

## REPORT TO THE NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

26/01/2024

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**Title:** North Wales Corporate Joint Committee's 2024/25 Budget and Levy on Constituent Authorities

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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement for the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) to approve its budget at a meeting of the CJC by 31 January annually.
- 1.2 The budget, which is included in the appendix, has been divided to reflect the structure of the CJC, namely the Strategic Planning, Transport, Investment Zones and corporate functions, and has been analysed per expenditure heading. This allows the constituent authorities' contributions to be levied separately for 'Planning' and 'Other' functions.

### 2. DECISIONS SOUGHT

- 2.1 To approve the Budget for 2024/25 for the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) as presented in the appendix. To approve the budget as noted below:-
  - Strategic Planning (6 Leaders and Chair of the Park - simple majority, quorum = 5)
  - Other Functions of the CJC including Transport (6 Leaders - simple majority, quorum = 5).

Strategic Planning	Transport	Corporate Joint Committee	Budget Total
£	£	£	£
371,250	182,750	210,820	764,820

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**2.2 To approve the levy on the constituent authorities, as noted below:**

- **Strategic Planning (Unanimity, quorum = 7)**
- **Other Functions (Unanimity, quorum = 6)**

	<b>Strategic Planning</b>	<b>Other functions</b>	<b>Total Levy</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Conwy County Borough Council	(58,510)	(65,370)	(123,880)
Denbighshire County Council	(52,080)	(55,220)	(107,300)
Flintshire County Council	(83,780)	(88,830)	(172,610)
Cyngor Gwynedd	(53,870)	(67,260)	(121,130)
Isle of Anglesey County Council	(37,230)	(39,480)	(76,710)
Wrexham County Borough Council	(73,010)	(77,410)	(150,420)
Eryri National Park Authority	(12,770)		(12,770)
<b>Total Levy</b>	<b>(371,250)</b>	<b>(393,570)</b>	<b>(764,820)</b>

**3. REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

- 3.1 Regulations 16 and 17 of The North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations 2021 set out the details of the process to be used to agree and fund the costs.
- 3.2 Again for 2024/25, it is recommended that the budget is funded by means of a levy apportioned between the constituent authorities based on the population relevant to the field of work.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The budget is based on the CJC's 'initial functions', namely preparing, monitoring, reviewing and amending the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and developing a Regional Transport Plan (RTP).
- 4.2 The total net budget for 2024/25 has remained at the 2023/24 level of £764,820, but the population figures have been updated.
- 4.3 Work is currently underway to transfer Ambition North Wales (ANW) to the economic well-being power of the CJC, but as the transfer will not take place until mid-year, a separate budget will be established and then transferred during the year.

- 4.4 Regular budget monitoring reports will be presented to the CJC during the year, and any issues will be highlighted and appropriate steps will be taken.

## **5. BUDGET HEADINGS**

### Employees

- 5.1 A report on “Resourcing of Statutory Functions” was presented to the CJC in its meeting on 24 March 2023, and the budget for 2024/25 is based on this staffing structure. It includes an interim Chief Executive (2 days a week), Personal Assistant (1 day a week), Manager (Statutory Functions), Project Manager (1 day a week), three Planning posts and one Transport post. An inflation estimate of 6% has been applied for 2024/25.
- 5.2 The cost of allowance for lay members is based on three members for the Governance and Audit Committee and seven members for the Standards Committee.

### Travel

- 5.3 The staff travel budget is based on an estimate of essential travel allowance and subsistence allowances.

### Supplies and services

- 5.4 This heading includes budgets for tools and equipment, various supplies, engagement and meetings, audit fees, external consultants and insurance.
- 5.5 The CJC currently has a shadow insurance cover as part of Cyngor Gwynedd’s insurance policy, but this interim arrangement will cease once Ambition North Wales is transferred, and the CJC will require its own insurance cover. The increased insurance budget is an initial estimate that we have received from Cyngor Gwynedd’s internal insurance advisor.

### Support Services

- 5.6 Support services are needed to facilitate the work of the Joint Committee, and the budget for 2024/25 includes the support of Finance, Legal (including the Monitoring Officer and legal input to Planning and Transport), Corporate Support (Committees, Translation and Human Resources) and Information Technology (one-off costs as well as support and licences) services.
- 5.7 The range of services and the cost estimates will be discussed again as the Service Level Agreements are formed.

### Set-up costs

- 5.8 The set-up costs heading has been added for 2024/25 and includes a budget for the legal costs associated with transferring ANW to the CJC as well as a budget for the Investment Zones. The commissioning of work related to the Investment Zones heading will need to be discussed further during the year as more information becomes available.

### Income

- 5.9 The CJC has been successful in their bid to Welsh Government for funding towards the Regional Transport Plan, and their 2024/25 allocation of £100,000 is shown in the budget and will contribute towards staff and external consultant costs during the year.
- 5.10 A contribution from reserve of £198,420 is also used to fund the budget, and the reserve balance will be reviewed during the year.

## **6. PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS**

- 6.1 Partners' contributions have been divided based on the population figures used in the 2024/25 settlement calculation, and although the total net budget used to calculate the levy remains at the 2023/24 level of £764,820, changes in these population figures means that four of the authorities (Denbighshire, Flintshire, Isle of Anglesey and Wrexham) will see a slight increase in their levy, while three authorities (Conwy, Gwynedd and Eryri National Park) will see a slight reduction in their levy.

6.2 In accordance with the legislation, the CJC's general budget and the Transport budget will be funded by the six North Wales authorities, while the Eryri National Park Authority will also contribute towards the Strategic Planning budget (where they will have a vote).

## **7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 The Corporate Joint Committee is subject to duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

7.2 In accordance with the legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, the Corporate Joint Committee must give due attention to the need (1) to eliminate unlawful discrimination (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) encourage good relations based on the protected characteristics. As setting a budget falls within the decisions which can be considered strategically, there is a duty to give due attention to operating in a way which is designed to minimise inequalities which stem from socio-economic disadvantage. As the Corporate Joint Committee is still in its early years, it is not considered that any specific impacts stem from the decisions submitted.

7.3 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 involves improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The act places a well-being duty on public bodies which is aimed at delivering the seven well-being goals, namely a prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal Wales with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture with a thriving Welsh language and which is globally responsible. Given the context, the recommendations are in accordance with these duties.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Regulations 16 and 17 of The North Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations 2021 set out the details of the process to be used to agree and fund the costs. These regulations place specific requirements regarding the calculation and approval of the budget requirement (Regulation 16) and then, as a second step, agreeing the levy contributions of the constituent authorities (Regulation 17). According to statute, the Corporate Joint Committee must adopt the Budget by 31 January 2024. **If the Corporate Joint Committee fails to agree on the contributions, Welsh Ministers have statutory powers to instruct the distribution of contributions.**
- 8.2 It is noted in the decisions sought that there are specific requirements regarding quorum and voting in relation to these decisions. Therefore, it must be ensured that voting is arranged in a way which reflects on the one hand the specific voting rights involved with setting the budget and on the other hand the need for unanimity on the decisions on the levy, again while separating both elements.

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – North Wales Corporate Joint Committee’s 2024/25 Revenue Budget

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## **RESPONSE OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

**i. Monitoring Officer:**

The report summarises the technical requirements involved with these decisions together with the statutory duties involved with establishing the budget and levy.

**ii. Statutory Finance Officer:**

Author of this report.