
REPORT TO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

26th January, 2026

TITLE: Formal Submission of the Strategic Development Plan Delivery Agreement

AUTHOR: Andy Roberts, Regional Strategic Planning Officer

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. This report provides an update for the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee following consideration of the budget for 2026/27 by the Corporate Joint Committee and the identification of sufficient funding to commence the Strategic Development Plan (SDP). A report on the budget will be considered at the meeting of the Corporate Joint Committee held on 23rd January 2026 where in a separate report on that agenda, agreement is also sought from the Committee to formally submit the Strategic Development Plan Delivery Agreement to Welsh Government for approval by the Welsh Ministers.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. To Note the outcome of the reports to the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) held on 23rd January 2026 and the next steps for the Strategic Development Plan.

3. REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. Responsibility to prepare the draft Delivery Agreement rests with the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee. The sub-committee has co-ordination and planning functions regarding each step towards delivery of the SDP.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1. Members of the Strategic Planning Sub-Committee were briefed on the SDP draft Delivery Agreement at an informal Member's briefing session held on Friday, 27th June, 2025. Members were briefed on the content of the draft Delivery Agreement for the purposes of subsequently publishing it for consultation, in line with the requirements of the SDP regulations. The members were also advised on the funding position with the SDP and sought further information on the options available to fully fund the SDP.
- 4.2. The draft Delivery Agreement and procedural steps for (non-statutory) consultation was considered by the CJC at its meeting on 18th July, 2025 - [link to report](#).
- 4.3. The consultation process began following the CJC meeting on Friday, 18th July and ran until Friday, 29th August, 2025. This allowed for a six-week period for consultation. The document was published on the Ambition North Wales website, along with contextual information about the purpose of the document and the means to make comments on it.

- 4.4. The outcome of the consultation was reported back to the Sub-Committee at its meeting held on 4th September 2025 ([link to report](#)) along with the requested detailed report on the funding position. It was resolved to recommend to the Corporate Joint Committee that they should approve the Delivery Agreement ready for submission to Welsh Government, subject to identifying sufficient funding for the Strategic Development Plan via the budget setting process for the Corporate Joint Committee. In doing so, Members expressed a particular concern that in setting a budget for the SDP, this should not have a significant impact on Local Planning Authority budgets, over and above the levy contribution already made for the SDP in 2025/26.
- 4.5. The Corporate Joint Committee then considered and endorsed this recommendation at its subsequent meeting held on 19th September 2026 ([link to report](#)).
- 4.6. Since that date the budget setting process has been underway to set the 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 Members were considered in how the CJC resource the SDP in year 1. The CJC budget for 2026/27 is due to be reported to the CJC on 23rd January 2026 for approval.
- 4.7. The SDP process has therefore in effect been on hold awaiting budget setting and approval, as that is the reassurance that Members wanted prior to formally submitting the Delivery agreement. Having considered the proposed budget for 2026/27 Members of the sub-Committee will see that the funding needed to commence the plan has been identified for year 1 of the programme, and in doing so, avoided any significant impact on the Local Authority levy from the SDP. It is, as a result of this, that the CJC is also asked to formally submit the Delivery Agreement for approval by Welsh Ministers.

5. CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. A copy of the report to the meeting of the Corporate Joint Committee held on 23 January 2026 requesting the submission of the Delivery Agreement is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. This provides Members with the rationale behind identifying sufficient funding for the SDP whilst at the same time not impacting significantly on Local Planning Authority budgets or the levy contribution towards funding the SDP. The report also provides a link to the CJC budget report and summarises what the SDP budget is for 2026/27, and how it has been arrived at.
- 5.2. Whilst self-explanatory, Members will note the following key points involved in how the SDP budget has been set:
- The estimated total cost of the SDP is £3.276m over the five-year programme, or £655,272 per annum. This is a 'worst-case scenario' and guides annual budget setting for what resources are needed, as well as how efficiencies and savings may reduce these costs over time.
 - The proposed budget for 2026/27 year 1 of the programme has been proposed at £597,650 and reflects what is needed in year 1 rather than simply applying an average.
 - The main expenditure components of the budget are: £253,290 to cover current salaries and planned recruitment in 2026/27; £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 cumulative contribution to meeting the proposed expenditure from the Local Authority levy is £388,170. This remains very close to the levy amount provided in

the 2025/26 budget (£375,040) representing a difference of only £13,130, or 2.2% of the overall expenditure budget for 2026/27.

- 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, along with any further funding that may become available to support the SDP.

- 5.3. 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 submitted the SDP Delivery Agreement for approval by Welsh Ministers.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1. Having reached this point, the report to the CJC (**Appendix 1**) has therefore now asked the committee 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. Subject to Members agreement to this on the 23rd January, the Delivery Agreement will be finalised 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. Delegation powers have been provided to the Chief Executive to make minor editorial changes in consultation with the Chair of this sub-committee.

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.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Report to CJC seeking Formal Approval to submit the SDP Delivery Agreement

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

i. Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety

ii. Statutory Finance Officer:

"I can confirm the accuracy of the information pertaining to the 2026/27 Budget that is contained in this report. I believe that this report is an accurate reflection of the current position with regards to the SDP."