



NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

17 January, 2025

TITLE: Progress update on Strategic Development Plan (SDP)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This report provides an update to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) on progress and challenges for preparing a Delivery Agreement (DA) for the regional Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and seeking approvals on the proposed plan as well as establishing the statutory pre-SDP Sub-Committee to oversee the preparation of the DA.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. To accept the progress to date and mobilisation arrangements.
- 2.2. To support the indicative timescales for development of the Delivery Agreement and authorise its preparation accordingly.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. During the Item 5 update at the CJC meeting on 22nd November, 2024; Members requested a report from the Interim Chief Executive to be presented at the next meeting to provide an update on progress in identifying and securing appropriate resources to lead the development of the Strategic Development Plan. This report addresses the Committee's request and provides the relevant information.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. Regulations made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 impose upon Corporate Joint Committees statutory responsibility for regional economic well-being, spatial planning, and transport planning.
- 4.2. The aim is to promote collaborative regional working to deliver more effective outcomes for communities by ensuring key issues, development and associated infrastructure is planned for in an integrated and comprehensive way across a wider geographical area. This represents a more joined-up approach than has previously been employed; aligned tightly to economic development ambitions and Welsh Government's vision for a more strategic approach to both land-use and transport planning.

- 4.3. In regard to spatial planning, the statutory duty to prepare both a Local Development Plan (LDP) and an SDP is set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). SDP Regulations were made enabling CJs to prepare an SDP. A draft SDP Manual was issued to all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in Autumn 2022, which will be finalised in Spring 2025. The draft Manual provides high-level timelines.
- 4.4. It is not anticipated that the SDP will be adopted until 2030 at the earliest, and LDPs must be kept up to date, ensuring, for example, that investment and sustainable development can continue to take place in a Plan-led way, providing confidence to all stakeholders including investors, developers, and communities.
- 4.5. In the case of preparing the SDP, the approach has been to seek an appropriate officer from the North Wales Local Authority network to be the Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer (Corporate Joint Committee) regarding regional spatial planning. This would ensure representation for local authority (LA) and regional interests, allied to subject matter expertise. This role is anticipated to start a secondment with the CJC from January 2025, initially on a shared time basis but full time from 1st April, 2025. The Strategic Planning sub-committee membership is established, and meetings can be convened to support the development of a Delivery Agreement and related steps, timetabled to ensure appropriate Member involvement in each stage of the process, to final adoption of the plan and monitoring.

5. SDP PROGRESS

- 5.1. The Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer will initially support the preparation of the programme plan and Delivery Agreement (DA), which is a public statement that contains the Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) setting out how and when stakeholders and the community can become involved in the plan making process and a Timetable (Regulation 10) for preparing the SDP - Regulation 11 (1). They will analyse the requirements of the SDP and liaise across all stakeholder groups, collaborating to produce the SDP.
- 5.2. Our indicative timetable for this work is outlined below:
- The CJC to Authorise preparation of DA - January 2025
 - Prepare draft DA and informally consult key consultees – February-March 2025
 - Revise draft DA (if required) – April 2025
 - Formally consult on DA – May-June 2025
 - The CJC to formally adopt DA – July 2025
 - Submit adopted DA to Welsh Government – July-August 2025
 - Publish DA on website and formally notify all stakeholders asap following WG approval
- 5.3. The CJC's Interim Chief Executive has been in communication with the Welsh Government's Planning Division regarding the necessary requirements and timelines for submitting the DA. The Welsh Government expects as per correspondence received 16th February, 2024 that the CJC's submit the DA for their agreement by December 2024. Due to resource constraints and prioritisation towards the Regional Transport Plan and its timescales, this has not been possible. Communication with relevant Welsh Government officials and Cabinet Secretaries will determine if the proposed indicative timescale for the DA is acceptable.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Costs will be drawn from existing North Wales CJC budgets with the necessary support from Cyngor Gwynedd's Legal and Finance teams.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The final statutory guidance for Strategic Development Plans from Welsh Government is expected to be published in Spring 2025.

APPENDICES:

None

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. **Monitoring Officer:**

"The preparation of any development plan is a significant project as the report reflects. The Delivery Agreement sets out the project plan and methodology for creating and adoption of the Strategic Development Plan, I am pleased that the report sets out a roadmap to achieve this key initial step.

ii. **Statutory Finance Officer:**

"I have no objections to the decision sought from the perspective of financial propriety. I expect the work of developing the plan to be completed within the budget of the CJC."