

## Project Brief – Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) commentary

Audit year: 2022-23

Date issued: August 2022

Publication reference number: 3143A2022

This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions. No responsibility is taken by the Auditor General or the staff of Audit Wales in relation to any member, director, officer or other employee in their individual capacity, or to any third party.

In the event of receiving a request for information to which this document may be relevant, attention is drawn to the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The section 45 Code sets out the practice in the handling of requests that is expected of public authorities, including consultation with relevant third parties. In relation to this document, the Auditor General for Wales and Audit Wales are relevant third parties. Any enquiries regarding disclosure or re-use of this document should be sent to Audit Wales at [infoofficer@audit.wales](mailto:infoofficer@audit.wales).

We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

# Contents

Project brief	
Legislative basis for the commentary	4
Background to the commentary	4
Purpose of the commentary	5
Method	5
Overall commentary question	5
Document Request	6
Output	6
Timescales for the commentary	7
Audit Wales contacts	7

# Project brief

## Legislative basis for the commentary

- 1 This project is being undertaken in accordance with Section 41 of the Public Audit Wales Act 2004. This Act places a duty on the Auditor General to undertake studies designed to enable him to make recommendations for improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the discharge of the functions or services of local government bodies in Wales.
- 2 It also supports the Auditor General in discharging some of his commitments and responsibilities in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) 2015 Act (the 'Act') which requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities, and each other.
- 3 Our privacy notice can be found on [our website](#) and it provides information about the potential collection of personal information by the Auditor General as part of this work.

## Background to the commentary

- 4 In our programme consultation paper in March 2022, we set out that we would be keeping track of governance arrangements around the creation of new bodies, including the new Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) in local government, where the Auditor General has a statutory role.
- 5 Four corporate joint committees have been established by regulations under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to help regional collaboration between authorities:
  - South East Wales CJC
  - South West Wales CJC
  - North Wales CJC
  - Mid Wales CJC
- 6 The aim in setting up the CJCs is to strengthen regional collaboration. They became legal entities as of April 2021 and can have budgets, staff, assets and undertake functions. They are largely subject to the same or similar powers and duties as councils. From 30 June 2022, the CJCs have three functions:
  - Developing transport policies
  - Preparing a strategic development plan
  - Economic well-being - anything CJC considers is likely to promote or improve the economic well-being of its area
- 7 There are a series of statutory guidance documents to support the implementation of the CJCs, with further guidance due out later this year.

## Purpose of the commentary

- 8 The purpose of this commentary is to:
- gain an early understanding of the CJsCs' evolving arrangements and their plans;
  - provide an overview of the progress of the CJsCs in setting up their arrangements to carry out their three functions and meet their legislative requirements;
  - compare and contrast the approaches of the four CJsCs;
  - gain assurance that the CJsCs are putting in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of their resources and make related recommendations where relevant;
  - provide early feedback to help the CJsCs learn and improve;
  - understand the CJsCs' plans to set their well-being objectives and apply the sustainable development principle;
  - identify any emerging areas for improvement or issues that need to be addressed in order to facilitate regional collaboration including understanding how the CJsCs align with other partnerships and regional structures; and
  - help inform the focus of future audit work relating to the CJsCs.

## Method

- 9 This commentary will include observing relevant meetings, document reviews and interviews with CJC officers and members. As a minimum, we would like to interview the Chair, Chief Executive and Director of Finance of each CJC. We will also get the perspectives of the constituent bodies of each of the CJsCs (ie the councils and national park authorities) through our regular liaison meetings with the Chief Executives and key contacts at these bodies.
- 10 We also intend to speak with Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association.

## Overall commentary question

- 11 The question this commentary will seek to answer is: **Are Corporate Joint Committees making good progress in developing their arrangements to meet their statutory obligations and the Welsh Government's aim of strengthening regional collaboration?** To answer this question, we will explore:
- the understanding of Welsh Government's aims for the CJsCs;

- have CJs established effective governance arrangements to meet the Welsh Government aims and statutory obligations;
- whether CJs have clear and effective plans to deliver the Welsh Government aims and meet their statutory obligations;
- how the CJs will fit in to existing partnership arrangements; and
- how CJs are planning to meet their requirements under the Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 including how they are setting their well-being objectives.

## Output

12 We will provide a report.

## Document request

### Exhibit 1: document request

Prior to the interviews, we will undertake a review of the documents identified below. However, we would be grateful if you could supply us with any additional documents which you feel may be relevant for this commentary. The list is not exhaustive and requests for additional documents may be made during the course of the commentary. Where documents in the list below are publicly available, we would be grateful if you could please direct us to where we can find them

#### Document Title

- Plans/documents setting out ambitions for each of the CJs
- Plans/documents outlining how the CJs will carry out the three functions conferred upon them
- Plans/documents outlining how the CJs will be resourced
- Plans/documents outlining how the CJs will meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015, including publishing their well-being objectives by April 2023
- Plans/documents setting out CJC governance arrangements in meeting the legislative requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, and regulations

## Timescales for the commentary

### Exhibit 2: Timescales for the commentary

Proposed timetable	
Project brief issued	August 2022
Document review Meeting observations Interviews	September-October 2022
Draft output	January 2023

## Audit Wales contacts

### Exhibit 3: Audit Wales contacts

The table below sets out the Audit Wales team that will be working on this commentary.

Name	Contact details
Director	Gary Emery Gary.emery@audit.wales
Audit Manager	Sara-Jane Byrne Sara-jane.byrne@audit.wales
Senior Auditor	Jason Williams Jason.williams@audit.wales
Senior Auditor	Allison Rees Allison.Rees@audit.wales



**Archwilio** Cymru  
**Audit** Wales