



## MID WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

### Governance and Audit Sub Committee

Date of Meeting – 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Purpose of Report</b> | To provide the inaugural meeting of the Governance and Audit Sub Committee with an update report from the Chief Executive of the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee. |
| <b>Decision Sought:</b>  | To note the content of the report.                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Report Author</b>     | Eifion Evans, CEO Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Finance Officer</b>   | Duncan Hall, Section 151 Officer                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Legal Officer</b>     | Clive Pinney – Monitoring Officer                                                                                                                                     |

### 1. Introduction:

- 1.1 This report is intended to provide Members of the Governance and Audit Sub Committee of the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee (MWCJC) with an update on the establishment and progress of work of the MWCJC.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides a framework for regional collaboration through a more coherent, consistent and democratically controlled mechanism called Corporate Joint Committees ('CJCs').
- 2.2 A CJC is a separate corporate body which can employ staff, hold assets and budgets and undertake functions and are part of the 'local government family' and where appropriate, are subject to the same powers and duties as principal councils in the way they operate.

2.3 The MWCJC which is made up of Ceredigion and Powys Local Authorities is one of four CJC established in Wales alongside The North Wales CJC, The South East Wales CJC and The South West Wales CJC. In addition, Bannau Brycheiniog have a member on the CJC in relation to Strategic Development Planning.

2.4 The three specific areas that are incorporated into the MWCJC which commenced its functions from 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 are as follows:

- Strategic Development Planning – the MWCJC must prepare a Strategic Development Plan
- Regional Transport Planning – the MWCJC must prepare a Regional Transport Plan
- Economic Wellbeing

## 2.5 Membership

The CJC consists of:

- Leader PCC (Chair)
- Leader CCC (Vice Chair)
- BBNPA Member (Strategic Development Planning only)
- Chief Executive Officer (Ceredigion County Council)
- Chief Executive Officer (Powys County Council)
- Monitoring Officer (Powys County Council)
- Chief Financial Officer (Ceredigion County Council)

The role of the Chair and CEO will rotate annually at the AGM of the CJC.

## 2.6 Sub Committees

The following Sub Committees have been established and are chaired by the respective Portfolio Holders from the two constituent authorities, rotated on an annual basis.

- Strategic Development Planning Sub Committee
- Regional Transport Planning Sub Committee
- Economic Well-being Sub Committee

In addition, the following governing sub committees are required to be established in accordance with the legislation:

- Standards Sub Committee
- Governance and Audit Sub Committee
- Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## 2.7 CJC Lead Functions

The following table reflects how the various lead functions within Ceredigion and Powys County Council have been divided up to support the governance dynamics of the CJC:

| <b>Lead Authority</b>                            | <b>Function</b>                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ceredigion County Council                        | Finance / S151                                                  |
| Powys County Council                             | Legal / Monitoring Officer                                      |
| Powys County Council                             | Internal Audit                                                  |
| Powys County Council / Ceredigion County Council | Translation of documents / simultaneous translation at meetings |
| Powys County Council                             | Democratic Services                                             |
| Powys County Council                             | CJC Programme Support                                           |

## **3. Progress Update**

### 3.1 Meetings

The MWCJC has been meeting on a quarterly basis since it's inaugural meeting in January 2022. Member and Officer appointments have been made to the CJC itself and all the sub committees, governance arrangements are in place and standing orders and a constitution have been agreed.

The Strategic Development Planning and the Regional Transport Planning sub committee's have met a number of times and will continue to meet on a quarterly basis. The Economic Wellbeing Sub Committee has not yet but it has been agreed that the Mid Wales Growth Deal Board will be encompassed into this Sub Committee and will be called 'Economic Wellbeing and Growth Deal Sub Committee'.

The Overview and Scrutiny Subcommittee has met once on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 with the Governance and Audit, and Standards Subcommittee meeting today.

### 3.2 Delivery

The legislation is prescriptive in that the MWCJC must produce a Regional Transport Plan by March 2025 with a draft version in place by December 2024 and a Strategic Development Plan Delivery Agreement by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, however progress on the

SDP has been delayed due to uncertainty around Powys County Council's delivery of a LDP or SDP or both. A paper is being taken to PCC Cabinet in May to agree a decision on this and a SDP workshop has been arranged for June 2024 to agree the way forward on the SDP. There are no specific statutory requirements for the Economic Wellbeing Sub Committee however it is envisaged that it will own the Strategic Vision of the Mid Wales Growth Deal.

To date the MWCJC has adopted a 'bare minimum' approach with no staff being employed via the CJC itself and resources in the respective organisations limited. Funding is being provided by Welsh Government to support the delivery of the RTP until 2025, however no funding has been provided to support the delivery of the SDP.

### 3.3 Budget

Whilst a grant of £250k for each CJC was provided by Welsh Government for the initial establishment of CJC's ongoing operational costs of CJC's are subject to contributions from the constituted local authorities.

The Budget for 2024/25 was approved on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The General Budget totalled £144k, with an RTP budget of £100k and SDP of £73k making a total of £317k. The Annual Return for year ending March 2023 has been approved by Audit Wales and was presented to the CJC in January 2024. For information a copy is provided with the agenda for the Governance and Audit Subcommittee meeting.

### 3.4 Corporate Plan

A Corporate Plan outlining the strategic direction of the CJC for the next 4-5 years has been produced and adopted by the CJC.

Although the work of the region is in its infancy, the plan sets out the purpose and direction for joint work between Powys County Council and Ceredigion County Council in the areas of the economy and transport. In addition, the two Councils will collaborate with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park on the creation of a Strategic Development Plan for the region.

The CJC has set out a Vision and Wellbeing Objectives, alongside an Integrated Impact Assessment, as part of the Corporate Plan.

The three public bodies involved have all worked together for many years on a range of matters, and the creation of the CJC will formalise this relationship and set it in a legal framework.

A copy of the plan is attached as an appendix to this report.

## **4. Integrated Impact Assessment:**

- 4.1 There is no requirement for an Integrated Impact Assessment for this report as the setting up of the CJC is underpinned by legislation and this report is to establish financial arrangements in accordance with legislation.

## **5. Workforce Impacts:**

- 5.1 Currently any employment within the MWCJC will be undertaken by constituent authorities and recharged back to the MWCJC taking due account of any associated taxation issues.

## **6. Legal Impacts:**

- 6.1 Part 5 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides for the establishment, through regulations, of CJsCs and compliance will be had with this and other legislative obligations in the establishment of CJsCs. The Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations came into force on 1st April 2021 and set out that the CJC should be established and the time limits for the discharging of specific functions.

## **7. Risk Management Impacts:**

- 7.1 Failure to establish the MWCJC and the associated Sub Committees is in breach of its obligations exposing itself to legal challenge. In addition, suitable arrangements must be put in place to ensure that the constituent authorities and the national park authority are able to fulfil their legal obligations in establishing the MWCJC.

## **8. Consultation:**

- 8.1 There is no requirement for public consultation in respect of this report.

## **9. Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

- 9.1 To provide members of the Overview and Scrutiny Sub Committee with an update on the establishment and delivery to date of the MWCJC.

## **10. Recommendations**

- 10.1. Members note the content of this report.