

South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

(Via Teams)

Members Present:

30 March 2023

Chairperson: Councillor D.Price

Councillors: D.Simpson, S.K.Hunt and D.Hopkins

**National Park
Representatives:** A.Edwards and T.Jones

**Officers In
Attendance:** W.Walters, W.Bramble, G.Jones, D.Clements,
K.Jones, C.Moore, O.Enoch, C.Griffiths,
S.Rees, D.Griffiths, S.Pilliner, D.Thomas,
S.Davies and C.Plowman

1. **Welcome and Chairs Announcements**

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no Declarations of Interests received.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 7 December 2022, was approved as an accurate record.

4. **Forward Work Programme**

It was confirmed that the Forward Work Programme would be further populated in readiness for the next meeting; it would be important to ensure that the Corporate Plan, subject to its approval, formulated the basis of the Committee over the next 12 months.

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

5. **South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee - Forward Work Programme of the Chief Executive**

The Committee were provided with a report regarding the proposed arrangements for the next Chief Executive of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee, pursuant to previous decisions taken by the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

It was explained that when the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee was established, it was proposed that the role of the Chief Executive of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee be rotated annually amongst the Chief Executives of the Constituent Councils; the first Chief Executive appointed was Karen Jones of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

Officers highlighted that the proposal contained within the circulated report was that William Bramble of Pembrokeshire County Borough Council, be appointed as the next Chief Executive of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee; however, it was intended that the new Chief Executive role would commence from 1 November 2023. It was noted that the November 2023 date would be the most appropriate date for this transfer to take place as it will enable existing governance arrangements to be concluded, and a new Chief Executive be in place prior to the budget setting process for 2024/2025 and priorities for the forthcoming year being established.

Members expressed their thanks to Karen Jones for the work undertaken in the role as the first Chief Executive of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

RESOLVED:

- That members note that the role of Chief Executive of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee is rotated annually amongst the Chief Executives of the Constituent Councils, changing on an annual basis;
- That members appoint Mr William Bramble, Chief Executive of Pembrokeshire County Council, as Chief Executive of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee from the 1st November 2023 pursuant to this arrangement.

6. **Corporate Plan 2023-2028**

Officers presented the Committee with the final version of Corporate Plan for 2023-2028, following the conclusion of the consultation

period. It was noted that the Corporate Plan contained three well-being objectives, together with an equality objective.

It was noted that the Corporate Plan had been revised to acknowledge the comments received following the public consultation process. Members were informed that the Plan was based around the budget that was approved earlier in the year; Officers had revised the programme of work for the next 12 months in order to fit in with this investment.

A discussion took place in regards to the summary of responses received from the consultation period, and the schedule of recommended changes to the Draft Corporate Plan.

RESOLVED:

- That members receive and consider the consultation comments received together with the officer responses and recommendations provided;
- That members provide delegated authority to the Chief Executive to make any minor editorial amendments and/or typographical amendments to the Plan and Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) ahead of its publication;
- That members formally approve the Plan for publication as finalised.

7. Regional Transport Plan Guidance

A discussion took place in regards to the Committee's response to the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) guidance, which had recently been issued by Welsh Government.

It was explained that this work stemmed from the duties that were placed on Corporate Joint Committees to develop and produce a RTP. Members were informed that Welsh Government had issued the latest version of the draft Regional Transport Guidance, in which Officers were required to review and then provide feedback to Welsh Government. It was confirmed that Transport Officers had completed their review of the guidance, in order to advise the Corporate Joint Committee, and had summarised the key findings within the circulated report.

The Committee were informed that Officers had a number of concerns in regards to timescales, duties and resources; the following points were highlighted:

- In regards to resources, developing this work stream would be a significant piece of work. A lot of the work will be handed out to the already stretched existing resources in each of the Local Authorities;
- It was acknowledged that there was a need for a programme manager to be appointed. The job description had been developed, and the next stage would be to advertise the job;
- The timescales for the development of the RTP were extremely ambitious. It would require a lot of study work to be carried out, and it would be very challenging in terms of the detail that was required;
- In terms of the policy framework, there were concerns over the 'top down' approach, and the latitude to develop a transport plan that was fit for purpose for the region. A lot of the policy framework had a strong focus on sustainability, however there also needed to be a focus on the economy, with transport being a key enabler for how to develop and improve the economy.
- There had been some suggestion that a Burn's Commission type of arrangement would be involved in developing the RTP. This was a concern as the duty for producing the RTP rested with the Corporate Joint Committee; having an additional layer of bureaucracy would not be supported, and would take away from the democratic responsibilities of the Local Authorities which form the Corporate Joint Committees;
- There were concerns with the amount of data analysis work associated with the development of the RTP. Although there was mention of Transport for Wales supporting this work, there was no clarity as to how much support they will be able to provide, and whether there was going to be funding for that to develop. In addition to these concerns, Transport for Wales had limited resources, and there was a requirement for RTP's to be developed across all four regions, which may cause issues when trying to obtain support from Transport for Wales;
- There were also concerns in regards to the level of resource that was going to be allocated to developing projects and programmes that would come from the RTP. When the plans were developed initially in 2010, there was a very clear message to be ambitious in terms of transport interventions; however, when the programme was developed there was significant reduction in the amount of funding which was available. This left Officers with extremely ambitious programme of projects but very little funding to be able to deliver.

Members reiterated the concerns raised by Officers, and highlighted the importance of raising these with Welsh Government; particularly in regards to the finances, timescales, lack of resources and the issues that may arise in relation to the consultancy work. The Committee expressed that transport schemes must be aspirational and ambitious, but they also had to be realistic in order for action to take place and to progress this work.

RESOLVED:

- That members note the duties and requirements from a transport perspective;
- That members endorse the approach being taken to respond to the requirements and duties, and approve the response to the draft Regional Transport Plan (RTP) guidance;
- That Welsh Government be pressed for additional funding to facilitate the development of the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) guidance.

8. **Urgent Items**

There were no Urgent Items received.

CHAIRPERSON