
NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE 18/07/25

Present: Chairperson: Councillor Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council).

Councillors: Dave Hughes (Flintshire County Council), Menna Trenholme (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), Rhun ap Iarthur (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: Alwen Williams (CJC Chief Executive), Claire Incledon (Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer – CJC), Dewi Aeron Morgan (CJC Statutory Finance Officer), Sian Pugh (Assistant Head of Finance – Cyngor Gwynedd), Sara Jane Jones (Senior Accountant Cyngor Gwynedd), Allan Pitt (ARUP), Iain Taylor (AMION Consulting), Andy Roberts (CJC Strategic Development Planning Officer), David Hole (CJC Action Programme Lead), and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader – Cyngor Gwynedd).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr. Nia Jeffreys (Cyngor Gwynedd) and Dafydd Gibbard (Cyngor Gwynedd).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

None to note.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 13 June 2025, as a true record.

5. NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD JOINT COMMITTEE - AUDIT PLAN 2025

The report was presented by Matthew Edwards (Audit Wales)

RESOLVED:

To accept the Audit Wales report which highlighted the Ambition Board's Audit Plan for

2024.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, and thanks were given for the opportunity to present the last audit plan of the Ambition Board. It was noted that the plan referred to the draft accounts being discussed during the meeting.

It was expressed that some elements of the plan needed to be highlighted in terms of reaching international audit standards namely highlighting the audit work together with timescales. It was expressed that no absolute assurance could be given as to the truth and fairness of the statements but that they adopted a concept of materiality. It was explained that the materiality level was set at 2%, however the plan had been based on last year's expenditure. Having seen the latest financial statement, it became clear that there had been a significant increase in expenditure and therefore the materiality level would need to be updated accordingly when the audit work was being undertaken.

The main risks were noted, one of which was the risk of management override but that this was present in all entities. Another risk highlighted was costing the net commitment/pension fund surplus along with implementing the international financial reporting standard - Leases.

It was noted that the audit fee was approximately £15,000. It was confirmed that the membership of the audit team was independent from the CJC but one threat to independence was noted in relation to the Audit Manager who is an acquaintance of a member of the Joint Committee's Operational Group. Appropriate steps would be taken to ensure that any potential conflict was managed.

Thanks were noted for the report.

6. NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD'S STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2024/25

The report was presented by Dewi Aeron Morgan (CJC Statutory Finance Officer).

RESOLVED

To accept and note NWEAB's draft Statement of Accounts (subject to audit) for 2024/25.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented noting that the figures set out aligned with what had been reported in the revenue out-turn report, presented back in June. It was noted that the appendices highlighted the total grants received in advance with a balance of £41.58m on 31 March 2025.

It was explained that the value of the pensions assets was still higher than the value of the liabilities, and the net asset position was £1m on 31 March. It was explained that the reason for this was that the actuary's valuation used corporate bonds, and because these had yielded high, it had led to high accounting discount rates, which gave the pension liabilities a lower value. Therefore, in accordance with the direction from the actuary, there was a need once again to adjust the value of the asset and show as £0.

It was highlighted that the Statutory Finance Officer had signed the accounts certifying

that he was of the opinion that the Statement of Accounts had been prepared in accordance with the appropriate practice as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. It was announced that the officer was of the opinion that it presented an accurate and fair picture of the financial position for the 2024-25 financial year.

It was noted that the Statement was currently being reviewed by Audit Wales and that the final accounts would be presented in the autumn.

7. SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The report was presented by Claire Incledon (Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer - CJC).

RESOLVED:

To approve the appointment of the following co-opted members to the CJC's Planning and Strategic Transport Sub-committees.

The membership of the sub-committees was noted as follows:

Strategic Transport Sub-committee	
Name	County
Cllr. Craig ab Iago	Cyngor Gwynedd
CHAIRPERSON Cllr. Goronwy Edwards	Conwy County Borough Council
VICE-CHAIRPERSON Cllr. David A Bithell	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr. Gary Pritchard	Ynys Môn County Council
Cllr. Barry Mellor	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr. Glyn Banks	Flintshire County Council

Strategic Planning Sub-committee	
Name	County
Cllr. Craig ab Iago	Cyngor Gwynedd
Cllr. Chris Cater	Conwy County Borough Council
VICE-CHAIRPERSON Cllr. Hugh Jones	Wrexham County Borough Council
CHAIRPERSON Cllr. Nicola Roberts	Ynys Môn County Council
Cllr. Alan James	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr. Richard Jones	Flintshire County Council
Cllr. Edgar Owen	Eryri National Park Authority

DISCUSSION

The report was presented noting that, over the past year, the Council had established two of the Sub-committees namely the Strategic Transport Sub-committee and the Strategic Planning Sub-committee, with membership coming from the relevant portfolio leaders of North Wales councils. It was noted that the Monitoring Officer had been given the right to

amend any membership and to appoint Lay Members, but this would be reported at the next CJC meeting.

It was noted that the report reported on the adjustments made to the membership following the Annual Meetings of all councils. Attention was drawn to the adjustments.

Cllr. Gary Pritchard highlighted that he was an acting member on the Transport Committee, until a new Portfolio Leader had been appointed.

8. UPDATE ON THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR NORTH WALES - DELIVERY AGREEMENT

The report was presented by Alwen Williams, CJC Chief Executive and Andy Roberts, Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the update on the progress in preparing a Delivery Agreement for the North Wales Strategic Development Plan and the main matters highlighted that will need to be resolved in future.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting that the SDP for North Wales was a statutory requirement, and it was highlighted that the report noted the main steps for producing the Plan.

The Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer noted that it was a pleasure to give an update on the work that had been undertaken. It was emphasised that they were in the early stages of producing the SDP. It was noted that an initial draft of the Delivery Agreement had been produced and shared with the Government together with relevant stakeholders and the Strategic Planning Sub-committee of the CJC. It was noted that the sub-committee had essentially agreed but had highlighted financial risks that would be noted later on in the report.

It was noted that the draft programme followed a 5-year timescale, and that the plan was over a 25-year period. He expressed his personal opinion that the 5-year timescale of the draft programme was rather long but followed the Government's guidance and highlighted that the main concern was ensuring that we get the Plan right. In terms of the 25-year plan, it was noted that some plans had been identified to start as early as possible.

In terms of communication and consultation, given that it was such a wide area, much consultation would take place virtually on a regional basis but face-to-face events could be held locally and some regionally.

It was emphasised that the biggest risk was the financial risk - the figure was so high and no money had been confirmed for the Plan, therefore the financial deficit would have to be found. It was explained that the Delivery Agreement would be going out to consultation today, and that the Agreement could hopefully be presented to the CJC in September as the one that will be submitted to the Government. However it was highlighted that the financial deficit would need to be resolved in order for the DA to be completed. It was noted that the CJC Lead for North Wales together with other CJs across Wales had raised this matter with the Government.

Attention was drawn to section 7 which highlighted the steps once the Delivery Agreement had been presented, noting that an open discussion was needed to form a full vision for the Plan in the autumn.

The members expressed their thanks for the report and noted, if there were problems with making up the financial deficit, that this be reported immediately to the CJC. It was noted that the Government would hopefully respond before the election due to be held in May. It was noted that the main concerns of the Strategic Planning Sub-committee would be reported immediately to the CJC.

It was asked whether the Plan would be published to the public in a simpler, understandable and concise format. It was noted that steps would be taken to ensure that the document was inclusive and accessible allowing access to anyone who was eager to read the Plan.

9. REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN FOR NORTH WALES - POST CONSULTATION

The report was presented by Alwen Williams, CJC Chief Executive and Andy Roberts, Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the update on the progress in preparing a Delivery Agreement for the North Wales Strategic Development Plan and the main matters highlighted that will need to be resolved in future.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, noting that the SDP for North Wales was a statutory requirement, and it was highlighted that the report noted the main steps for producing the Plan.

The Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer noted that it was a pleasure to give an update on the work that had been undertaken. It was emphasised that they were in the early stages of producing the SDP. It was noted that an initial draft of the Delivery Agreement had been produced and shared with the Government together with relevant stakeholders and the Strategic Planning Sub-committee of the CJC. It was noted that the sub-committee had essentially agreed but had highlighted financial risks that would be noted later on in the report.

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It was asked whether the Plan would be published to the public in a simpler, understandable and concise format. It was noted that steps would be taken to ensure that the document was inclusive and accessible allowing access to anyone who was eager to read the Plan.

10. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the discussion. The report relates to a draft Memorandum of Understanding of the Investment Zone with the Welsh and UK Governments which has been designated as a confidential document by a Government Department for the provisions of Section 100 (A)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972. As a consequence, it is a requirement that the report is excluded from publication as this would disclose confidential information.

11. FLINTSHIRE AND WREXHAM INVESTMENT INVESTMENT ZONE UPDATE AND PROPOSED MOU

The report was presented by Alwen Williams, Chief Executive and Iain Taylor, AMION Consulting

RESOLVED:

The Update Report was accepted and the work between the Investment Zone team, the Welsh Government and the UK Government was noted to determine an acceptable allocation within the £160m for the cost of tax relief linked to the occupation and development of Investment Zone Tax Sites.

The proposed draft Memorandum of Understanding was approved for the Flintshire and Wrexham Investment Zone and to delegate to the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer of the CJC, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair of the CJC to agree and complete the final document.

A further report was requested to the CJC in September 2025 with detailed proposals for the North Wales Innovation Board.

DISCUSSION

The report was discussed.

The meeting commenced at 13:30 and concluded at 15:00

CHAIRMAN