

**South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee - Economic Well Being
and Regional Economic Development Sub-Committee**

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

11 February 2025

Chairperson: Councillor R.Stewart

Councillors: R.Francis-Davies, H.Evans, J.Hurley and
P.Miller

**National Park
Representatives:** C.George

**Officers In
Attendance** S.Aldred-Jones, S.Davies, S.Walters, R.Moxey,
P.Relf, S.Brennan, P.Homes, K.Tillman 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 meeting held on 22 July 2024, were approved as an accurate record.

4. **Delivery Update - Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)**

The Committee were provided with an update on the delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), with emphasis on Quarter 3 progress and expenditure.

The circulated report outlined the responsibility of Local Governments in developing Regional Investment Plans for the SPF and set out the

basis of the program which were a mix of anchor projects, grant schemes and standalone projects.

Reference was made to the transition year that had been agreed for 2025/26; discussions continued between UK and Welsh Government on the funding for beyond March 2026. It was noted that delivery will need to be concluded by December 2025 to allow for full programme closure by March 2026.

Officers highlighted that significant progress had been made in regard to regional performance outputs including job creation, safeguarding jobs and grants awarded to organisations and enterprises.

It was noted that circa £50k had been allocated to Economic Well-being and Development workstream; this had been approved by the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SWWCJC). The circulated report captured the detailed actions for the Sub Committee which had been put in place in order to achieve the Well-being Objectives.

The Chairperson acknowledged the substantial amount of work that had been undertaken across the region to ensure that the current round of SPF had been delivered. It was stated that the Chairperson, through their Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) role and as Chairperson of the SWWCJC, was continuing to lobby UK and Welsh Governments to ensure that local government remained an equal partner in arrangements around shared prosperity.

The Committee expressed their views on the current delivery programme for the SPF, and how the process had been much more efficient due to the alignment with local government; they would encourage this to continue moving forward.

A discussion took place in regard to the delivery of the funding between now and the end of the year; Members asked for reassurances that the projects were ready to be delivered and that the funding would be utilised. Officers confirmed that they were not permitted to carry over any money from the funding into next year; a significant amount of the money underspent so far was capital, which wasn't uncommon in these processes. It was added that there would be opportunity to capitalise any revenue underspends that emerge towards the end of the financial year; there will be capacity to absorb anything that remains into the major schemes that were being delivered across the region.

In terms of the transition year, it was explained that one of the key principles was extension of the anchor projects; this included all of the grant schemes that enable access to third and private sectors. Officers hoped that these schemes would be re-opened within the next few weeks; this guaranteed spending and continuity for the teams delivering across the region. Similarly for open call projects, Officers stated that they were looking at extension and adding to existing projects rather than starting from the beginning; this will enable Officers to add to the quality of what was already being delivered. It was mentioned that each Local Authority, through their governance processes, will confirm whether they are satisfied with delivery and the shape of the programme in each area.

Reference was made to a letter that had recently been sent to the Secretary of State, Parliamentary Under Secretary and Cabinet Secretary addressing concerns in relation to the jobs that could be at risk if UK or Welsh Government decided to take a different approach to deliver the SPF, than the approach that had been taken regionally. It was confirmed that the Democratic Services Officer will circulate this letter to the Committee, following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and shared to the SWWCJC on 19 March 2025 as a regional update.

5. **Forward Work Programme**

A discussion took place regarding the purpose and way forward of the Sub Committee, and how Members can ensure that the areas of work they focus on were productive; with outcomes being fed back to the SWWCJC.

Following Members contributions, Democratic Services will update the Forward Work Programme accordingly.

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

6. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items received.

CHAIRPERSON