

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

(via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

16 July 2024

Chairperson: Councillor R.Sparks

Vice Chairperson: Councillor T.Bowen

Councillors: S.Pursey, D.Howlett, M.John, M.Tierney, P.Black and D.Cundy

Officers In Attendance K.Tillman, R.Brown, S.Jones, A.Thomas and L.Willis

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 the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on 16th January 2024 and 15th February 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **South West Wales Regional Transport Plan - Programme Update**

Officers provided an overview of the report as contained within the agenda pack.

Members referred to page 14 of the report which stated concerns are held by the working group in relation to finance and the final completion timeline. Members referenced the letter from the Cabinet

Secretary for North Wales and Transport, contained within the agenda pack, and expressed concern that money may be taken from local transport grants to fund the regional transport policies; this would impact on local authority work programmes. Members questioned whether further representation has been made to Welsh Government on this matter.

Officers confirmed that concerns have been raised with Welsh Government in relation to funding levels. The Cabinet Secretary has highlighted that the allocated funding is to be used towards the regional transport plan as well as the development of the strategic development plan. The Chair of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SWWCJC) has responded to Welsh Government explaining the constraints faced by the limited budget. The level of approved funding will cover the cost of the consultation work but not the development of the strategic plan. It was noted that this position is mirrored in other Corporate Joint Committee's (CJC's) across Wales.

Members suggested that the Chair of the SWWCJC is advised that members share these concerns. The Scrutiny Committee Chair asked officers to confirm support of the committee to the Chair of the SWWCJC.

Members noted the report.

5. **Welsh Language Standards update**

Officers provided members with an overview of the report as contained within the agenda pack.

Members noted the report.

6. **Corporate Plan 2023-2028 Corporate Priorities 24/25**

Officers provided a brief overview of the report contained within the agenda pack.

Members referred to the action plan contained within the agenda pack, and requested further information on how the Regeneration Directors Group interacts with the CJC. It was noted that there were gaps in information for some actions.

Officers confirmed that four sub committees were formed in relation to the wellbeing objectives to ensure governance, decision making, and information, ideas and suggestions were cascaded from regions to the CJC and vice versa. The CJC Constitution sets out executive leads and political leads for each wellbeing objective, as follows:

- Regional Transport – executive lead - Swansea, political lead - Carmarthenshire.
- Economic Development & Economic Wellbeing - executive lead - Carmarthenshire, political lead - Swansea.
- Regional Energy - executive lead – Neath Port Talbot, political lead - Pembrokeshire.
- Strategic Planning - executive lead – Pembrokeshire, political lead – Neath Port Talbot.

Prior to the formation of the CJC, core and director working groups were formed. In each authority the Directors leading each theme, report back to the programme board and steering group formed under the CJC.

Members expressed concern that some progress updates were deferred to the Regional Regeneration Directors Group, without comment; any progress should be noted in the document. There is ambiguity around the group which is outside of the CJC structure.

Officers stated there had been consultation on the actions, going forward, the focus was for increased activity and engagement from stakeholders. A workshop has been arranged for November to look at the priorities and whether they remain relevant for 2025-2026, there are opportunities for continuous improvement. The well-being objectives are not subject to change, but the actions need to be reviewed. As part of participation and engagement work there is a need to ensure appropriate engagement, this includes communities as well as existing working groups and officers in each authority.

Members expressed concern in relation to the level of stakeholder engagement and questioned the value of a consultation with limited responses; the level of responses across the region is varied. Members questioned how people can be made aware of the aims. Members noted that an organisation called 'For the Region' has conducted work in Carmarthenshire recently and asked who is being engaged with to carry out the consultation on behalf of the committee.

Officers confirmed that the Corporate Plan has been published and promoted through the SWWCJC website. There is an independent follow up consultation on the well-being objectives and functions. The consultation is live and further details are detailed on the webpage. There is representation on the working groups from officers from each authority, Welsh government, and other specialist bodies. The consultation is built upon from findings gained from implementation of the initial corporate plan and building on feedback and highlighting opportunities for improvement. Each authority is promoting the consultation through their social media channels and their own independent websites.

Members referred to the plan showing the transport network and national parks on page 124 of the report and questioned why the A477 to Pembroke Dock was not highlighted as a strategic route.

Officers were unable to answer fully at present, however it was confirmed that prior to the case for change being approved, members raised the importance of ensuring that all regions were considered fully, especially rural areas; this was included within the scope of the case for change document. Officers confirmed that it may be more appropriate to discuss this further following development of a policy document and findings of the consultation that are due to be presented to scrutiny committee and the CJC in early September.

Members expressed concern that this matter has been raised previously; it would be useful for members to have assurance that the feedback given by members is noted.

Officers responded, that in terms of the document, it was important to highlight that the contents of the corporate plan have not changed, changes have taken place within the appendices. Members views are built into the feedback that is gathered from each of the committees, and what is approved in CJC. Members were reminded that a workshop was planned for the autumn; where the current position can be considered, and new priorities and actions can be put in place for 2025-2026.

Members noted the report.

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

Members were given the opportunity to select items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme.

Members set the Forward Work Programme for the forthcoming meeting.

8. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

CHAIRPERSON