

**MINUTES OF THE FORMAL MEETING
OF THE
MID WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 19TH JANUARY 2023 at 11 am to 12.30 pm
Via ZOOM WEBINAR**

PRESENT

Powys County Council (PCC)

County Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Leader / Vice Chair of the Mid Wales CJC

Dr Caroline Turner, Chief Executive

Nigel Brinn, Executive Director

Clive Pinney, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Nicola Williams, Strategic Programme Delivery Manager (CJC)

Julie Williams, Programme Support Officer (*taking notes*) (CJC)

Attending

County Councillor Jake Berriman for Agenda Item 6

Ceredigion County Council (CCC)

County Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader / Chair of the Mid Wales CJC

Eifion Evans, Chief Executive

Barry Rees, Corporate Director

Duncan Hall, Section 151 Officer and Corporate Lead Officer: Finance and Procurement

Justin Davies, Corporate Manager: Core Finance

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA)

County Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe, Vice Chair of BBNPA

Gareth Jones, Director of Planning and Place

1.	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
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The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and brief introductions took place around the table.

2.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence received for the Committee –

PCC - Debby Jones, Professional Lead - Legal

CCC - Elin Prysor, Monitoring Officer and Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance

3.	DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
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There were no disclosures of interests to declare relating to matters to be considered on the agenda.

4.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
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The Chair proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4th July 2022 be signed as a true record and seconded by Councillor James Gibson-Watt.

5.	MEMBERSHIP OF THE CJC COMMITTEES
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The Membership of the Sub Committees was being presented at the CJC for endorsement.

A few vacancies under the Standards, Joint Overview & Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Sub Committees have now been filled. Awaiting two nominations from the BBNPA in relation to the Governance & Audit Sub Committees.

- **ACTION: Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe to inform the Monitoring Officer of the nominations for the Governance & Audit Sub Committees.**

It was confirmed that during the next BBNPA meeting, appointments will be made and the Monitoring Officer will be advised accordingly and report at the next CJC Meeting.

It was advised that the CJC could authorise the Monitoring Officer to accept those nominations or alternatively they can be formally appointed at the next meeting.

- **RECOMMENDED** that delegation is given to the Monitoring Officer to accept nominations from the BBNPA for the Governance & Audit Sub Committee.
- **RESOLVED** that Monitoring Officer to accept BBNPA nominations for the Governance & Audit Sub Committee and report at next CJC meeting.

6.	REPORT TO THE CJC FROM THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SUB COMMITTEE
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Report presented on behalf of the Strategic Development Planning (SDP) Sub Committee by Councillor Jake Berriman, Chair of the SDP Sub Committee.

Feedback is sought from the CJC members in relation to correspondence (circulated this morning) from the Welsh Government in respect of funding for Strategic Development Plans.

Brief overview

The CJC has an obligation to prepare a Strategic Development Plan across Mid Wales to bring together a plan through the relevant members of the CJC with the constituent Local Authorities and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

The sub-committee met on 14th October and 2nd December. Terms of Reference were agreed and a letter had been written to Julie James, Minister for Climate Change. The letter outlined the position and requested that Powys be permitted to lose its 'drop dead' end date in terms of its existing adopted local development plan, so that resources could be set aside for the production of the replacement plan.

In the 2nd December meeting, a response from the Minister advised that the Welsh Government was disinclined to remove Powys' 'drop dead' end date, stating that Powys needed to carry on preparing the local development plan.

Members will be aware regarding cost of the work and an options paper was produced with six options with focus on option 2 which was how to commence the SDP alongside the local development plans.

The Local Authorities are in different positions with Ceredigion and the National Park having suspended their local development plans for a variety of reasons.

Agreed to focus on option 2 with a caveat that the Chair of the SDP would again write to the Minister to highlight the fact the Brecon Beacons National Park is involved in three SDP's in addition to its own replacement plan and there are no new resources available and that Powys is already committed to a costly replacement plan with no option other than to continue with that provided by the Government.

The CJC Chair wished to note two points –

1. With regards to the letter to Julie James, Minister whilst acknowledging the position the SDP Sub Committee Chair, the Chair recommended that sight of the letter before it was sent would have been useful.

The CJC Chair wishes to be kept informed of any future correspondence to Minister's from the CJC or any of the Sub Committees

2. With regard to the letter received from the Welsh Government this morning, is there a requirement to reply to that letter from members of the CJC or The Chair?

It was acknowledged that the Chair of the CJC would have a copy of any correspondence in this respect going forward.

It was reported that the pressure is to progress the RTP first before the SDP. The RTP guidance is imminent with the SDP manual forecast by the end of this year.

It is acknowledged that the manual is due at year end and an expectation to have the CJC to sign off a Delivery Agreement with the Welsh Government over the timetable of producing an SDP by the end of the year also.

The Chair of the SDP stresses a further conversation led by the CJC Chair and the Chief Executives is required.

Endorsement noted of comments regarding the timeline and expectations.

Concerns were raised about being asked to provide a system without guidance which is essential for formulating for compliance with the Welsh Government.

The Chair welcomes opinions regarding meeting with Welsh Government and agreed that a meeting needs to be arranged urgently to have the drop-dead date lifted, get clarity on the guidance, expectations of an SDP and how it interlinks with Local Plans.

Eifion Evans, Chief Executive of Ceredigion CC stated it was critical that support be given to Powys to get the drop dead date removed.

The CJC Chair, Vice Chair and BBNP are happy to support.

- **ACTION - Chair of the Mid Wales CJC to contact the Minister Julie James to request a meeting to discuss Powys issue with the review of the LDP.**

7.	CJC ANNUAL RETURN 2021-22
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The CJC Annual Return was presented by the Section 151 Officer, with the CJC being in existence in 2021/22 no expenditure incurred and no transactions therefore a nil return reported to Audit Wales.

- **RECOMMENDATION to approve the Annual Return outlining the positions for 2021/22 and noting a nil position.**
- **RESOLVED and approved the CJC Annual Return 2021-22 by Councillor James Gibson Watts and seconded by Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe.**

8.	CJC BUDGET 2023/24
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Presentation of the CJC Budget Report for 2023/24 which includes a strategic planning and core element as laid down in CJC Regulations.

Proposed budget of £175,000 which is a slight increase on the current year which is £160,000.

Key pertinent points –

The Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee is a separate legal entity so acting in its own interests.

Outstanding issues are VAT, Corporation tax issues, HM Treasury, these are close to being concluded and some operational challenges also given that the CJC is a separate legal entity.

Noted the SDP discussions earlier and advised this is not the time to be growing the CJC Budget until an absolute direction of travel is confirmed.

Discussions took place around the quorate needed for the meeting and concerns raised around capacity at the BBNPA.

- **ACTION – The Strategic Programme Manager for the CJC is to check with the Monitoring Officer/Regulations and raise with Welsh Government whether it would be acceptable for the two Local Authorities and the BBNPA to delegate a person to attend the meetings, if one of the three elected members were not able to join that meeting, so that the meeting could proceed.**

Summary

An overall budget of £175,000, split into a strategic planning element and a core general budget element as laid down in the regulations and due to the uncertainty in terms of requirements and directions etc. and confidence levels in terms of value for money when it comes to the SDP and RTP which was discussed earlier. Last year's budget was £160,000 so just a slight increase.

It was noted that there is the ability within the regulations to revise the budget within a financial year so if required in 2023/24 where some of the future requirements do

become clearer and we are content with the direction of travel, taking into account the significant budget challenges in each authority, we are able to increase the budget within the year if required.

Any CJC underspend at the end of the year would go into a Mid Wales CJC Reserve account and would need to be split into a strategic planning element and a general element.

Pension Fund

Nominations required for the administering of a pension for the CJC.

Ceredigion CC fall under the Dyfed Pension Fund which is administered by Carmarthenshire CC and it would not be appropriate for the pension fund to be the administering authority for the Mid Wales CJC as Carmarthenshire CC are not part of the CJC themselves and therefore by default the Powys Pension Fund would be the most obvious Pension Fund Administering Body.

Response to Welsh Government on that basis that should the CJC become an employer at some point in the future then the Powys Pension Fund would be the designated Pension.

Appendix A of the report sets out the detail of the £175,000, its split into just over £131,000 being the general budget and just under £44,000 being the strategic planning element.

Its funding two posts being the Strategic Programme Delivery Manager and the CJC Programme Support Officer and other support cost whether it be Democratic Services, Legal support or Finance support.

- **RECOMMENDATION 10.1 A - E is only for Ceredigion and Powys members to approve because it does not include strategic planning.**
- **RECOMMENDATION 10.2 F - J and needs to be all CJC members including the National Park because that is the strategic planning element.**
- **RECOMMENDATION to ratify the decision re the Powys Pension Fund as the designated administering Authority.**

Councillor James Gibson-Watt queried recommendations 10.1 – should section two of the report not be resolved satisfactorily by the end of the financial year that further discussions with Government Officials to take place.

Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe queried the formula for the Strategic Plan budget for awareness going forward, the Section 151 Officer confirmed the BBNPA contribution did not include any support costs.

- **RESOLVED 10.1 A- E proposed by Councillor James Gibson-Watt and seconded by Councillor Bryan Davies as Chair.**
- **RESOLVED 10.2 F – J Councillor Bryan Davies proposed and seconded by Councillor James Gibson-Watt.**

- **RESOLVED** re the Powys Pension Fund being designated as the administering pension fund authority for the CJC this was proposed by Councillor Bryan Davies and seconded by Councillor Gareth Ratcliffe.

9.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
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There was no other business to report to the committee today.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and the meeting conclude.