
NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE
01/07/2026

Present: Councillor Nicola Roberts (Isle of Anglesey County Council) (Chair)
Councillor Hugh Jones (Wrexham County Borough Council) (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

Craig ab Iago (Cyngor Gwynedd), Chris Cater (Conwy County Borough Council), Edgar Wyn Owen (Eryri National Park Authority) and Alan James (Denbighshire County Council)

Chief Officers:

Adrian Walters (Flintshire County Council), Dewi Jones (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Paul Mead (Denbighshire County Council), Gareth Jones (Cyngor Gwynedd), Dewi Jones (Isle of Anglesey County Council), James Harland (Conwy County Council) and Keira Sweeney (Eryri National Park Authority).

Officers present:

Mark Watkins (Monitoring Officer), Andy Roberts (Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer), Ffion Haf Williams (Senior Operations Officer), Elen Wyn Owen (Corporate Support Officer), Dewi Morgan (Chief Finance Officer), Jasmine Jones (Democracy Services Officer) and Sera Whitley (Democracy Services Officer).

Others in attendance: Chris Smith (Wrexham County Borough Council).

1. ELECT CHAIR

DECISION

To elect Councillor Nicola Roberts as Chair of the Sub-Committee for 2026/27.

2. ELECT VICE CHAIR

DECISION

To elect Councillor Hugh Jones as Vice-Chair of the Sub-Committee for 2026/27.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:-

- Councillor Richard Jones (Flintshire County Council)
- Councillor Ifor Glyn Lloyd (Conwy County Borough Council)

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent matters were raised.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January 2026 as a true record.

7. SDP POSITION UPDATE REPORT AND NEXT STEPS

The report was submitted by the Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer.

RESOLVED

To note the content of this report and the key milestones in the SDP programme.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To bring Members up to speed with progress on the SDP, given that the last workshop took place in March 2026 and the Senedd Elections resulted in the cessation of formal Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) business during the pre-election period.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the report's purpose was to inform members and refresh members on where we are currently within the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and where we intend to go in the next year. It was emphasised that this year is an important one politically and electorally, and therefore how and what work takes place in this period is of particular importance. It was explained that much of the work intended for this period involves evidence gathering and background work, which is opportune given the criticality of the year and the onset of the elections next May.

It was noted that the report contains five key parts, with the first part focusing on reflection on the key milestone of the approval of the delivery agreement for the SDP. It was noted that the delivery agreement was submitted formally in February 2026 and an endorsement was received by the Welsh Government soon after. It was noted that work has started in earnest in taking the delivery agreement forward.

The second part of the report focused on reflecting on the performance of last year and deciding on whether it was possible to claim a Welsh Government one-off in-year performance grant of up to £200,000 for recognition of the work and progress made. It was confirmed that given that the milestones were reached, the claim of the full £200,000 has been successful, which will go into the general balances of the CJC to support further budget pressures whenever they may occur, particularly in relation to the SDP.

The third part of the report focused on starting work in earnest on the SDP. It was noted that milestones had been set out within the report. It was highlighted that the SDP was currently in stage two of the plan-making process, termed the 'pre-deposit preparation and consultation phase', which includes a recruitment phase. It was emphasised that the current stage was an evidence-gathering stage. It was noted that the first part of this stage would include auditing what pre-existing information is available. Within this first part, it was noted that a Regional Scoping Meeting was held with Arup and all local authority representatives and various other bodies, including

Natural Resources Wales, and then further individual policy meetings were held with each local authority to identify the scope, timelines, and breadth of the evidence bases currently held. It was explained that Arup would then take these evidence bases and consolidate, update, and bolster them for use in the SDP. It was noted this work would take until the end of the summer period at the very earliest.

It was noted that an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) would be woven in as a thread in the plan-making process. It was noted that members who were a part of steering their respective Local Development Plans (LDP) would need to carry out the same process. It was explained that a Scoping Report would need to be used to define the scope of what the Integrated Impact Assessment would be by defining a series of criteria across a range of issues, in order to test the emerging plan against these to see if it has a positive or negative impact on said criteria. It was highlighted that the outcome of this process would then be used to go back and improve upon the plan and rewrite any necessary policies.

It was noted that the outcome of this evidence audit and gap analysis would be the production of a Main Issues Report. It was explained that this Report would be given back to the local authorities as a summation of the key information and key evidence drawn from the pool available. It was noted that this report would enable the production of the background detail data, with the hope being that through Arup a regional data portal could be created in a centralised location for local authorities to access data on a regional basis.

In terms of recruitment, a structure for recruiting an internal team had been set out within the costing of the SDP in order to take the plan forward. Nervousness was expressed in going ahead too quickly in appointing an internal team due to the fact that the pool of planners within a North Wales context is very small, and as such it might place pressure on the local authorities. It was noted that a single job description has been written for a Principal Planner, as it was felt that support in this area was sorely required. Within the report, it was noted that plans had been made to appoint a virtual team in addition, which would comprise consultants from Arup.

In terms of 'Calls for Sites', it was noted that this process involves defining what type of sites and what scale we are looking for, whether housing, retail, employment, or other. It was emphasised that it is important to try and dovetail this into either existing or emerging 'Call for Site' processes. It was confirmed that conversations had been held with certain local authorities on this matter in order to ensure that the CJC and local authorities don't overlap and conflict, but work in a parallel and consistent way.

It was noted that the final part of this stage of the plan involves the development and assessment of growth and spatial options, with the SDP needing to take account of these matters as they are identified in existing or emerging Local Development Plans as well as projecting potential growth forward over the 25-year plan period.

In discussion, the importance of not taking Planning Officers from local authorities as part of the recruitment process was emphasised. The importance of collaboration in this matter was highlighted, and the possibility of offering secondment opportunities was discussed as a method of supporting the SDP while simultaneously retaining and furthering the experience of valuable Officers within Local Authorities. In response, it was agreed that secondment opportunities were an excellent way of moving forward in terms of recruitment. Furthermore, the suggestion of hiring officers retiring or close to retiring within the CJC on a part-time basis was highlighted as a potentially viable strategy moving forward.

It was noted by the Chair that, following a period of local consultation in her own constituency in regard to potential sites, the response and offers were sparse. The importance of distinguishing between local calls for sites and ones called for as part of the SDP was highlighted in order to avoid confusion. In support of this suggestion, it was suggested that the Local Authorities support the CJC as they go about their 'Call for Sites' process if the funds were available locally in order to facilitate this support. In response, it was noted that further discussion would need to be held to identify the level of support officers in Local Authorities can give within this process, in order to ensure that the engagement process reaches the full scope of people available. It was noted that as part of Arup's work, mapping out where each Local Authority is within their own Local Development Plan would be a key component, and this would aid in ensuring that the timing of the SDP's 'Call for Sites' would be distinct from the Local Authorities in order to minimise any confusion or duplication.

Concern was expressed in relation to the potential public backlash to any large strategic housing sites being acknowledged within the SDP. It was questioned how the SDP can be responsive to local feeling as it moves forward. In response, it was noted that thresholds for what is defined as 'strategic' may differ from one local area to another. It was noted that data emerging from candidate sites and emerging deposit plans would form the baseline for the SDP in order to avoid overriding local work. It was noted as a possibility that a broader approach be taken by not identifying sites with red lines, but rather general areas of search for housing. It was also noted that going further into the 25-year plan, it may not be viable to be prescriptive nor use long-term projection trend lines as a firm housing trend for growth; rather, it might be better suited as a range where the likely outcome falls within it. It was emphasised that this would give local authorities flexibility in terms of housing targets. The Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer expressed concerns in terms of Welsh Government housing projections and their accuracy, given that they conflict with housing requirements in emerging plans.

8. SDP FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report was submitted by the Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer.

RESOLVED

To agree on the SDP Forward Work Programme.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Forward Work Plan sets out a calendar of meetings for the period up to July 2027.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that this report outlines the key upcoming dates, and that diary invitations have been sent to each member. It was noted that key reports expected had been highlighted for each date, but that these were indicative given the current resource capacity.

In discussion, it was questioned when the 'Call for Sites' was anticipated to occur, as a meeting would have to be held to discuss this. In response, it was noted that the 'Call for Sites' would likely not be ready before the local government elections. It was emphasised that this was not a cause for concern, as it ensured that the process

would be undertaken correctly and would not create conflict with the election period. It was noted that the process for the 'Call for Sites' could be discussed via correspondence, regardless of the fact that the process would likely not begin for some time.

The meeting commenced at 14:00 and concluded at 15:36.

Chair