as part of the recruitment process was emphasised. The importance of collaboration in this matter was highlighted, and the possibility of offering secondment opportunities was discussed as a method of supporting the SDP while simultaneously retaining and furthering the experience of valuable Officers within Local Authorities. In response, it was agreed that secondment opportunities were an excellent way of moving forward in terms of recruitment. Furthermore, the suggestion of hiring officers retiring or close to retiring within the CJC on a part-time basis was highlighted as a potentially viable strategy moving forward.

It was noted by the Chair that, following a period of local consultation in her own constituency in regard to potential sites, the response and offers were sparse. The importance of distinguishing between local calls for sites and ones called for as part of the SDP was highlighted in order to avoid confusion. In support of this suggestion, it was suggested that the Local Authorities support the CJC as they go about their 'Call for Sites' process if the funds were available locally in order to facilitate this support. In response, it was noted that further discussion would need to be held to identify the level of support officers in Local Authorities can give within this process, in order to ensure that the engagement process reaches the full scope of people available. It was noted that as part of Arup's work, mapping out where each Local Authority is within their own Local Development Plan would be a key component, and this would aid in ensuring that the timing of the SDP's 'Call for Sites' would be distinct from the Local Authorities in order to minimise any confusion or duplication.

Concern was expressed in relation to the potential public backlash to any large strategic housing sites being acknowledged within the SDP. It was questioned how the SDP can be responsive to local feeling as it moves forward. In response, it was noted that thresholds for what is defined as 'strategic' may differ from one local area to another. It was noted that data emerging from candidate sites and emerging deposit plans would form the baseline for the SDP in order to avoid overriding local work. It was noted as a possibility that a broader approach be taken by not identifying sites with red lines, but rather general areas of search for housing. It was also noted that going further into the 25-year plan, it may not be viable to be prescriptive nor use long-term projection trend lines as a firm housing trend for growth; rather, it might be better suited as a range where the likely outcome falls within it. It was emphasised that this would give local authorities flexibility in terms of housing targets. The Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer expressed concerns in terms of Welsh Government housing projections and their accuracy, given that they conflict with housing requirements in emerging plans.

8. SDP FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

RESOLVED

To agree on the SDP Forward Work Programme.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Forward Work Plan sets out a calendar of meetings for the period up to July 2027.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that this report outlines the key upcoming dates, and that diary invitations have been sent to each member. It was noted that key reports expected had been highlighted for each date, but that these were indicative given the current resource capacity.

In discussion, it was questioned when the 'Call for Sites' was anticipated to occur, as a meeting would have to be held to discuss this. In response, it was noted that the 'Call for Sites' would likely not be ready before the local government elections. It was emphasised that this was not a cause for concern, as it ensured that the process

would be undertaken correctly and would not create conflict with the election period. It was noted that the process for the 'Call for Sites' could be discussed via correspondence, regardless of the fact that the process would likely not begin for some time.

The meeting commenced at 14:00 and concluded at 15:36.

Chair

STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 2026

TITLE: Strategic Development Plan Position Update

AUTHOR: Andy Roberts, Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. To provide Members with an update on the position reached with the Strategic Development Plan (SDP).

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. That Members note the content of this report.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. To bring Members up to speed with the progress with the SDP.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. This report follows on from the position and work programme for the year that was set out in the report to this committee in July of this year ([Link to report](#)) and provides a brief update on progress since the July meeting.

- 4.2. Members will recall from that report that an important first task that had already commenced at the time of the committee meeting was the first stage in developing an evidence base for the SDP. This specifically involved a two-stage process of auditing the existing information and evidence already available in databases and in Local Development Plan evidence bases.

- 4.3. In terms of this matter, the previous report referred to this as follows:

- 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.

- 4.4 Whilst this work is well advanced, the draft recommendations and report is not yet available to report to this committee meeting but will form part of the agenda for the next meeting. To illustrate the basis on which the evidence audit has been conducted, appendix 1 to this report sets out the scope of the Evidence Audit and is based on the 'core issues' outlined in the LDP manual. This framework has then been used as a benchmark to assess the available information and evidence in order to determine the up datedness of this, and whether gaps exist that will need to be addressed by commissioning specific evidence gathering work.
- 4.5 The scoping meetings held with each LPA policy team were also invaluable in identify the location and accessibility to respective LDP evidence bases which are all being assessed, as well as the position reached with LDP reviews.
- 4.6 Whilst the full audit report is yet to be provided by the CJC's consultants, appendix 2 provides a high-level summary of some of the emerging key finding of the review of LDPs in terms of growth patterns, infrastructure priorities, and indicates where the evidence base remains robust or where an update is likely to be required. Members are invited to review this high-level summary and provide their thoughts and feedback at the meeting, which can then be fed into the finalisation of the recommendations and audit report.
- 4.7 The next steps involve the finalisation of the Evidence Audit report and recommendations for further work. Alongside this work is being commissioned on the Integrated Impact Assessment scoping report and the need to analyse and summarise the content of the evidence identified in the audit, and for this to be written up in a Main Issues Report to guide the next stages of SDP development.

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.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix 1:** Audit Scoping Topics
 - Appendix 2:** High Level Audit Summary
-

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer:

“The CJC has a statutory duty to prepare a Strategic Development Plan and the statutory framework has been considered by this Committee. 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.”

SDP Evidence Audit Framework – key topics for Evidence Audit:

Strategy

Housing

Gypsies and Travellers

Employment

Environment

Transport

Energy

Water

Waste

Social Infrastructure

Minerals

Tourism and Leisure

Town Centres

High level summary of initial outcomes from Evidence Audit

Context

The review provides a consistent understanding of growth patterns, key allocations and infrastructure priorities, and identifies where the evidence base remains robust and where updates are required to support SDP preparation.

Regional spatial strategy

Across North Wales, there is a clear and consistent spatial pattern: Growth is concentrated along the A55 and A5/A483 corridors, reflecting strong links between:

- Housing;
- Employment; and
- Strategic transport infrastructure.

The Wrexham–Deeside National Growth Area (NGA) is the primary focus for economic and housing growth. A series of Regional Growth Areas (RGAs) along the north coast (e.g. Bangor, Llandudno, Rhyl, Holyhead) act as key service and employment centres. This broadly aligns with Future Wales and is reinforced through LDP strategies across all authorities.

Transport and infrastructure

The region benefits from strong strategic connectivity, anchored by:

- The A55 North Wales Expressway (Holyhead to Chester);
- Proposed improvements through the North Wales Metro; and
- A wide range of planned infrastructure upgrades (rail, road, bus and active travel), now formalised through the RTP and Regional Transport Delivery Plan (RTDP).

The evidence confirms a strong alignment between planned growth locations and existing/proposed transport investment. This provides a solid foundation for integrated land-use and transport planning within the SDP.

Employment patterns

Employment growth is strongly aligned to:

- The Wrexham–Deeside NGA, including major sites such as Wrexham Industrial Estate and Deeside Enterprise Zone;
- Strategic corridors (A55 and A5/A483), with key allocations in Flintshire, Wrexham and along the north coast; and
- Sectoral opportunities including:
 - advanced manufacturing

- energy and nuclear (Anglesey, Trawsfynydd)
- tourism and coastal economies

Rural and more constrained areas (e.g. Eryri) show limited large-scale employment growth, reflecting environmental constraints.

Housing provision

Across adopted LDPs, the review identifies:

- ~46,000 dwellings allocated across North Wales;
- A generally distributed pattern of growth, focused on higher-tier settlements; and
- Strong alignment between:
 - housing allocations
 - employment areas
 - transport corridors

However, there is variation between authorities in the scale of growth and reliance on large strategic sites versus smaller allocations. Recent Welsh Government evidence introduces a significant change in context:

- New estimates indicate substantially higher housing need across Wales;
- Around 35% of need is for affordable housing; and
- Unmet need has increased significantly, driven by rising homelessness.

For North Wales, this creates a potential gap because many existing LDPs are based on older, lower growth assumptions, and there is a risk that continuing these approaches could underprovide against updated evidence. There is also a clear shift in emphasis from allocating land to delivering homes in practice, with a greater role for public sector funding, housing associations, and alternative delivery models.

Constraints, sensitivities and opportunities

Future growth will need to respond to important regional constraints, including:

- Environmental designations (Eryri National Park, AONB/National Landscape, coast);
- Potential new National Park designation in North East Wales;
- Infrastructure capacity; and
- Welsh language and community considerations.

These factors are particularly important when considering how additional housing requirements could be accommodated.

The review highlights several key implications for the emerging SDP:

- Strong foundation: Existing spatial strategies and infrastructure plans provide a clear starting point.
- Balancing challenge: Higher housing need must be reconciled with environmental, community and viability constraints.
- Delivery focus: Greater emphasis needed on how development will be delivered, not just where.
- Changing context: The SDP is being prepared during a period of evolving national policy, including likely future housing targets.

North Wales has a well-established and coherent spatial structure, with growth aligned to key corridors, centres and infrastructure. However, the policy and evidence base is evolving rapidly, particularly in relation to housing need and delivery. The SDP provides a critical opportunity to update and strengthen the regional growth strategy, align with the latest evidence and move towards a more delivery-focused, regionally integrated approach to planning.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 2026

TITLE: Relationship between the Strategic Development Plan and Local Development Plans

AUTHOR: Andy Roberts, Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. To share advice provided to Denbighshire County Council by the Corporate Joint Committee, responding to a number of questions relating to the relationship between the emerging Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and its emerging Local Development Plan (LDP) review.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. That Members note the content of this report.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. To assist Members to understand the respective positions of the SDP and their LDPs.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. The CJC was recently asked by Denbighshire County Council if it would provide advice in response to a series of questions relating to the respective position of the emerging SDP and their review of their LDP. Denbighshire are currently considering the need to potentially begin their review afresh, following new and higher housing need projections published by Welsh Government.
- 4.2. The Questions were posed by Cllr Merfyn Parry who a Member of Denbighshire's Planning Committee is and also is Chair of their Development Plan Panel. The questions are well worded and highly relevant not only to the specific position that Denbighshire are in but will hopefully resonate with all Local Planning Authority Lead Members and help set the context between the emerging SDP and where they are with their LDP reviews.
- 4.3. The response note to Denbighshire is attached as appendix 1 and the CJC is grateful to Cllr Parry and Paul Mead the Development Manager for agreeing to share this with the wider committee. Members are asked to consider the note and provide feedback or raise queries of their own at the forthcoming meeting.

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.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Response to Denbighshire CC on the relationship between the emerging SDP and LDPs

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer:

“The CJC has a statutory duty to prepare a Strategic Development Plan and the statutory framework has been considered by this Committee. 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.”

Advice provided to Denbighshire County Council by the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee on the relationship between the emerging North Wales Strategic Development Plan and Denbighshire's replacement Local Development Plan, to support the consideration by DCC Members of the need to discontinue the replacement LDP presently being prepared and begin the process afresh.

Questions posed by Cllr Merfyn Parry and received via Paul Mead, Development Manager, DCC.

Responding CJC officer: Andy Roberts, Regional Strategic Planning Manager

1. The current stage and anticipated timetable for preparing and adopting the North Wales Strategic Development Plan.

CJC Response: The SDP Delivery Agreement was approved by Welsh Government in February 2026 just prior to the start of the pre-election period for Senedd elections. Work on the plan therefore commenced in June 2026 following the outcome of those elections. The SDP timetable sets out a programme for plan preparation and adoption which is just over five years, with adoption planned for the first quarter of 2031, following Examination in Public of the plan, using essentially the same process as for LDPs. [The approved Delivery Agreement is available here](#). Work is currently underway on the SDP evidence base with an initial audit of available evidence almost complete and ready to report. This has included dialogue with all North Wales LPAs to gain an understanding of respective LDP evidence bases, where following the audit a gap analysis will be carried out to understand where resources may need to be invested to update the evidence.

2. Which planning matters will be determined regionally through the SDP and which will remain for Denbighshire's LDP.

CJC Response: Future Wales: The National Plan provides guidance on the potential content for SDPs in policy 19 – Strategic Policies for Regional Planning, where it sets out the following:



Policy 19 – Strategic Policies for Regional Planning



Strategic Development Plans should embed placemaking as an overarching principle and should establish for the region (and where required constituent Local Development Plans):

1. a spatial strategy;
2. a settlement hierarchy;
3. the housing provision and requirement;
4. the gypsy and traveller need;
5. the employment provision;
6. the spatial areas for strategic housing, employment growth and renewable energy;
7. the identification of green belts, green corridors and nationally important landscapes where required;
8. the location of key services, transport and connectivity infrastructure;
9. a framework for the sustainable management of natural resources and cultural assets;
10. ecological networks and opportunities for protecting or enhancing the connectivity of these networks and the provision of green infrastructure; and
11. a co-ordinated framework for minerals extraction and the circular economy, including waste treatment and disposal.

The Welsh Government requires the adoption of Strategic Development Plans in the North, Mid Wales, South West and South East regions.

The evidence audit referred to earlier has therefore followed these general policy areas and similarly encompasses Strategy, Housing, Employment, Gypsies and Travellers, Environment,

Transport, Energy, Water, Waste, Social Infrastructure, Minerals, Tourism and Leisure, Town Centres.

Rather than consider the above as being exclusively dealt with in the SDP, it may be better to consider that these are appropriate to make policy on at a regional scale, but that policy then provides guidance to each LPA as to how the outcomes of the regional guidance provided are implemented at a local scale via the LDP. The CJC will receive the evidence audit report referred to above in the near future and once reviewed this can be shared with each LPA.

Another key consideration of course is that whilst the SDP is being prepared then effectively no material planning weight attaches to it for the purpose of either guiding the development of individual LDPs or for use in any decision-making context. That said, the approach that the CJC has already set out and implemented is to work collaboratively with all the North Wales LPAs to both share progress and emerging evidence, as well as track progress on emerging LDPs. This will ensure that an LPA is aware of the emerging SDP in the review of its own plan. The CJC is clear that it cannot and will not take a unilateral approach to developing the SDP that may then impose a policy position on LPAs that compromises current or emerging local policy. Even when the SDP needs to look longer term to 2051 and beyond the end dates of all current LDPs, it will do so in collaboration with the LPAs.

3. *The legal requirement for Denbighshire's future LDP to be in general conformity with the SDP.*

CJC Response: Whilst that is correct, this can only formally apply in the event there is an adopted SDP already in place prior to adoption of an LDP review. That said, the emerging timetable for the SDP and the consideration of the need to commence a refresh of the Denbighshire LDP review are on similar timelines and with reference to the response above, provides an opportunity for informal collaborative working to ensure that regional and local policy can be developed in a context of mutual understanding and agreement. This applies to all of the LPAs in North Wales but clearly the degree of collaboration depends on the stage reached with respective LDPs, relative to where the SDP is.

4. *Whether the SDP could determine or materially influence Denbighshire's housing requirement, distribution of growth, settlement hierarchy, strategic employment sites and major infrastructure.*

CJC Response: The general answer to this is yes potentially, but this would depend on when the SDP is adopted and where an LPA is with its emerging LDP at that time. From the responses above and the collaborative approach that the CJC wants to take with LPAs, this should provide a less formal but potentially close relationship between emerging LDPs and SDPs so that there are 'no surprises' as respective plans reach a critical stage such as examination. In terms of each point raised, the way the SDP can influence these is as follows:

Housing Requirement – The SDP will set an overall housing requirement in a similar way to the way this is done for individual LDPs using the latest national population and household projections as a starting point. Like the LDP process, different growth options will be generated and 'tested' via the preferred strategy consultation, but with prior review with the LPAs beforehand. This process will also factor in emerging housing requirement figures in LDPs. Any deviation from the projections to take a more policy-based approach will as for LDPs, need to clearly be evidenced

and justified. There may be mileage in considering a region-wide policy approach to deliver more affordable housing as an example.

Distribution of Growth and Settlement hierarchy – In terms of these spatial influences, the SDP will seek to break down the regional growth (housing and employment) by each local authority area. This again is guided by the sub-national projections, adopted or emerging LDPs, and any emerging local policy position. Remember that the SDP will only focus on a strategic scale of development, so will either set thresholds for site sizes (e.g. housing sites of 3-500 homes or more, 50-100 ha of employment land) and/or may more generally identify broad amounts of housing or jobs that key locations should aim to deliver over the 25-year plan period. The spatial hierarchy therefore will only seek to identify the regionally significant growth areas/settlements which will be based on LDP tier one settlements with some further assessment of sustainability, infrastructure capacity, and connectivity. It will be for LDPs to determine the distribution of growth for the majority of their settlement hierarchies.

Strategic Employment Sites – This point has been covered above in relation to the scale of sites that the SDP will consider. A register of strategic sites will be compiled from existing sources and emerging plans as part of the evidence base development stage. It should be noted that the SDP is seeking to build on what is emerging locally but should also be thought of as an opportunity to consider longer term employment growth options that may well need to look beyond current LDP provision and end dates. The SDP is the opportunity to be creative and ambitious about sustaining growth into the longer term, for the region as a whole.

Major Infrastructure – This depends on what we define as major infrastructure and the plan will seek to consider all available sources and talk to the key infrastructure providers to identify current or planned infrastructure projects and factor those into the policy framework. This is no different from the process that LDPs have to follow. It should also be noted that depending on the type and scale of certain infrastructure, such development may fall outside of the LPAs remit to determine, instead being considered at a national scale via the SIP determination process.

5. *The implications of discontinuing and restarting Denbighshire's replacement LDP while the regional SDP is being prepared.*

CJC Response: The decision to cease work on the present LDP review and commence the review afresh is a matter for DCC but the CJC understands that this is driven by a significant change to evidence relating to newly published household projections from Welsh Government that would render the housing requirement in the present LDP review difficult to continue to justify. As for SDP development, this will rely on the latest available projections from Welsh Government to use in assessing growth options and setting a housing requirement and as such, the opportunity exists for DCC to align its proposed refreshed review with the emerging SDP evidence base which creates natural synergies in terms of using the same sources to consider appropriate levels of growth. From comments made above, the CJC does not consider that it would be appropriate to prepare an SDP unilaterally and impose this on LPAs, but rather to work collaboratively to ensure that work on LDPs dovetails with the emerging SDP.

6. *Whether restarting could result in evidence, consultation and other work being duplicated or subsequently overtaken by the SDP.*

CJC Response: As per previous responses given, there are significant potential benefits of aligning respective LDP and SDP processes and timetables, around evidence gathering, strategy development, growth optioneering, and policy development. The CJC is committed to taking a

collaborative approach with LPAs, irrespective of where they are with their LDP review process. The CJC has already committed to sharing the outcomes of the current evidence review process underway and the outcomes of any further work on growth options and spatial hierarchy.

7. *Whether Denbighshire may ultimately be required to prepare a more limited form of LDP beneath the regional SDP.*

CJC Response: This option in effect already exists in terms of the option to prepare an LDP 'Lite', but this is dependent on there being an adopted SDP in place first of all. An emerging SDP carries little weight and any LPA who is considering or needs to review its present LDP needs to commence this, as it is a statutory duty in its own right for the Authority to have an up to date development plan, and given the likely adoption date of the SDP (2031) there is no realistic justification to delay an LDP review, on the basis of waiting for the SDP to be prepared and adopted.

8. *What opportunities Denbighshire members, including the Strategic Planning Group and Full Council, will have to influence the preparation of the SDP before decisions are made by the CJC.*

CJC Response: Apart from the regular dialogue and collaboration between officers of the CJC and each respective LPA, the most obvious way for an LPA to influence the SDP is by maintaining progress with its LDP review, including evidence gathering, as these are the principle means that the CJC will use to track progress and build into the SDP, emerging growth options and policy priorities, certainly for the first half of the 25 year SDP plan period. After that each Council has a direct connection to the SDP as respective portfolio holders for planning comprise the CJC Strategic Planning Sub Committee who act as a steering group for SDP preparation, and link back to respective LDP review processes. The CJC Strategic Planning Manager would be more than happy to provide regular updates to respective LDP Panels or Preparation Groups and will leave this open invitation for respective groups to consider and extend invitations if required.