

**South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee - Overview and
Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

(via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

2 November 2023

Chairperson: Councillor R.Sparks

Vice Chairperson: Councillor T.Bowen

Councillors: S.Pursey, D.Howlett, M.John, E.Schiavone and
P.Black

**Officers In
Attendance** L.McAndrew, J.Eul, C.Griffiths, J.Jones,
D.Giffiths, S.Davies, D.John, D.Thomas and
A.Thomas

Invitees: Councillor R.Stewart

1. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **Correspondence between the Scrutiny Committee Chair and Corporate Joint Committee Chair**

The Chair thanked Cllr Rob Stewart, the Chair of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee for attending.

Members of the scrutiny committee expressed their concerns with regards to the timelines that are set by Welsh Government that are expected to be met by the Joint Committee. Further, that there is no budget provision to support this.

Member queried if the committee had received any response from Welsh Government in reference to transport.

Cllr Stewart confirmed that the committee continue to stress that in order for the Joint Committee to meet the responsibilities and obligations of the Joint Committee, it has to be properly funded by Welsh Government. Whilst the committee is continuing to work, it can only work to the budget that it has been provided.

In terms of the Regional Transport Plan, Welsh Government have indicated that on submission of the plan they will release £125,000 to the Committee. However, it was acknowledged that the funding would not be sufficient to deliver everything the committee wish to do in terms of regional transport planning.

Members queried if any clarity had been provided to the Joint Committee on the role of Transport for Wales in supporting the delivery of the Regional Transport Plan. Cllr Stewart confirmed that there are a range of ongoing discussions being undertaken.

Officers confirmed that there is a lead officer from Transport for Wales and there will be some assistance in terms of modelling, however beyond that officers are uncertain of the assistance of Transport for Wales. A timeline is being developed for the Plan and this will be one of the first requests for assistance from Transport for Wales.

Members referenced the Audit Wales letter, in particular the risks identified by the Joint Committee having sufficient resources to achieve its objectives within the region. Members were advised that when discussions were taking place across Wales prior to the Corporate Joint Committees being introduced, the 22 authorities across Wales were clear to Welsh Government that the CJC's should

not place additional burden on local authorities. The CJC will strive to achieve its aims but can only carry out work that it has sufficient funding for and money cannot be taken from other areas, such as Social Care and Education, to fund the work of the CJC.

The regional arrangements have been set up with a similar approach to the Swansea Bay City Region arrangements with the exception of the National Parks who are part of the current CJC arrangements. Time was taken to set up the structure of the regional arrangements to ensure that they operate on the most efficient level. The four local authorities work well together. Provided the arrangements can be properly resourced and funded the Chair of the CJC was confident that there is a really strong base to work from, and this has been expressed to the auditors.

It was confirmed that funding in relation to the net zero target came to Council's directly on a local lead basis, not through the Corporate Joint Committee. To reach the decarbonisation targets by the date set by UK Government will require significant funding.

Cllr Stewart provided an example of a low carbon sustainable and achievable project. The Homes as Power Stations provides low energy bills for those living in the properties and keeps the supply chain for the project local.

Members thanked Cllr Stewart for attending the meeting.

Members noted the item.

Following scrutiny, the item was noted.

5. **Audit Wales Letter - Commentary of Corporate Joint Committee Progress**

Members considered the report as circulated with the agenda. Members were provided with a summary of the audit work that had taken place in relation to the Corporate Joint Committee.

With regards to the poverty agenda, members noted that this also had to be set up within the Corporate Joint Committee, as well as individually within the four constituent authorities. Members expressed their concern at duplication of work and queried how the Corporate Joint Committee would differentiate from the constituent

authorities. It was confirmed that the CJC would be looking at the child poverty elements in relation to each of its three current functions.

Following scrutiny, this item was noted.

6. **RTP Implementation Plan for Submission to Welsh Government**

Members considered the information as circulated within the agenda pack.

Members queried how the scrutiny committee can engage with the Regional Transport Plan as it progresses. Further, if the case for change would be ready for the scrutiny committee to consider at its meeting in January to carry out some pre-scrutiny on the item.

Officers were conscious of the ambitious timescales set by Welsh Government in relation to the RTP. Whilst the guidance for the RTP was delayed, it was noted that the implementation date of 2025 had not moved. Officers noted that with the CJC being relatively new, the engagement and consultation elements of the RTP were still being considered how this could be carried out within the timescales. Officers would welcome a steer from CJC and the corresponding scrutiny committee.

Members stressed the ongoing need for ongoing dialogue with the Chair of the scrutiny committee by officers, to ensure that key dates are understood.

Members referred to the letter sent by the CJC to Welsh Government.

Members noted the £125,000 to be received during the current financial year from Welsh Government. Officers indicated that this money would not be the entire sum expected to develop the entire plan. Further, officers indicated that they would expect some flexibility with regards to when the money has to be spent as this would depend upon the development of the plan.

Members queried the extent of the consultation. Officers confirmed it would include key stakeholders, members and businesses. It would also consider other developments that are coming forward.

Members raised concerns around the peripheral arrangements and how remote areas in West Wales may benefit from such arrangements. Officers advised that consideration of such was set out in guidance from Welsh Government. Officers stressed the importance of good consultation in the plan in order to ensure that it considers and addresses all areas fully and reflects the diverseness of the region.

Members asked to have sight of the Case for Change as early as possible.

Following scrutiny, the item was noted.

7. **Corporate Joint Committee Forward Work Programme 2023-2024**

This item was noted.

8. **Forward Work Programme 2023 - 2024**

Members agreed to add the Regional Transport Plan Case for Change to the meeting scheduled for January 2024.

9. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

CHAIRPERSON