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## REPORT TO THE CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2026

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**TITLE:** Formal Submission of the Strategic Development Plan Delivery Agreement

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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This report seeks the agreement of the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) to formally submit the Delivery Agreement (DA) for the North Wales Strategic Development Plan (SDP) to Welsh Government for approval by the Welsh Ministers. This follows the setting of an appropriate budget by the CJC for 2026/27, to meet the costs of producing the SDP in the first year of the timetable and commence the plan.

### 2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. To formally approve the submission of the SDP Delivery Agreement to Welsh Government for approval in accordance with Regulation 11(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021.
- 2.2. To provide delegated authority to the Chief Executive of Ambition North Wales in consultation with the Chair of the Strategic Planning sub-committee to make any minor editorial or formatting amendments to the Delivery Agreement to prepare it for formal submission to Welsh Government.

### 3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. Responsibility to approve and submit the draft Delivery Agreement for approval by Welsh Ministers rests with the Corporate Joint Committee.

### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1. Members of the Corporate Joint Committee considered the SDP draft Delivery Agreement at its meeting held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Following feedback from a consultation on the Delivery Agreement, the Committee agreed at that meeting to approve the Delivery Agreement ready for submission to Welsh Government, subject to resolution of the funding of the SDP. This resolution also considered changes to the Delivery Agreement as detailed in the Consultation Report appended to the covering report to that meeting and is also inclusive of a Member amendment made and agreed at that meeting, in relation to full compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

- 4.2. Members also considered feedback received from the consideration given to the same matters by the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee who met prior to the CJC meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September. A key concern expressed by the sub-committee was the impact the funding of the SDP would have on existing Local Authority budgets and the levy paid by each authority to fund the CJC. It was noted in the report to the Committee on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September that these are considerations for the process of setting the CJC budget overall, and not just a budget for the SDP.
- 4.3. Since that date the budget setting process of the CJC has been underway to set the overall budget for 2026/27, including the funding needed in year 1 of the SDP Delivery Programme to commence the plan. Officers have been working with finance colleagues to ensure that the wishes of Member in relation to budget pressures were considered in how the SDP is resourced. The CJC budget for 2026/27 is due to be reported to the CJC on 23rd January 2026 for approval.
- 4.4. The SDP process has therefore in effect been on hold since September awaiting budget setting and approval, as that is the reassurance that Members wanted prior to formally submitting the Delivery agreement. From the report that presents the budget to this meeting for approval, Members will see that the funding needed to commence the plan has been identified, and in doing so, this has avoided any impact on the Local Authority levy from the SDP. This is explained in more detail in the following section.

## 5. CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. As Members will know, the estimated cost of producing the SDP has been estimated at £3.276m over the five-year process, or an average of £655,272 per annum. Whilst this is considered a realistic estimate, it is also one that should be seen as a worst-case scenario, leaving scope at each annual budget setting cycle to seek to achieve efficiencies and savings. These are the total costs to the CJC whose duty it is to produce the SDP and to fund that process. Members have previously considered a specific report on the funding of the SDP ([LINK](#)) which compared the budget set for 2025/26 with the funding that would be required to meet these costs, which in essence required the 2025/26 budget to increase by about 50%.
- 5.2. Having considered the revenue expenditure needed for the first year of producing the SDP following Welsh Government approval of the Delivery Agreement, a budget for the SDP for 2026/27 has been proposed amounting to £597,650. The breakdown of this is provided in the budget report that appears earlier on this agenda which details the required expenditure and the sources of income that will be used to meet that expenditure (see budget summary sheet in **Appendix 1**).
- 5.3. The main components of the budget are made up of expenditure requirements of: £253,290 to cover current salaries and planned recruitment in-year; £292,490 that mainly provides funding for essential consultancy support along with a sum to fund the provision of an SDP back-office system; and finally £50,960 that provides funding for the various support services required to assist with plan production. The total expenditure of £597,650 is below the annual average estimated costs above and presents an early example of budgeting for the costs we need to expend, rather than simply accumulating a budget. Whilst the costs may vary over time, these will be determined at each annual budget setting process, guided by the overall cost estimates, the stage reached with the plan, and other potential sources of income available at that time.

- 5.4. A key concern for Members when the Delivery Agreement was approved in September, was the ability to set an appropriate budget for the SDP, without this having a significant effect on Local Authority Budgets. This concern was also echoed by Members of the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee. There are two things for Members to note from the budget summary in appendix 1 in relation to this. Firstly, the cumulative contribution to meeting the proposed expenditure from the Local Authority levy is £388,170. This remains very close to the levy amount required in the 2025/26 budget (£375,040) representing only a £13,130 difference, or 2.2% of the overall expenditure budget for 2026/27.
- 5.5. A significant mitigating factor that has helped significantly limit the impact on Local Authorities is the reserve funding that has been identified to use in the budget (£209,480). This has come from a combination of budget underspend in-year in 2025/26, and the award of a performance grant from Welsh Government to the CJC for the progress it has made of £200,000. The combination of these potentially also leaves further reserves that can be considered as part of setting the budget for year 2 of the SDP in 2027/28.
- 5.6. The CJC has therefore reached the point where it has firstly already approved the Delivery Agreement for submission to the Welsh Ministers for their approval and secondly, has set a realistic budget for year 1 of the SDP programme that is sufficient to meet the production costs. The position reached with the budget in terms of the very limited impact on the Local Authority levy is a significant achievement, providing Members with the reassurance they sought, and with the potential to repeat this as part of the budget setting exercise for 2027/28, at least. Whilst a Medium-Term Financial Strategy has yet to be agreed for the CJC, this position is considered to be the best that can be achieved for next year (and the year after), and therefore the certainty required to commit to formally submitting the SDP Delivery Agreement for approval by Welsh Ministers.

## **6. NEXT STEPS**

- 6.1. Members are therefore now asked to agree to formally submit the SDP Delivery Agreement to Welsh Government for approval in accordance with Regulation 11(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021.
- 6.2. On the presumption that Members agree, the Delivery Agreement will be finalised following this meeting and submitted within as short a space of time as possible. Once received by Welsh Government it is understood that the Minister will write to the CJC within four weeks of receipt to indicate acceptance of the Delivery Agreement, signifying the formal commencement of work on the plan. If Welsh Government have any queries about the content of the Delivery Agreement, there is more than sufficient time to address these, secure the full amount of performance grant, and maintain progress against the SDP timetable.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. Costs will be drawn from the proposed North Wales CJC budget for 2026/27 with the necessary support from the CJC's Legal and Finance teams. The CJC will also seek to secure further funding support from Welsh Government as the SDP progresses, and to identify efficiencies and potential savings in setting future annual budgets.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. The Corporate Joint Committee has a statutory duty to prepare a Strategic Development Plan further to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). 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.

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### **APPENDICES:**

**Appendix 1:** Ambition North Wales Summary Budget 2026/27

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### **STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:**

**i. Monitoring Officer:**

“There are a series of key decisions which lead ultimately to the adoption of a Strategic Development Plan. Although a technical document in many respects the approval of the Delivery Agreement for submission to Welsh Government is a significant decision. It sets out the proposed process and commitment of the CJC to deliver the plan. The recommendation draws attention to the issue of funding of the Plan process and the need for the CJC to ensure resolution of this issue as a pre-condition for the submission of the Agreement to Welsh Government.”

**ii. Statutory Finance Officer:**

“The submission of the Delivery Agreement is a key step in the development of the Strategic Development Plan.

I can confirm that the financial information contained in this report is consistent with the proposed budget for 2026/27. Subject to the Corporate Joint Committee approving the budget, I have no objections to the decisions sought.”