

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

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

21 November 2024

Chairperson: Councillor R.Sparks

Vice Chairperson: Councillor T.Bowen

Councillors: R.Davies, D.Howlett, M.John, M.Tierney, D.Cundy, P.Black and W.Lewis

Officers In Attendance A.Eynon, S.Aldred-Jones, K.Tillman, N.Pearce and A.Thomas

1. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. **Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on 3rd September 2024 and 14th October 2024 were approved as true and accurate records.

4. **Sub Committee Update - Strategic Planning (Consultation)**

Members considered the report as circulated within the agenda pack.

Welsh Government requires all regional organisations to prepare a Strategic Development Plan (SDP). This requirement has been in place for a long time. The region has been lobbying Welsh Government for the resources to be able to undertake the responsibility. The estimated cost of preparing an SDP is in the

region of £2.5million. The region do not have the funding to deliver the plan. Currently, the region has allocated £20,000 to deliver a regional response to the plan.

It was confirmed that not only do the CJC not have the funding resources available to deliver the plan, but they do not have the planning officers that will be required to develop that policy.

The officer confirmed that North Wales and Mid Wales are in exactly the same position with regards to this item and they have not progressed with preparing a delivery agreement. It is understood that Cardiff have prepared a delivery agreement but have not started to implement the agreement as they have estimated that it is going to cost £3.5million.

Welsh Government are also in the process of preparing a manual for each of the regions which the region will have to comply with when developing the SDP. A draft version of the SDP guidance was shared with planning officers throughout Wales earlier in the year with an indication that the official guidance would be published later in the year. To date, this has not yet been published. Welsh Government have given an indication that it will be published in Spring 2025. Officers advised that it would not be responsible of the region to begin preparing an SDP without the guidance from Welsh Government.

Members expressed their frustration at sufficient funding not being available to support the functions of the CJC. Further, the undue stress and pressure that is being placed upon officers who are involved in undertaking the duties required of the CJC.

Following scrutiny, members note and endorse the overview of the implementation of the work required pursuant to the Town and Country Planning (Strategic Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2021, specifically noting the difficulties in complying with legal obligations and endorsing the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SWWCJC) to further engage with Welsh Government and Cabinet Secretaries to advise on the progress and challenges to limit actions to the SWWCJC for any potential breach/s.

5. **Forward Work Programme 2024-2025**

Members were provided with an update on items for the Forward Work Programme.

Members programmed items selected from the CJC Forward Work Programme, for consideration at the meeting to be held in January 2025.

Members noted the Forward Work Programme.

6. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

CHAIRPERSON