

Cllr. Rob Stewart
Chair of the Corporate Joint Committee

Dear Cllr. Rob Stewart

Re: Corporate Joint Committee

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chairperson of South West Wales (SWW) Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) at the request of the membership of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee – Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee in my capacity as Chairperson of said Sub-Committee.

In the last two meetings of our Sub-Committee members have expressed their frustration and lack of clarity about the purpose and benefit of the new regional structure. The CJC appears to be attempting to formalise existing excellent relationships between the member organisations. However, our local authorities have a proven track record of joint working and the duties of the new CJC appear to be a costly and unnecessary burden which is costing our residents at a time when budgets could not be under more pressure from the ongoing cost of living crisis, brought on by the consequences of several factors including Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

In our last meeting on 23rd February, the substantive items on the agenda 5, 6 and 7 were the Draft Corporate Plan 2023-2028, The SWW Economic Delivery Plan 2025-2030 and the Regional Transport Plan 2025-2030. In each of them officers and members both noted that the work of the CJC appears to be superfluous since the member organisations already work together on these projects.

We appear to have been forced into this by Welsh Government and there is concern that the necessary levels of bureaucracy that the CJC requires does not offer a clear benefit. Whilst future benefits might be in the offing in the future, they are not clear now. At the very least we suggest that we should have more clarity from Welsh Government and if they will insist on this structure, we recommend that they fund the costs directly rather than creating additional burdens on local authorities.

I would kindly request that you note our sub-committee's frustration and I ask you to pass this onto the members of SWW CJC and in your ongoing engagement with Welsh Government and Ministers.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr. Russel Sparks

Chair of the Corporate Joint Committee – Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee