



Cyd-Bwyllgor Corfforedig y Canolbarth

Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee

MID WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting – Monday, 29th January 2024

REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF PRE-PREPARATORY WORK OF THE SDP SUB-COMMITTEE

Purpose of Report	To provide the CJC with an update on the progress to date on the pre-preparatory work for the SDP
Recommendations:	<p>A) To note the progress and narrative update on actions undertaken to date.</p> <p>B) For Members to consider and comment on the proposed Forward Work Plan set out in paragraph 10 – and if content, that Members support the proposals.</p>
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Finance Officer	Duncan Hall, Section 151 Officer
Legal Officer	Clive Pinney – Monitoring Officer

Introduction and Background:

1. Members of the CJC have previously received and considered reports on the proposals for the Strategic Development Plan, with a budget agreed to implement pre-preparatory works to enable the formal start of an SDP to commence.
2. Significant work has been underway to take forward the actions identified by the SDP sub-group.
3. This report provides an update on the progress against those actions, and to make a the CJC aware of barriers to progress on the formal start of an SDP.

Regional Update:

4. Following the last meeting of the CJC on the 12th of October 2023, it was agreed that Powys County Council would consider their internal procedures and seek monitoring officer advice re formal pausing of their replacement plan preparation (LDP2). This was with a view to seeking full council resolution on decisions around this step. After this Powys have reviewed their position and sought legal counsel this advice is still

forthcoming. The SDP sub-group and CJC will be notified when this advice has been received and reviewed.

5. Bannau Bryceiniog National Park were also anticipating discussion as to future direction of replacement plan preparation at BBNPA. At the time of the last sub-group no formal decision had been reached, it is understood it will be Spring before such a resolution is made. The SDP sub-group and CJC will be notified when any formal decision has been made.
6. The Ceredigion replacement LDP remains on formal pause due to the revised JNCC targets for riverine levels of Phosphates in the Teifi Special Area of Conservation whilst mitigations are devised and implemented. Work on this remains at pace with the establishment of the Teifi Nutrient Management Board, development of the Nutrient Management Plan and recent announcement of the Teifi Demonstrator catchment project, to date the LDP position remains unchanged.
7. At a meeting of the Planning Officers Society for Wales (POSW) alongside Welsh Government colleagues on the 25th of October 2023, John Fudge and Mark Newey (Policy Leads at WG) discussed the letter sent to CJC's by Minister Julie James in the summer and outlined their expectations that a Delivery Agreement for all SDPs would be submitted before the end of this financial year. Discussion focused on resource constraints and difficulty with timelines across all regions. – It was not apparent from the meeting that any CJC region was in a position to comply with this request as resource requirements remain a Wales wide concern for SDPs as well as the planned delay to the SDP manual release (consultation on the manual expected May 2024). However, it is brought to the attention of the CJC for information and reiteration of the expectation at a ministerial level.

For Discussion and Agreement:

Forward Work Programme

8. The SDP subgroup held on the 17/10/23 agreed the following action list of pre-preparatory work which was planned between October 2023 and March 2024. The identification of an indicative budget has been prioritized given the budget setting process both the Local Authorities and the CJC undertake in Jan/ Feb each year. An indicative budget has been shared with partners and will be reviewed at an SDP subgroup workshop to be convened in February.
9. Internal Requirements
 - Timeline for SDP (including matching with other regional plans and Powys, potential BBNPA LDP2)
 - Mapped reporting structure for (member, officer engagement) below SDP subgroup level.

- Establishment of SDP officers / member working groups – either regional or LPA/ NPA specific or both as advised.
- Skills mapping regionally.
- Complete SDP regulations/ draft manual requirements list
- Resource Requirements for SDP (staffing / consultancy)
- Consideration of IT requirements across the region
- Draft Budget for SDP

Statutory Requirements

- Draft Delivery Agreement
- Draft Community Involvement Scheme

10. The following table outlines the progress to date on each of the identified work streams:

Work Stream	Current Status	Expected completion Date
Timeline for SDP (including matching with other regional plans and Powys/ BBNPA LDP2)	Need clarity on LDP 2 preparation in PCC and BBNPA before completion	Mar 2024
Mapped reporting structure for (member, officer engagement) below SDP sub-group level.	Discussions with Welsh Government ongoing as issue highlighted across multiple regions awaiting further direction – suggested in SDP engagement that initial agreement to undertake SDP is taken through local democratic processes and PSB groups are utilised for on-going engagement	ongoing
Establishment of SDP officers working groups – either regional or LPA/ NPA specific or both as advised.	Teams site established, meetings arranged, discussions ongoing – SDP partners feel a series of officer / member workshops scheduled around the	ongoing

	formal SDP subgroup meetings would also be worthwhile.	
Skills mapping regionally.	<p>Each authority/ park area been contacted, and a data set has been completed for Ceredigion with skill sets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Please note</i> BBNPA have confirmed that they are unable to respond to the request to complete the skills audit as they have no staffing resources to put to the SDP. 	On-going – may need to review how we approach this.
Complete SDP regs/ manual requirements list	List created – engagement with officer working group feedback from BBNPA incorporated – await SDP manual to formalise	Partially complete – await publication of SDP manual (May 24) to complete
Resource Requirements for SDP (staffing / consultancy)	Not complete -officer discussion have identified that BBNPA feel a more appropriate solution for staffing the SDP is to have a dedicated officer at each authority who is responsible for the SDP and acts as a liaison between the CJC SDP and the constituent policy / LDP team. This has additional cost implications for the SDP budget – some of which could be alleviated by each authority where possible redirecting staff workstreams or employing additional resources.	March 2024

Consideration of IT requirements across the region	Meeting with Powys arranged, discussions ongoing – seems likely that the region will move to the Powys IT system as the most recently procured system	March 2024
Draft Budget for SDP	Indicative budget spreadsheet created to be finalised once all pre-preparatory work complete and agreements made regionally as to future progress and staff resources for the SDP.	Partially complete – to be discussed at upcoming workshop but can only be finalised alongside formal DA
Draft Delivery Agreement	A draft is available – however without formal decisions on commencement and structure of an SDP team it is not able to be completed and would be premature to finalise for submission to Welsh Ministers	Contingent on regional partners decision making and capacity issues
Draft Community Involvement Scheme	A draft is available – however without formal decisions on commencement and structure of an SDP team it is not able to be completed	Contingent on regional partners decision making and capacity issues

Resource Requirements

11. The engagement work to date regionally highlights differing views on the staffing resource requirements to undertake an SDP whilst all 3 authorities agree broadly the costings outlined in the indicative budget. There remains considerable concern over how this would be delivered with some partners advocating for a dedicated regional SDP team therefore the budget has been focused on identifying the cost of SDP preparation. In effect the base cost of producing the evidence, consultation, and examination of an SDP alongside the costs of employing a dedicated SDP manager and a GIS officer (an identified skills shortage regionally). Dependent on decision making as to how to manage staffing resources to undertake an SDP, further costs may be liable for staffing – but this will be contingent on whether the region moves as one to SDP work with existing policy teams, resources internally are partially re-directed to SDP work or a standalone team were created.

12. BBNPA have confirmed they do not have any staffing resources to direct to an SDP, and would like to stress that the SDP will need a specific resource that responds to both the local and regional context. It is their view the best way to do this is to create a 'virtual team' resourced by specific Regional Planning Officers hosted by the constituent LPAs, whose work programme is co-ordinated by the SDP team leader who is an independent appointment by the CJC. These officers will be able to provide a link back into the local context and knowledge without requiring LPAs to resource a layer of plan which they are not mandated to produce.

13. At this stage given the regional partners capacity needs further consideration it would not be effective to recommend a budget is set for SDP and subsequently a Delivery Agreement is finalised. However, an ongoing resource is required to continue baseline pre-preparatory work and it has been suggested this should remain at the 0.5 FTE equivalent identified in the last two quarters of 23/24 to enable the bringing together of the workstreams that are presently ongoing.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A) To note the progress and narrative update on actions undertaken to date.
- B) For Members to consider and comment on the proposed Forward Work Plan set out in paragraph 10 above – and if content, that Members support the proposals.

Financial Impacts:

14. The financial implications of progressing an SDP have been outlined in an indicative budget and shared with partners, this will need consideration at constituent authority level and an agreement reached alongside resource identification during the 2024/2025 budget setting process in PCC, BBNPA and CCC. At present only a resource requirement for a 0.5 FTE SDP resource has been set in the forthcoming budget until decisions as to progress on an SDP can be reached.

Workforce Impacts:

15. None identified at this time. Contingent on decisions as to delivery structure of an SDP.

Legal Impacts:

16. None identified at this time. Legal advice was sought from the Monitoring Officer in relation to the constitution and the provisions for this sub-committee.

Risk Management Impacts:

17. None identified at this time.

Consultation:

18. There is no requirement for consultation in respect of this report.