

South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

5 December 2023

Chairperson: Councillor D.Price

Councillors: D.Simpson, S.K.Hunt and D.Hopkins

**National Park
Representatives:** A.Edwards and T.Jones

Co-Opted Members: E.Woollett

**Officers In
Attendance:** M.Nicholls, W.Walters, W.Bramble, K.Jones,
D.Clements, C.Moore, A.Eynon, S.Aldred-
Jones, C.Griffiths, L.McAndrew, H.Rowlands
and C.Plowman

1. **Welcome and Chairs Announcements**

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no Declarations of Interests received.

3. **Forward Work Programme**

The South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee Forward Work Programme was noted.

4. **South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee Annual Return for year ending 31 March 2023**

Members received the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee annual return for the year ended 2022/23.

The Committee was informed of the process of the approval of accounts for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee. It

was highlighted that the Corporate Joint Committee – Governance and Audit Sub Committee were the responsible Committee for receiving and approving the accounts. It was confirmed that the accounts for the year ended 2022/23, had gone through this process on 26 October 2023; and had been signed by the Chair of the Governance and Audit Sub Committee.

It was mentioned that due to the size of the turnover, there wasn't a requirement to complete a full statement of accounts; instead Officers had to complete an annual return, which was detailed in Appendix B of the circulated report.

Officers reminded the Committee that the agreed budget for 2022/23 was £575k, with the corresponding levy raised; and that the expenditure for the year was £190.6k. It was noted that the full detail of expenditure was included in Appendix A of the circulated report; this document also detailed an under spend of £384.8k. It was added that the under spend balance had been transferred into the reserves.

It was further explained that 2022/23 was the first year of operation for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee; hence why there was a limited spend. Officers also mentioned that £20k was allocated to each Sub Committee of the Corporate Joint Committee, however these monies weren't utilised in 2022/23. It was noted that in the current year, there had been a lot more activity in regards to the work of the Sub Committees.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

5. South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring 2023/24

The Committee received the Quarter 2 financial monitoring for 2023/24.

The Finance Officer provided an overview of the detail included in the financial monitoring, which was captured in Appendix A of the circulated report; the document highlighted the activity carried out in the current financial year. It was noted that a total of £384.824 had been brought forward from the last financial year, to the current financial year.

It was noted that the levy was amended slightly when setting the budget for the 2023/23 financial year; the total budgeted amount was set at £617.753. Officers explained that there had been a lot more activity carried out in the current financial year; however, Officers were still anticipating an under spend for the 2023/24 financial year.

A discussion took place in regards to the forecast for the various work streams. It was stated that the work streams were anticipated to spend around £5k each; with the exception of transport, where £50k spend was anticipated.

Members were informed that there were still some pursuance of grants from Welsh Government, in terms of supporting some of the work streams; however, this had not been concluded as of yet.

Officers highlighted that there was a reduced cost associated with the Regional Management Office due to the Business Manager post becoming vacant in June 2023, and not yet filled.

It was concluded that Officers were anticipating a total spend of £322k for the 2023/24 financial year, resulting in a potential underspend forecasted at £295,542; any underspend will be held in reserves, and will support the budget or activity in future years.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

6. Update to the Terms of Reference of the Sub-Committees of the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

A report was provided in regards to amending the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Joint Committee Sub-Committees.

Officers explained that the proposed amendment would allow the requisite Cabinet Member, from the same political lead authority, to Chair the Sub-Committee meeting; either in the absence of the Leader or at the request of that said Leader.

It was queried whether the Leaders would be permitted to ask the relevant Cabinet Member to permanently Chair the meeting. Officers highlighted that the default position would be for the relevant Leader to the Chair the meeting; however, the amendment would allow for the individual Leader to delegate the meeting in its entirety to the Cabinet Member, if they wish to do so.

RESOLVED:

That the terms of reference for the Corporate Joint Committee Sub-Committees be amended, as set out in paragraph 5 of the circulated report.

7. **Audit Wales - All Wales Corporate Joint Committee Report**

Members were presented with an Audit Wales Report which provided commentary on Corporate Joint Committee progress across Wales.

It was explained that the Audit Wales report was included as Appendix 1 of the circulated report; the report included a section in regards to the five recommendations in which Audit Wales expected to see all Corporate Joint Committees making further progress on over the next 12-18 months.

The National Park Authority representatives welcomed the recommendation in regards to partnership working with National Park Authorities.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

8. **Corporate Plan - Draft Priorities for 2024/25**

Officers provided a report which was seeking approval to consult with stakeholders on the actions/steps that the Committee proposes to undertake, in order to deliver the wellbeing objectives set for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee in 2024/25.

Officers explained that the three main objectives that were approved last year as part of the Corporate Plan, would remain the same for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

It was highlighted that at a recent workshop, Officers discussed some of the achievements of the Corporate Joint Committee throughout the past year, and compiled a list of next steps; these steps were detailed within the circulated report.

Members were provided with further information in regards to the step relating to the Investment Zone; although the Investment Zone would be situated in the South East, Officers felt that there was opportunity to explore and support some of the activities that were included within the Investment Zone Prospectus for the South West.

It was noted that granting permission to consult on these priorities, would provide opportunity over the coming weeks to reflect upon the budget and what priorities should be taken forward in 2024/25.

Members queried the approach that would be taken in regards to the consultation process. Officers confirmed that they would be taking the same approach that was used for the Corporate Plan consultation process, including timescales.

It was acknowledged that further discussions would need to take place regarding the budget and delivering on the agreed priorities.

RESOLVED:

That authorisation be granted to the Chief Executive to undertake formal consultation on the well-being objectives and the proposed actions/steps to be taken in 2024/25, in order to deliver the wellbeing objectives.

9. **Welsh Language Standards**

Officers presented a report which was seeking authority to respond to the consultation initiated by the Welsh Language Commissioner on the proposed standards to the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

It was explained that Officers had cross checked the Welsh Language Standards that the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee had adopted, against the standards that were included within the Draft Compliance Notice received from the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office.

Officers confirmed that there were no differences in the standards, and therefore were seeking to formally respond to the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office prior to the end of the ongoing consultation; indicating that the Committee would be content to proceed to the next stage of the process.

RESOLVED:

That authorisation be granted to the Chief Executive to formally respond to the Welsh Language Commissioner before 5th January 2024, indicating the Committee's acceptance of the proposed Welsh Language Standards for the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

10. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items received.

CHAIRPERSON