
NORTH WALES CJC STRATEGIC PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE
14/09/2026

Present: Councillor Hugh Jones (Wrexham County Borough Council) (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

Craig ab Iago (Cyngor Gwynedd), Richard Jones (Flintshire County Council), Chris Cater (Conwy County Borough Council), and Ifor Glyn Lloyd (Eryri National Park Authority).

Chief Officers:

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

Officers present:

Alwen Williams (Chief Executive of the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee), Mark Watkins (Interim Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer), Helen Edwards (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Andy Roberts (Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer), Sian Pugh (Assistant Head of Finance – Cyngor Gwynedd), Ffion Haf Williams (Senior Operations Officer), Elen Wyn Owen (Corporate Support Officer), Gwen Roberts (Democratic Services Officer – Cyngor Gwynedd), and Sera Whitley (Democratic Services Officer – Cyngor Gwynedd).

Others present:

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:-

- Councillor Nicola Roberts (Isle of Anglesey County Council) (Chair)
- Dewi Morgan (Chief Finance Officer)

It was noted that Alan James (Denbighshire County Council) is no longer is a Member of the CJC Strategic Planning Sub-committee due to recent Cabinet changes at Denbighshire County Council. It was reported that Paul Mead was in attendance as representative for Denbighshire County Council.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent matters were raised.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 July 2026 as a true record.

5. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE REPORT

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

RESOLVED

To note the contents of this report.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To provide Members with an update on the position reached with the Strategic Development Plan.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that the Sub-committee was not quorate at the time the discussion began.

The report was presented, providing an update on progress on the Strategic Development Plan (SDP). Members were reminded that a Forward Work Programme had been set out for the year at the previous meeting held on 1 July 2026, and five key topics were noted as part of that Forward Work Programme. One of those key topics was evidence gathering on the Strategic Development Plan (SDP)

It was reported that this report consists of an evidence audit undertaken by ARUP, who have been commissioned to undertake the work on behalf of the CJC. It was explained that all local authorities have an evidence base that supports their Local Development Plan (LDP), and that the first principle of the evidence audit was to look at how usable and how up-to-date that information is. It was explained that the second principle of the evidence audit was to undertake a gap analysis in order to identify recommendations and areas for future work.

Members were informed that the draft report of the evidence audit was received following publication of the agenda for this meeting. It was explained that this draft evidence audit report will be shared with policy managers and senior managers within the local authorities to ensure close collaboration whilst developing the SDP. Furthermore, it will also give local authorities the opportunity to see if there is any potential benefit or overlap of similar work that is being planned as part of their LDP.

It was further explained that the appendix to the report provides an idea of general trends emerging from the early analysis of the evidence, and particular focus was drawn to the strong alignment between employment, housing, and strategic transport infrastructure.

In response to clarification requested regarding a clear definition of 'strategic', it was explained that there is not currently a fixed definition as there will likely be different thresholds across each authority in North Wales. It was stressed that the definition will likely emerge from the evidence audit as it will focus on the range, scale, and scope of allocations that each local authority have made.

It was questioned whether certain, specific topics such as affordable housing, phosphates, retail, rail networks, green infrastructure, flood risks, and parking standards fit within the evidence that has been collected. It was explained that all of these topics are covered under fairly general headings, and are not exclusive to the SDP. It was stressed that the evidence report is likely to identify topics, such as the aforementioned, that require policy direction at a strategic level.

Following the late arrival of one of the Sub-committee's Members, it was confirmed that the meeting was now quorate. A recap of the item was provided by the Regional Strategic Development Planning Officer for the benefit of the late Member, and they confirmed to the Chair that they held a sufficient understanding of the item following the recap.

Concerns were raised surrounding unlawful encampments by the gypsy and traveller community, and particular attention was drawn to how it is a strategic problem rather than a local problem. It was highlighted that this particular issue creates potential division within communities and that the policy needs to catch up with the demand.

It was elaborated that all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and Corporate Joint Committees were invited by the Welsh Government's local government Housing and Planning committee, through the WLGA, to make suggestions and recommendations for their Forward Work Plans. A submission was made on behalf of the North Wales CJC of needing more innovative ways of providing affordable housing, and that the way provision is made for gypsies and travellers needs to be fundamentally assessed at a strategic level.

A further issue was raised regarding the amount of time it takes individuals to vacate unlawful encampments, noting that this entire process can take up to four years. It was highlighted that a fast-track system that treats unlawful encampments more seriously and a complete review of the legislative process is required. It was noted that hopefully the SDP process would allow these questions and concerns to be raised at a consistent strategic level, and allow for meaningful policy and guidance development at a strategic level.

6. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

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

RESOLVED

To note the contents of this report.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To assist Members in understanding the relevant positions of the Strategic Development Plan and their Local Development Plans.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, highlighting Denbighshire County Council's current position with their Local Development Plan (LDP). It was reported that Denbighshire County Council have been developing a review of their LDP and have been affected by the emergence of the new Welsh Government's housing projections issued earlier in the year. It was explained that the trends showing in the Welsh Government projections are significantly higher than the housing requirement currently demonstrated in Denbighshire's LDP review.

Following discussions with Welsh Government, it was explained that Denbighshire County Council now need to hold internal discussions as to whether they progress with their current review or, as Welsh Government have indicated, start their review again. It was

further elaborated that a workshop had been planned in Denbighshire, surrounding the relationship between the SDP and Denbighshire's potential need to restart their LDP. It was noted that a number of questions had been posed to help inform this workshop, and these questions are shown in the appendix of the report.

In response to a question regarding the relationship between the SDP and LDP, it was explained that it is a statutory duty for the CJC to produce the SDP and likewise it is a statutory duty for local authorities to produce a LDP. It was stressed that the intention is for the SDP to be produced alongside the LDPs, and particularly for the early part of the 25-year plan period of the SDP to reflect what is in the adopted and emerging LDPs to minimise any potential conflict.

An update was provided regarding what stage some of the local authorities are with their LDPs, and it was clarified that there is a strong degree of alignment on the SDP from the local authorities in North East Wales. It was highlighted that some of the other local authorities are further along in the process, and furthermore it was stressed that the SDP tries to align how much the local authorities can collaborate with one another but that it does depend on what stage they are at in the process.

It was reported that the goal is for the SDP to set a framework that provides guidance for the Development of LDPs in the long-term, and supports the strategic ambition through continued economic growth. It was highlighted that once an SDP has been adopted, it will give local authorities the opportunity to take context from the SDP and produce an LDP that deals with specific local issues.

A question was asked regarding whether or not developers would be able to use the SDP policy to argue that certain developments are appropriate in the local area should the SDP be adopted on a local authority level. It was confirmed that if a strategic site is specifically identified with a red line boundary within the SDP, has gone through the examination process, and has been adopted with the SDP, then a developer could use the SDP policy to argue that a development is appropriate. However, it was noted that if the approach taken is not to identify specific sites, it would make the identification of sites more vague and generic for developers.

It was further confirmed that the housing provision figure of 46,000 dwellings allocated across North Wales, as identified in the review, is a collation of what is in the seven current and emerging LDPs in North Wales. It was noted that this figure is below what is nationally anticipated in terms of housing provision.

It was questioned how the different levels of developments across the local authorities, and the various stages they were at, would be assessed. It was confirmed that the evidence audit is looking to collate each local authority's assets, and following this, the differences in timescales would be assessed and then the consultants would produce a series of recommendations for further work. It was noted that definitive guidance regarding from Welsh Government would be helpful.

A concern was noted regarding ARUP doing such a large proportion of the work on behalf of the CJC. It was clarified that local authorities will be required to scrutinise and advise accordingly, ensure value for money, and ensure that ARUP are undertaking meaningful work on behalf of North Wales. It was elaborated that ARUP have the resources to undertake the work quickly and can cover a whole spectrum of information whilst they are gathering evidence, and it was also noted that ARUP produced the Regional Transport Plan for the CJC and there is therefore a lot of crossover with existing policies.

The meeting commenced at 14:10 and concluded at 15:00.

Chair