

South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

26 July 2022

Councillors: R.Stewart (Chairperson), A.Lenny, P.Miller,
S.K.Hunt

**National Park
Representatives :** A.Edwards, T.Jones and D.Clements

Officers: M.Nicholls, W.Bramble, M.Ronan, C.Griffiths,
C.Moore, R.Arnold, Jones, O.Enoch,
D.Thomas, N.Pearce, S.Pilliner, D.Griffiths and
C.Plowman

1. **Welcome**

The Monitoring Officer for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Rob Stewart (Swansea County Council) be appointed Chairperson, and that Councillor Darren Price (Carmarthenshire County Council) be appointed Vice Chairperson of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

3. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

4. **Constitution of Corporate Joint Committee**

The South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee were provided with an overview of the circulated report, in which the following points were highlighted:

- The desire to establish four separate sub committees to the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (the details of which were included in the circulated report). It was noted that dates for these sub committees had yet to be determined, and that they will be organised as and when required;
- The requirement to constitute a Governance and Audit Sub Committee. Following recent discussions with regional partners, it was confirmed that the membership of this meeting had been established;
- The requirement to establish a Standards Committee. It was determined previously that one Constituent Council's Standards Committee will assume the responsibility of overseeing standards for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee. It was proposed that Neath Port Talbot Council would be responsible for this function, subject to Members approval.
- The requirement to establish an Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee. Members were informed that the first meeting was scheduled for September 2022, and a regular programme of meetings will continue from thereafter.
- The proposed South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee meeting timetable had been developed, and a Forward Work Programme will also be developed to inform Members of the items for consideration at each meeting.

It was highlighted that the circulated report was specific in regards to the fact that a lead Chief Executive would be appointed to the Sub Committees, and it was suggested it would be advantageous to change this to a lead Officer from each Constituted Council. The South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee was informed that this change could be incorporated into the documentation.

During a previous meeting of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee, it was indicated that a meeting would be arranged with Welsh Government in order to discuss matters relating to the National Park Authorities, and clarify their involvement in the Corporate Joint Committees throughout Wales. Officers were asked if there were any updates on this. It was confirmed that Officers of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee attended a meeting with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), to try and obtain clarity

relating to National Park Authorities. Following this meeting, correspondence was issued which provided an overview of the statutory provisions in respect of the National Parks; however, further and more detailed discussions will be taking place in the upcoming months. Officers explained that the outcomes of any meetings will be brought to the attention of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

RESOLVED:

That Members approve the creation of the sub-committees identified at paragraph 8 of the circulated report, and the proposed representatives appointed to the sub-committee set out at paragraph 9 of the circulated report;

That Members approve the establishment of the Governance and Audit Sub-Committee Committee for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee as set out in paragraphs 12-17 of the circulated report;

That Members approve the designation of the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Standards Committee as the Standards Committee of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee;

That Members approve the establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Committee for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee as set out in paragraphs 21-26 of the circulated report;

That Members approve the timetable for future meetings for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee as set out in paragraph 27 of the circulated report.

5. **Co-optees of the Corporate Joint Committee**

The Committee was presented with a report relating to the appointment of co-opted members on the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee; this was built into the constitution in order to obtain, and take into account, the experiences and knowledge of various organisations. Officers were recommending that Members consider co-opted representatives from two local health boards that serve the area, along with the two universities. The four individuals had been identified and were listed in the circulated report.

It was explained that the co-opted Members would be joining the meetings as observers and contributors; they would not have voting rights, nor would they be able to participate in agreeing priorities, as this would remain with the constituent council members of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (and National Park Authorities for strategic planning functions). Subject to approval of the recommendations, members were informed that the Lead Monitoring Officer will be issuing co-option agreements, with the aim that the co-opted members will be able to take their place on the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee from September onwards.

RESOLVED:

That Members agree that following receipt of a signed co-option agreement, and on the terms identified in paragraph 8 of the circulated report, the following representatives be co-opted to the CJC:

- (a) Mr Steven Wilks, Provost of Swansea University
- (b) Mr Medwin Hughes, Vice Chancellor of University of Wales, Trinity St David
- (c) Ms Maria Battle, Chair of Hywel Dda University Health Board
- (d) Ms Emma Woolett, Chair of Swansea Bay University Health Board

6. Presentation by Transport Officers

Members received a presentation from Transport Officers on the Transport and Infrastructure Development, which set out their current position, in particular transport planning across the region.

The presentation captured the following key areas:

- The policy drivers that will shape the Regional Transport Plan (RTP)
- Information regarding the history of transport planning
- The governance arrangements and structure currently in place
- The enablers around the RTP guidance and the timescale to deliver the plan
- The work that has been ongoing in terms of preparing for the future
- The ambition going forward
- Project delivery, including the work that was ongoing across the region to support the movement of goods and people

- The structure, governance and delivery resource required to deliver the RTP

Policy Drivers

In regards to policy drivers, it was explained that Future Wales: The National Plan, set out the priorities for land use planning for the future and development of this will shape the movement of goods and people going forward.

Officers stated that last autumn, Welsh Government published the Wales Transport Strategy which set out the vision for transport. The vision was to provide an accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system, focusing the priorities around people and climate change. It was highlighted that the strategy's ambition was to have fewer cars on the road, and have people moving more by public transport. In addition, the strategy detailed priorities of bringing services closer to people in order to reduce the need to travel, allowing people and goods to move easily from door to door; it also concentrated on developing public transport, and walking and cycling, through the active travel priorities.

It was added that public transport, and the ambition around this, will likely require changes to bus legislation in the future. It was highlighted that the bus reform work being carried out by Welsh Government and Transport for Wales was still ongoing; and the road review was also still being developed.

History

Prior to 2006, it was explained that transport planning and delivery was a Local Authority responsibility. Officers continued that the Transport (Wales) Act was then amended to shift the responsibility to regional and from 2006 to 2013 a formally constituted body 'SWITCH' was formed, in which the four Local Authorities worked together to produce a regional transport plan.

It was noted that the Transport (Wales) Act was amended further in 2014, and from there on the responsibility was again with the Local Authorities; however, the region worked collaboratively to deliver the joint local transport plan for West Wales.

Officers mentioned that the region was very diverse, with predominantly rural communities to the West, and urban communities to the East; these differences will need to be a focus when developing the plan going forward.

Governance and Structure

Members were informed that collaborative working had been continuing and officers were meeting on a monthly basis, and Cabinet Members for transport were meeting on a quarterly basis, through the regional transport forum. It was mentioned that this forum was not a formally constituted arrangement, and decisions around transport, up until this point, had been made by individual Local Authorities.

Officers highlighted that there were various officer groups in place under this forum to take forward the collaborative work around transport planning, program delivery, responding to consultations and input into the metro development with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales.

In regards to the public transport element of the workstreams, it was noted that the bus services support grant was being administered jointly between Carmarthenshire and Swansea across the region.

In addition to the above, there were also various ad hoc groups focusing on active travel, road safety and parking.

It was also explained that there were procurement contracts in place for the region, dealing with professional design services for infrastructure development and construction, as well as collaboration around fleet procurement.

RTP Guidance and Timescales

A discussion took place regarding the key enablers that needed to be in place in order for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee to take forward the RTP. The regional transport planning guidance was critical in this, and will shape the nature of the work that would be required in order to develop the RTP for Members consideration. Officers mentioned that Welsh Government were due to issue the guidance in the autumn period. Reference was also made to the statement of funds that will be available in terms of the delivery of the RTP, as well as mention of the National Transport Plan, which will determine the national transport priorities.

It was highlighted that officers had started to create policy objectives for consideration and a detailed report pertaining to policy context was scheduled to be brought to the September meeting of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee. The various objectives were detailed in the circulated presentation; most of which had a clear

focus on economic development, as well as moving sustainably both across the region and into the region.

Officers explained that the RTP will also need to take into consideration the regional interdependencies; these were the other strategies that determined the nature of movement across the region:

- Economic Development Plan
- Strategic Development Plan
- Energy Plan
- Digital Strategy
- City Deal

Preparing for the Future

The South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee was informed that Welsh Government had aspirations to deliver metro transport systems; there were three across Wales including North Wales, South East Wales and South West Wales. It was mentioned that any bids for funding of transport schemes had to consider Welsh transport appraisal guidance.

Officers referenced the following projects, which were underway:

- Transport Modelling – working with Transport for Wales to understand the nature of movement and the impact of movement on the infrastructure
- Transport Hubs Business Case – preparing for investment into the transport hubs
- Bus Business Case – this work will shape the public transport system for the future
- Active Travel Infrastructure – development around the hubs and stations in order for people to travel sustainably and connect into the infrastructure
- The Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy – this work will be linked to the Energy Strategy

Ambition

The circulated presentation detailed the transport responsibilities in Wales. It was stated that there were various tiers of Government that had different responsibilities, some which were devolved; the table included in the presentation, displayed who was accountable for certain responsibilities.

A further discussion took place in relation to these responsibilities, in particular the leads on each area and the delivery of the transport service.

Officers mentioned the various studies that have been underway by Welsh Government and Transport for Wales; including studies around rail frequency enhancements and bus corridor enhancements. It was stated that there had been work ongoing which focused on looking at the strategic connectivity into the region on the rail network, specifically on the South Wales main line; this was important due to congestion on the rail network to the East.

In addition to the above, work was ongoing into what happens within the region in terms of the service frequency and connectivity; journey time was a critical factor, particularly journeys to the West. It was explained that rail journeys were not competitive with car journeys in this particular direction and accordingly might suffer as a consequence.

It was noted that more recently, work had been undertaken to develop the work around an urban metro and bus corridor in order to support an integrated transport system and there were more emerging priorities around the urban network and the potential for an urban metro.

A brief discussion took place in relation to the longer term projects; for example looking into the use of rail between Ammanford and Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen, as well as links from Swansea to Neath, and from Neath to Onllwyn and Cwmgwrach.

The South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee was informed of some of the exciting work that was ongoing in terms of transport and decarbonisation, working in partnership with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales. Officers discussed the plans to use electric buses on the route between Aberystwyth to Carmarthen from early next year, as well as the plan for the potential use of hydrogen buses around the urban areas. It was mentioned that the hydrogen buses were at an early concept stage, and Officers were looking into the feasibility of this.

Officers stated that it was important to note that the transport sector was in a state of transition in terms of considering the right power source for the future; there had been a prevalence of electric in the light vehicle sector, however the emergence of hydrogen was being seen more frequently.

In terms of the strategic bus corridor, it was noted that work would be going looking at decarbonising the network as the hydrogen project progresses.

Given the ambition around bus transport, it was explained that there were a lot of interdependencies. There were various aspects that will need investment in order to shape the bus network accordingly. Members were informed that the legislative reform was an important part of that. Once the RTP determined the policy priorities and the investment required, this will then inform the bus corridor infrastructure and investment. Reference was made to the bus decarbonisation strategy and the need to make information available in real time for customers, as well as considering the passenger information standards and ticketing integration.

Current Project Delivery

The circulated presentation detailed the various projects and work streams that were currently being delivered under the areas of transport. The following key points were highlighted:

- **Highway Infrastructure**
 - Cymmer Carriageway Realignment
 - Cross Hands Link Road Investment
 - Safe Routes in Communities (SRIC) funding and the Local Road Safety Grant (LRSG) - these were investments in infrastructure that was designed to encourage people to travel sustainably and safely, particularly around walking routes
 - Resilient Roads Storm Repairs – as a consequence of climate change, and the storms that had occurred, certain highways had become damaged; Officers had received funding to be able to repair some of that infrastructure.

- **Electrical Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure**
 - Strategic Charging Hubs in Cross Hands and Swansea Central
 - Public Charging Stations – this was being carried out across all Authorities
 - Electric Taxi – a pilot was being undertaken in Pembrokeshire

- **Public Transport Infrastructure**
 - Bus Hubs/Interchanges – various being looked into and/or delivered across the region in each of the Authorities
 - Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Schemes – this was

being carried out in various rural areas including Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire

- **Active Travel Infrastructure**
 - A number of work streams were being carried out around active travel; priority shifting in Welsh Government has effected the level of investment
- **Rail Infrastructure**
 - St Clears Railway Station – this will be the first new station, which was funded by UK Government

Structure, Governance and Delivery Resource

Members were informed that there were some key considerations in regards to having the resource in place to deliver the work that was required to take the regional transport planning forward.

It was highlighted that work programmes would not be able to be delivered based on the existing level of resource. This was also confirmed by other regions across Wales, who were in a similar position.

A discussion took place in regards to the detail around the resource level requirements. The various resources and budget to deliver the work was detailed in the presentation, including a Regional Transport Plan Development and Programme Lead Officer to be in place for the last quarter of this financial year, as well as a Graduate Trainee to support elements of the work.

It was added that based on the guidance coming forward from Welsh Government, and previous experience with the former regional transport plans means there was likely to be a requirement for specialist studies.

Based on discussions surrounding resources and budget, it was highlighted that the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee need to lobby UK and Welsh Governments to ensure that they were prioritising and funding the necessary works in the region. The Chair agreed to write a letter to Ministers, in order to raise funding requested and to make a case for the work programme to proceed as quickly as possible.

Members were mindful of the need for all communities across the region to be connected and benefit from this network; however,

appreciated that this work stream was still in the early development stages. It was stated that the end result should reflect a reliable and affordable service that reaches communities, with the best possible network.

A query was raised in regards to how each of the Local Authorities priorities would feed into the work being undertaken and what the region had collectively agreed would need to be prioritised. In addition, Members asked what accountability mechanisms had been set up in regards to governance; and what structures were in place to secure delivery against the necessary timescales.

It was stated that there was an opportunity through the regional transport planning process to shape what transport looks like in the future. Officers clarified that the RTP will set the policies for the region, and the infrastructure and investment will follow those policies; this will come forward once the regional transport planning guidance was issued from Welsh Government.

Following on from the above, it was noted that currently work was ongoing with the Local Transport Plan and this will soon be replaced by the regional transport planning guidance. Officers expressed the importance of the current studies that were being undertaken, as they provided an evidence base to inform what goes forward in terms of those priorities.

Another important element was noted to be the level of investment that was going to be available for the region. It was highlighted that in order to invest in the improvements that had been discussed in terms of the infrastructure; this will come through the statement of funds.

Officers had previously mentioned the creation of the Sub Committees, which will form part of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee. It was highlighted that one of the Sub Committees will have a focus on transport; this will be further formalised in September, as the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee will need to consider the transport objectives for that Sub Committee to progress.

It was stated that the guidance that will be produced from Welsh Government in autumn, was critical and should reflect what was in the Wales Transport Strategy; as well as reflecting some of the work that was ongoing in terms of the metro development.

The Chair added that transport priorities was being discussed wider across the region, for example in Swansea Bay City Region Joint

Scrutiny Committees; priorities were being developed through this forum, and will likely link in with priorities that Members may discuss in future meetings.

Members raised that at some point in the future, a further discussion would need to take place regarding the agreed priorities and the ranking order in which they will be delivered. Members asked for further information on when this would need to happen and who would be involved in these discussions.

It was confirmed that these types of discussions would form part of the next phase. It was stated that the outcome of these discussions would need to fit in with UK and Welsh Governments plans in terms of their investment portfolios and priorities, as they would be providing the funding for the works. Members were informed that a session was being arranged in the city region around some of the major projects that were underway; the metro and transport infrastructures would form part of these sessions. It was added that there will be an opportunity for Members to explore some of the political in terms of some of the major projects.

RESOLVED:

The Chair of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee to formalise a letter, addressed to Welsh Ministers, regarding funding requests and to make a case for the transport work programme to have the appropriate support in place.

7. Urgent Items

There were no Urgent Items received.

CHAIRPERSON