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**NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE**  
**13/06/25**

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**Present:** Chair: Councillor Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council)

**Councillors:** Dave Hughes (Flintshire County Council), Nia Jeffreys (Cyngor Gwynedd), Charlie McCoubrey (Conwy County Borough Council), Gary Pritchard (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Jason McLellan (Denbighshire County Council) and Edgar Owen (Chair of the Eryri National Park Authority)

**Chief Executives of Constituent Councils:** Geraint Owen (Cyngor Gwynedd), Dylan Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Matthew Georgiou (Conwy County Borough Council), Neal Cockerton (Flintshire County Council), Graham Boase (Denbighshire County Council), Alwyn Jones (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Jonathan Cawley (Eryri National Park Authority)

**Other officers present:** Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer - Cyngor Gwynedd), Dewi Aeron Morgan (CJC Statutory Finance Officer), Hedd Vaughan-Evans (Head of North Wales Ambition Operations), Claire Incledon (CJC Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer), Iain Taylor (AMION Consulting), David Hole (CJC Action Programme Lead), Sian Pugh (Assistant Head of Finance - Cyngor Gwynedd) and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader - Cyngor Gwynedd)

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Cllr. Mark Pritchard was elected Chair of the Corporate Joint Committee for 2025/26.

**2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

Cllr. Charlie McCoubrey was elected as Vice-Chair of the Corporate Joint Committee for 2025/26

**3. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Alwen Williams (CJC Chief Executive), Rhun ap Gareth (Conwy County Council) and Dafydd Gibbard (Cyngor Gwynedd).

**4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

There were no declarations of personal interest.

**5. URGENT ITEMS**

None to note.

**6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 March 2025 as a true record.

**7. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**

The report was presented by Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer.

## **RESOLVED:**

**The draft calendar was approved for the period up to June 2026.**

## **DISCUSSION**

The report was submitted noting that the Joint Committee was required to receive a calendar to determine the frequency of its meetings for the following council year. It was highlighted that dates were in place for the Joint Committee along with three of the sub-committees – namely the Economic Wellbeing Sub-Committee, the Strategic Transport Sub-Committee and the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee.

It was noted that work was being undertaken for the establishment of the Governance and Audit Sub-Committee and that a programme of work needed to be set. It was explained that it was intended to advertise for members to the Standards Committee after the summer, and regarding the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee that five of the authorities had received the report to establish it, but that they were still waiting for one county's decision.

### **8. CO-OPTION OF MEMBERS TO THE CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE**

The report was presented by Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer.

## **RESOLVED**

### **Resolved:**

- i. That the Monitoring Officer reviews the principles of co-option onto the Corporate Joint Committee and its sub committees as set out in the Establishment Regulations (as amended) and the statutory guidance.**
- ii. That the review comprises a consultation with the four Higher and Further Education providers in relation to their membership on the Economic Wellbeing sub-committee to be reported to a future meeting of the Corporate Joint Committee.**
- iii. That in relation to the future governance of the Corporate Joint Committee consideration be given to options around creating advisory membership or stakeholder liaison groups with representatives of the Trade Unions, Third Sector, Housing Associations, private sector and health, the terms of which to provide for the exchange of information and collaboration in supporting the decision making of the Corporate Joint Committee.**
- iv. That the review be conducted in consultation with the Members of the Joint Corporate Committee and the Chief Executives of the Constituent Authorities with a view to submitting a report to the Joint Corporate Committee with a recommendation regarding the model for co-option.**

## **DISCUSSION**

The report was presented noting the need for discussion on the establishment of governance arrangements, and that this report was part of the process to address the requirements in the statutory guidance. It was explained that the guidance identified the need to actively involve others in the work of the Joint Committee across functions. It was

highlighted that there was discussion about a seat and a vote for the Further and Higher Education institutions, but the need to create a process to address this was noted.

It was explained that this report was a first step in the journey in order to have a concrete plan, but it was noted that there was a need to respect democracy but that a practical model was in place to get the job done.

## **9. BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD AND NON-EXECUTIVE ADVISORS**

The report was presented by Iwan Evans, Monitoring Officer and David Hole, CJC Action Programme Lead.

### **RESOLVED:**

**To accept the report which updated Members on post-transfer and development of the project and the ongoing progress of the implementation programme to support the continued establishment of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC).**

### **DISCUSSION**

The report was presented stating that it provided an update on the work that had been done following the transfer on 1 April 2025. It was highlighted that there was a programme of change and improvement based on priorities and some limiting factors for the year. It was expressed that further work was needed to change what had not yet been developed in subsequent years.

It was noted that there was specific work for projects and to develop the public's understanding of the CJC's work. The officers were thanked for the update and the need to receive an update in September was noted, as work needed to continue over the summer months.

## **10. FLINTSHIRE AND WREXHAM INVESTMENT ZONE**

The report was presented by Hedd Vaughan-Evans, Head of Operations and Iain Taylor, AMION Consulting.

### **RESOLVED:**

#### **It was agreed:**

- **Accept the update report**
- **Review the proposed outline arrangements for the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone Advisory Board and advise on the proposal.**
- **Review the proposed Delegation and Decision Framework and advise on the proposal.**
- **Receive a further report with detailed proposals following the Inter-Authority Workshop**
- **Submit a further report if there was a delay in one of the high-level milestones for year 1.**

### **DISCUSSION**

The report was presented stating that it provided an update and highlighted the future framework and timetable. It was highlighted that the plan introduced Zone 4 back in May,

and that they hoped to receive feedback in June, and that any significant changes that will require the interventions to come back to the CJC will be agreed on.

It was explained that the team was preparing Portal 5 to be delivered, with key elements including Investment Zone milestones, Investment Zone Programme and Investment Zone Risk Register. Attention was drawn to the key milestone table highlighting dates up to the end of December.

Moving forward, it was highlighted that the scheme has a budget of £10m and will be working with Cyngor Gwynedd and the Welsh Government to spend this. The need to establish the Advisory Board was noted, as set out in Portal 3. It was noted that an interim Advisory Board was in place for the interim period and the need to create an additional skills sub-board was highlighted, which was in the process of being undertaken.

It was explained following the 2024 Call for Projects, that a wide range of potential investment schemes and significant demand for a support programme have been identified. It was explained that the investment opportunity process had identified the need to invest in essential infrastructure to unlock the largest development sites. It was noted that there will be a need to move quickly. It was explained that a business case has been accepted for Project Prince by Knauf Insulation and an Outline Project Plan has been received by Pochin/Goodman for their land at Airfields, Deeside. It was expressed that Airbus was developing the case for the Advanced Manufacturing Centre next to their Deeside campus.

It was explained that a workshop between the CJC and Flintshire and Wrexham County Councils was planned for the end of June, in order to work through the details of how decisions will be made and how the programme will operate under delegations from the CJC. It was noted that key principles included that the CJC delegates the operation of responsibility of the Accountable Body to the Economic Wellbeing Sub-Committee, and that the sub-committee allocates resources to support, to manage the assurance process for all projects above a £5m grant application. It was expressed that there were implications for administering £160m of the Flexible Grant Funding and allocations for Tax Relief, particularly Business Rates Relief. It was clarified that detailed financial arrangements as set out in the Grant Funding Letter, the Memorandum with the Welsh and UK Government together with the Memorandum of Local Understanding between the CJC and Flintshire and Wrexham County Councils would be considered once they had been prepared.

Members gave thanks for the report and noted their pride in seeing the development of a skills programme. It was asked whether the skills programme element was for the whole of north Wales and not just for Flintshire and Wrexham. It was emphasised that although the investment zone and jobs were linked to Flintshire and Wrexham, the need to identify opportunities and access to training in wider counties was explained so that the whole region could benefit from the scheme.

The need to move at speed was noted and it was asked that if the milestones were not reached that a report should come to the CJC setting out the reasoning for the delay.

## **11. NWEAB'S REVENUE OUT-TURN AND CAPITAL POSITION FOR 2024/25**

The report was presented by Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance (CJC Statutory Officer) and Sian Pugh, Assistant Head of Finance.

## **RESOLVED**

**The report providing the final North Wales Economic Ambition Board (BUEGC) out-turn position to the North Wales Joint Incorporated Committee (CJC) for revenue and capital in 2024/25 was accepted.**

## **DISCUSSION**

The report was presented explaining that it had already been submitted to the Economic Wellbeing Sub-Committee, but it was now submitted for approval. It was added that they were aiming to submit the report in the form of a statement of draft accounts in July.

It was explained that the final out-turn revenue position for the year was an underspend of almost £386k, and that it was an increase from the underspend forecast in the December review. It was noted that this was mainly due to a decrease in expenditure on several of the budget headings. It was expressed that the final net underspend under the Portfolio Management Office heading was £75,140, due to underspend on employee expenditure. It was explained that this was due to lower inflation than budgeted along with an extension of the Shared Prosperity Fund grant until the end of March 2025.

It was stated that underspending of Supporting Services by the Accountable Body was mainly due to underspending of the Finance Service Support. The final underspending of the Joint Committee was highlighted and the reasons for this on each heading were highlighted. It was noted that there was an unbudgeted expenditure of £2.8m on Transfers to Reserve Funds. It was highlighted that back in February the Board approved the use of the interest received on the Growth Deal Balances from 2024-26 to fund additional roles and additional development costs, and to retain the current resources of the Portfolio Management Office for an additional 2 years beyond March 2026.

In terms of the main income streams, it was highlighted that this included partner contributions, the North Wales Growth Deal grant revenue allocation, the CJC's contribution for staff secondment, the Welsh Government's energy grant, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the earmarked reserve fund. It was noted that the final out turn revenue position for the year was an underspend of almost £386k and this was an increase from what was forecast. It was explained that in order to leave a neutral position for the year, it was stated that they would be drawing £714k down from the North Wales Growth Deal Grant rather than the £1.1m indicated.

In highlighting the reserves, it was noted that the total reserve fund as at 31 March 2025 was £211k. The Board, at its February meeting, used £61k from this reserve fund as part of the 2025-26 budget. It was stated that the project fund balance was £29k, and it was explained that the money would be used to fund the costs of a local Energy project. It was highlighted that the interest fund balance was £4.7m and the resource fund was £2.8m.

It was noted that the year-end review of the Capital programme indicated a net reduction of £13.3m, and that this was due to the slippage of four projects along with the removal of another project. It was explained that starting projects during the year brought some of their high-profile spending forward.

It was also explained that a request had been received from the Sub-Committee to analyse the delivery profile of the Growth Plan into the initial profile, and it was explained that the department considered that it would not be a useful comparison as a result of the number of changes to the Growth plan since its inception. It was stated that if the CJC was keen to see an in-depth analysis, it was recommended that it should be done in accordance with the 2025 update to the Portfolio Business Case which would incorporate recent opportunities.

It was asked whether the Wylfa's reserve list had been confirmed. It was noted that no money had been committed, and that a decision would be required once a business case had been confirmed.

## **12. NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE OUT-TURN REPORT AND ANNUAL RETURN**

The report was presented by Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance (CJC Statutory Officer) and Sian Pugh, Assistant Head of Finance.

### **RESOLVED**

**The report was accepted which provided the final position for 2024/25 to the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) and seeking the approval of the official Annual Return for 2024/25 was obtained.**

### **DISCUSSION**

The report was presented stating that as the Joint Committee's turnover was less than £2.5m, an annual return rather than a floor statement of accounts would be required to meet the statutory requirement.

It was stated that the final out-turn position for the year was an underspend of almost £402k, and it was explained that this was an increase from what was forecast in the December review. It was noted that this was mainly because the expenditure on external consultants for Strategic Planning will not start until 2025/26.

Members were guided through the budget headings and a final underspend of £333,674 was highlighted on the Employees heading. It was noted that the lay members' allowance budget related to Governance and Audit Committee meetings and these meetings would take place from 2025/26. It was stated that the travel and subsistence budget had not been utilised during the year, and that there was an underspend of £129,140 against the heading for supplies and services. It was explained that Audit Wales' fees were showing negatively, and that this was because the fees calculated in previous years were higher than the actual amounts and had been reversed in 2024/25. In addition, fees were lower because it was an Annual Form rather than a set of accounts that need to be audited. It was highlighted that external consultant expenditure of £222,231, of which £180,517 was funded by the Welsh Government's Transport Grant. It was noted that there was an underspend on the insurance costs, as an interim policy existed with the full policy starting in April 2025.

It was explained that there was a net expenditure, of £195,753. It was noted that expenditure on the legal and democracy costs included the costs of an external law firm as well as a legal and democratic consultant commissioned to provide expert advice and support on the establishment of the CJC.

It was stated that the CJC was successful in its application to the Welsh Government for funding towards the Regional Transport Plan, with £125k awarded in 2023/24 and £100k in 2024/25. The interest received on balances for 2024/25 was £57,723. It was explained that a contribution from the reserve of £83k relating to the costs of the Investment Zone would be repaid once the grant income was approved by the Welsh Government.

The Joint Committee was asked to note and accept the actual expenditure and income for 2024/25, and to approve the underspend of £402k to the earmarked reserve to give a total of £1,113k. It was added that £565k of this has been approved for use as part of the 2025/26 budget.

### **13. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT FOR 2025/26**

The report was presented by Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance (CJC Statutory Officer) and Sian Pugh, Assistant Head of Finance.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**The report which provided the Joint Corporate Committee's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2025/26 was accepted.**

#### **DISCUSSION**

The report was submitted stating that treasury management decisions were made on a daily basis, and the Finance Department at Cyngor Gwynedd was required to act in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy. The transfer of the Ambition Board to the CJC took place on 1 April 2025, and therefore the statement included the balance sheets of the CJC and NWEAB.

It was explained that the statement was based on the CIPFA Code and the Guide on Local Authority Investments by the Welsh Government, and therefore fulfilled the CJC's legal responsibility under the Local Government Act 2003. It was explained that treasury management was about keeping an abundance but not an excess of cash to meet the CJC's spending needs, managing risks associated with striking the right balance between risk and returns. It was expressed that in order to formulate this Strategy, it was explained that the department had received expert advice from treasury management advisors, Arlingclose. It was explained that the investments were consistent with the type of investments that Cyngor Gwynedd makes, and that there were limits to the amount allowed for each institution to spread the risk.

### **14. 2025/26 PAY POLICY**

The report was presented by Geraint Owen, Corporate Director of Cyngor Gwynedd.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**A Pay Policy Statement for the Joint Committee for 2025/26 was adopted.**

#### **DISCUSSION**

The report was submitted stating that a Pay Policy Statement needs to be adopted for 2025/26. It was explained that the policy was reviewed annually, and that it was very similar to what was agreed last year. It was highlighted that this year's policy stipulated the Chief Executive's salary.

The meeting commenced at 14:30 and concluded at 15:55.

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(Chair)