

South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

13th January 2022

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

Carmarthenshire: Cllr E Dole

Swansea: Cllr R Stewart

Neath Port Talbot: Cllr EV Latham

Pembrokeshire: Cllr D Simpson

Brecon Beacons National Park: Cllr A Evans

Pembrokeshire National Park: Cllr T Jones

Officers: W Walters, P Roberts, K Jones, W Bramble, C Mealing Jones, P Harries, S.Curran, C.Griffiths, G. Jones, C.Moore, R.Arnold and M.Ronan.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declaration of interest was made:

Aled Edwards: as he has a Personal Interest in relation to his role with South Wales Consortium on Regional Governance held by Rhondda Cynon Taff Council.

2. **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee**

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Rob Stewart (Swansea Council) be appointed Chair and that Cllr Emlyn Dole (Carmarthenshire Council) be appointed Vice Chair of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

3. **Adoption of Constitution and Procedural Rules for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee**

Mr Craig Griffiths (Head of Legal and Democratic Services for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council) introduced the report and explained that legislation has been created relating to how the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee must operate; setting out roles and responsibilities and prescribing the manner in which the Corporate Joint Committee must discharge its functions.

It was explained that at this first meeting, the Committee is required to adopt a set of standing orders by which the Corporate Joint Committee will be governed. This includes the appointment of several statutory roles, namely that:

- The Chief Executive role will be rotated annually between constituent Councils and will commence with Mrs Karen Jones from Neath Port Talbot Council
- The s151 and Chief Finance Officer will be Chris Moore from Carmarthenshire Council
- The Monitoring Officer will be Craig Griffiths from Neath Port Talbot Council

Mr Griffiths explained that the constitution also details the proposed governance regime of the Corporate Joint Committee with details on how decisions will be taken including the creation of Scrutiny, Governance and Audit and Sub Committees.

Members' attention was drawn to the appendices of the report, which include the proposed constitution, rules of procedure, access to information procedure rule and a code of conduct for members.

It was stated that colleagues from the Brecon Beacons National Park had made some minor observations to officers on the content of the constitution documentation. Mr Griffiths committed to discussing the detail of this with the Brecon Beacons National Park Monitoring Officer and stated he intends on bringing a revised and final version of the constitution documents to a future meeting of the Corporate Joint Committee.

It was clarified that the National Park Authorities are not able to vote on the adoption of the constitution due to the guidance on voting rights set out in the legislation and that National Park Authorities have voting rights on Strategic Planning matters and associated issues only.

RESOLVED:

- Members approved the allocation of operational responsibilities of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee as set out in paragraph 7 and authorised the entering into of agreements between the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee and the Constituent Councils identified to provide these services
- Members approved the creation of the sub-committees identified at paragraph 14 of the report and the proposed representatives appointed to the sub-committee set out at paragraph 15
- Members approved the establishment of Governance and Audit Sub-Committee Committee for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee as set out in paragraphs 18-22 of this report;
- Members approved the designation of the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Standards Committee as the Standards Committee of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee;
- Members approved the establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Committee for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee as set out in paragraphs 27-31 of this report;
- Members approved the Constitution of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee set out in Appendix 1;
- Members approved the Rules of Procedure for South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee meetings set out at Appendix 2;
- Members approved the Access to Information Procedure Rules for South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee meetings set out at Appendix 3;
- Members approved the Members Code of Conduct for South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee meetings set out at Appendix 4;
- Delegated authority granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee to agree any documents necessary to

implement the requirements of this report and the recommendations set out above.

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

Mrs Karen Jones (Lead Chief Executive of the Corporate Joint Committee) introduced the report and presented the Forward Work Programme of the Chief Executive as contained within the circulated report. She stated that she looked forward to working in the continued spirit of partnership.

Members noted the duties of the Chief Executive as well as the work requirements of the Corporate Joint Committee as set out in the legislation namely:

Strategic Land Use Planning
Economic Wellbeing
Transport

It was also explained that as the Corporate Joint Committee is to be treated as part of the Local Government family, there are other associated governance matters that will need to be considered in due course such as Welsh Language standards.

It was noted that a detailed Forward Work Programme will be created and documented at future meetings of the Committee.

Mrs Jones explained that she was seeking delegated authority to enter into Service Level Agreements (SLA's) with Local Authorities to buy back services from constituent Councils for the operation of Corporate Joint Committee functions in line with the agreed constitution. It was clarified that it is not the intention at this time to directly employ anyone in relation to carrying out duties associated with the Corporate Joint Committee.

It was noted that Local Government Elections will take place in May 2022, which has the possibility of impeding meetings taking place particularly in relation to the pre-election period.

RESOLVED:

- That Members note the current work programmes of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee to implement the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
- That Members note the statutory responsibility of the Chief Executive of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee
- That Members grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive to negotiate and enter into Service Level Agreements with the local authorities mentioned in paragraph 33 of this report for the services necessary for the Corporate Joint Committee to execute its statutory functions.

5. Draft Annual Budgets for Financial Years 2021/22 and 2022/23

Mr Chris Moore (Chief Finance and s151 Officer for the Corporate Joint Committee) presented the committee with the draft annual budgets for the financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23 as contained within the circulated report.

The report states that Carmarthenshire Council will be designated the accountable body to discharge the financial obligations of the Corporate Joint Committee as well as the legal requirements of setting the budget.

It was discussed that the proposal included in the report is for a zero levy for this year, as costs have been absorbed by constituent authorities and that a £250,000 grant for certain items from Welsh Government towards the set-up costs of the Corporate Joint Committee had been received.

There will be a duty to set a budget for future years to ensure provision of adequate resources to allow the Corporate Joint Committee to undertake its role and function appropriately and there is an obligation to recover costs of operating by a levy based on constituent authorities and if appropriate, National Park Authorities (although there is ongoing debate on this.)

Members noted that there is a proposal to create the role of 'Business Manager' to coordinate the Corporate Joint Committee and its overall operation within the draft budget.

The various approaches to how the levies to constituent authorities are calculated and applied were discussed. After consultation with

other s.151 officers, it was noted that 'by population' was agreed to be the fairest way.

RESOLVED:

- That Carmarthenshire County Council shall act as the Accountable Body for discharging the financial obligations in respect of the SWWCJC
- That the SWWCJC shall set a zero budget for the financial year 2021/2022, concluding in no Levy being raised against constituent authorities participating in the SWWCJC in respect to this year;
- To ensure fairness and equity across the region the Regional funding of the SWWCJC will be set through a levy apportionment by population size;
- That the budget set out in appendix A is noted as the Draft Budget which will be finalised and presented to the SWWCJC on the 25th January 2022; and
- That currently no firm conclusion has been presented in respect of the National Park Authorities financial contributions and that the position of the National Park Authorities is informed further at the SWWCJC meeting on the 25th January 2022.

CHAIRPERSON