

South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

15 March 2022

Swansea: Cllr R Stewart

Carmarthenshire: Cllr E Dole

Neath Port Talbot: Cllr E V Latham

Pembrokeshire: Cllr D Simpson

Brecon Beacons National Park: A. Edwards

Pembrokeshire National Park: Cllr P. Harries

Officers: W. Bramble, C. Moore, C. Griffiths, S. Curran, S. Jones, K. Jones, M. Ronan, M. Nicolls, P. Holmes, R. Arnold, T. Jones, G. Jones, H. Lucocq, W. Walters.

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting held on January 25th 2022**

It was noted that on page 3 item 1, the spelling of Tegwyn was incorrect and should be changed to Tegryn.

RESOLVED: with the inclusion of the above alteration, the minutes of the meeting held on January 25th be approved.

2. **Governance and Administrative Matters - Update**

Karen Jones (Lead Chief Executive of the CJC) introduced some further governance and administrative matters pertaining to the CJC as detailed in the circulated report. She referred to the recent guidance on a range of statutory duties that Welsh Government have issued in relation to the CJC's. The committee heard about section 6 specifically which relates to policy and planning issues that must be considered by the CJC including- the equality duty, the biodiversity duty, the duty to comply with Wellbeing of Future Generations duties among others. It was stated that a Forward Work Programme will be

developed for the committee ensuring all required topics are built into their work for the year.

Karen Jones went on to explain that arrangements were being made for the CJC to have its own 'corporate identity' and Swansea Council have been tasked with creating some initial designs.

Members were also asked to consider an initial media protocol, which detailed how the work of the CJC would be communicated initially.

Members were asked to note that the protocol would develop to include the national parks as they become more substantively involved.

RESOLVED:

1. That members of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) note the 'other statutory duties' set out in the 'Corporate Joint Committees: Statutory Guidance' issued by Welsh Government.
2. That members of the CJC note and endorse the Chief Executive's proposal to build the work required to meet these other statutory requirements into the Committee's Forward Work Programme.
3. That members of the CJC authorise the Chief Executive to progress the development of a corporate identity for the CJC to a conclusion in consultation with the members of the CJC.
4. That members of the CJC approve the media protocol at Appendix 1 as an initial basis for governing media activities related to the activities of the CJC.

3. **Adoption of additional documents to be included within the Constitution of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee**

Members considered additional documents to be included within the Constitution of the CJC as contained within the circulated report.

RESOLVED:

That the CJC adopt and include in their constitution:

1. Protocol regarding correspondence from MP and MS (contained at Appendix 1.)
2. Local Resolution Procedure (contained at Appendix 2)
3. Members Gifts and Hospitality (contained at Appendix 3)
4. Nonattendance at meetings policy (contained at Appendix 4)
5. Petition Scheme (contained at Appendix 5).
6. Public Speaking Protocol (contained at Appendix 6)
7. Protocol on Member and Officer Relationships (contained at Appendix 7)

8. That Members note the future documentation that will be brought forward to the CJC for approval as set out in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the circulated report.

4. **South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan (REDP)**

The committee were asked to consider the adoption of the South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan as contained within the circulated report and to note that the REDP will become the regional strategy for economic wellbeing going forward. It was noted that due to events such as Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the climate emergency the strategy has been re-focussed over last 12 months. The renewed plan has built on the existing evidence base and action planning and has undergone consultation. The committee were asked to note current performance, which includes adding circa 20,000 jobs to the economy since 2013 and a closing productivity and economic activity gap more to do although members noted there is still more that needs to be achieved.

The committee noted the planned wider approach to realise incremental improvement with a wider stock of business and to focus on strengths (including collaborations, culture and environmental assets.) Members were also pleased to note the synergies of the REDP with the WG policy position on the Regional Economic Framework.

The committee were pleased to hear details surrounding the 'ambitions' of the plan and the 'missions' that will underpin them. Alongside the overall plan there is a live pipeline of 45 projects with some £3bn associated spend which will add direction and substance to the strategy.

It was noted that the REDP has been approved by the four Local Authorities, and if adopted at the CJC the focus will then move to delivery. It was noted further that there will be a resource implication but for the first year it is envisaged that existing resources such as the EARth project will be utilised.

Members queried how the strategy can adopt to a continually changing environment and used the recent Ukrainian refugee crisis as an example. They were pleased to note that the flexible project pipeline could flex in response to changing circumstances, opportunities and threats.

It was queried what degree of engagement had taken place during the consultation period with a particular focus on the involvement of national park authorities.

It was explained that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, events had been curtailed but virtual events had been successful and no feedback had been received. Moving forward the specific projects will deserve partner engagement and members were pleased to note that future consultation plans will include national parks as appropriate.

RESOLVED:

That the South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan (REDP) be adopted as the regional strategy for the economic wellbeing strand of the CJC's work programme.

5. **South West Wales Regional Energy Plan**

Members considered the South West Wales Energy Plan as contained within the circulated report.

The plan is intended to be the framework for the CJC's work programme and members heard how it has been developed over the last 12-18 months via extensive work with the four Local Authorities and their 'Core Regional Directors Energy Group' and supported by the Welsh Government's Energy Service. There has also been a wide range of input from advisory groups and stakeholder sessions.

It was noted that it is intended to be a strategy for the region and focusses on the leadership role of the CJC particularly around the ambitious target to achieve net zero energy consumption by 2050.

Members were advised that work-streams have been set up on:

- Industrial/commercial
- Transport
- Domestic
- Renewable energy

Members were pleased to note that consolidated energy and economic modelling and action plans will accompany the work-streams and the three key steps for driving the strategy forward, which include;

- developing governance structure,
- socialise the strategy (increase visibility and levels of awareness) -
- and develop the action plan.

Member's attention was drawn to the caveat that the plan does not take into account major industrial users and emitters in South Wales but it is accepted that they will have their own strategies and net zero action plans.

RESOLVED:

That the South West Wales Regional Energy Strategy be adopted as the framework for the CJC's work programme with further reports to be brought forward in due course identifying how it is proposed that the strategic intent will be delivered.

6. **Shared Prosperity Fund**

Members considered the Shared Prosperity Fund as contained within the circulated report.

It was explained that the UK Government has now published its 'Levelling Up' white paper as well as pre-launch guidance on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Wales team are engaging with Local Authorities in advance of issuing final guidance.

There is expected to be a pivotal role for Local Authorities to lead bids in their areas but collaboration is expected on local investment plans to allow the funding to be drawn down.

It was explained that the CJC does not have status in respect of VAT under s.33 so it is not deemed an appropriate vehicle for drawing

money down and until this is established the Local Authorities will be the main vehicle for this.

Concern was raised that money may be given in an adhoc manner without strategic due regard to overall aims and it was encouraged that this feedback be provided directly to responsible team.

RESOLVED:

That the CJC note the UK Government's White Paper 'Levelling Up' and associated pre-launch guidance for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

That the CJC note the consultation and engagement being undertaken by the UK Government with partners including local authorities to develop arrangements that maximise UK Shared Prosperity Fund in each nation. UK Government would support delivery on a regional footprint in Wales – based on the four economic regions/City and Growth Deal regions.

That the CJC note work underway to assess the role the CJC might have in delivering the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which is a central pillar of the UK Government's Levelling Up agenda.

CHAIRPERSON