

No.

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Special Remote Meeting held on 24th January, 2022 at 6.05 p.m.

The Council agenda is available [here](#).

The recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

Present: Councillor Jayne Norman (Mayor); Councillors Julie Aviet, Vincent Bailey, Rhiannon Birch, Jonathan Bird, Bronwen Brooks, Lis Burnett, George Carroll, Christine Cave, Janice Charles, Millie Collins, Geoff Cox, Robert Crowley, Pamela Drake, Vincent Driscoll, Stewart Edwards, Ben Gray, Owen Griffiths, Stephen Griffiths, Sally Hanks, Nic Hodges, Hunter Jarvie, Gwyn John, Dr. Ian Johnson, Gordon Kemp, Peter King, Kevin Mahoney, Kathryn McCaffer, Anne Moore, Neil Moore, Michael Morgan, Rachel Nugent-Finn, Andrew Parker, Bob Penrose, Sandra Perkes, Andrew Robertson, Leighton Rowlands, Ruba Sivagnanam, John Thomas, Neil Thomas, Steffan Wiliam, Margaret Wilkinson, Edward Williams and Mark Wilson.

770 ANNOUNCEMENT –

Prior to the commencement of the business being transacted, the Mayor read the following statement:

“May I remind everyone present that the meeting will be live streamed as well as recorded via the internet and this recording archived for future viewing”.

771 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE –

This was received from Councillor A.R.T Davies.

772 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST –

No declarations were received.

773 IMPLEMENTING THE SOUTH EAST WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE (MD) –

The Leader provided an overview of the report contents and referred to the interim governance and delivery model to implement the statutory requirements for establishing the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEWCJC) by using a twin track approach to operate the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCR) alongside the initial bare minimum phase of the CJC ahead and setting its first budget on 31st January, 2022.

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He also apprised Members on how it was intended to implement an integrated lift and shift model which sought to bring together the CCR and the SEWCJC into one coherent model of regional economic governance.

The setting up of the CJC was a statutory and legal duty for all 10 Local Authorities in the South East Wales region and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority including, the responsibility to set the budget for the SEWCJC by no later than 31st January, 2022. The Leaders of the 10 Authorities and a representative of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority would be meeting shortly to agree budget by that date. Agreement by all parties was required on the subject.

He had considered it important and necessary to bring the matter before Council so that all Members understood the principles under which the SEWCJC would operate and the associated financial responsibilities. It was the intention that the SEWCJC would be established on an interim basis with a minimum budget until such time the SEWCJC could become fully operational.

Making reference to the report recommendations and particularly to Recommendation (7), he was seeking Council's approval in order to agree the Council's contribution to the budget of the SEWCJC in line with paragraph 4.9 of the report and funded as detailed in paragraph 4.10 of the report.

He reminded Members that as Leader of the Council, as did the other Local Authority Leaders, he had a duty to consider and set the first budget of the SEWCJC by the above date in order to ensure the Council was complying with legislative requirements.

He was also further seeking Council's approval (Recommendation (9)) to grant delegated authority to the Council's Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services to serve formal written notice in accordance with Clause 2.1.2 of the SEWCCR's Joint Working Agreement following the inception of the SEWCJC.

Responding to the Leader's comments, Councillor Carrol had some sympathy for him and his administration. Acknowledging WG legislation and the legal requirements to implement CJsCs, he did not see these were the best way of deciding and delivering services at a local community level. He and his Group did not support centralisation of power away from local communities, sentiments he understood had been expressed by elected Members of other Councils across Wales. Accepting the legal requirements to establish such bodies, he considered that the concept was a retrograde step and accordingly was opposed to it and signalled that his Group would be abstaining from voting on the matter.

Councillor Gray thanked the Leader for bringing the matter to Council as he was aware that the other Councils in the region had yet to discuss the issue. He acknowledged that there were some questions that remained unanswered in relation to the operation of the SEWCJC. There were serious issues that remained in regard to ensuring the decisions of the SEWCJC were scrutinised and that local communities had an awareness of what such bodies were doing. The minimum that could be done from this Council's and Cabinet's perspective was to ensure that the minutes for the SEWCJC were reported to Cabinet for consideration as currently in

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the case of the CCR minutes going forward and if need be further reports to Council. He indicated that his Group was supportive of the recommendations set out in the report under consideration.

Councillor Robertson endorsed the comments of his Group Leader and understood the Council's position however, he viewed the proposals as a massive erosion of local democracy and the centralisation power and decision making. Alluding to the other report to be considered relating to the additional Director positions which was to be discussed later, he considered this report to be a contradiction in the context of implementing the CJC, which would bring about a loss of responsibilities at a local level.

Councillor Dr. Johnson was appreciative that the matter was being brought before Council for consideration, acknowledging that the report encompassed what was a technical and administrative matter. He alluded to the impending local government elections and to the fact that there remained a number of matters in relation to the SEWCJC which would be delayed and therefore be for consideration and decision by a new Council Administration.

He signalled that his Group would be supporting the proposals however he had a number of concerns that remained in regard to the operation of the SEWCJC and recalled his previous concerns raised some years ago in regard to the establishment of the CCR in terms of the Council missing out on funding as it was neither the capital nor valley community. This concern remained in relation to policy development, particularly in relation to housing and economic development matters, with the County not benefiting.

Referring to the earlier concerns expressed, which he did not share, Councillor Dr. Johnson reminded Members that the WG initiative had a democratic mandate based on the outcome of Senedd elections held in 2021. That said, he did have concerns in regard to the future operation of the scrutiny arrangements of the SEW CJC and he was sure that this would be raised by the Leader and the Leader of the new Administration, as he did not consider the current scrutiny arrangements in place for the CCR as particularly democratic and he looked forward to the future where opposition parties could participate as opposed to being locked out which they currently were. He alluded to Barry Dock Transport Interchange project as such a case where he questioned whether the project would benefit Barry. He also referred to the newspapers in Wales commenting on the purchase of Aberthaw Power Station. Acknowledging that there had been recent discussions on the project he felt that these matters should not feel like they were under wraps with information not being open and available to Vale residents. While supportive of the proposals there were still lessons to be learnt.

Councillor John echoed previous comments made in regard to thanking the Leader for bringing the matter to Council for consideration, unlike some Councils who were only discussing the matter at a Cabinet level. Alluding to his comments made some time ago at a scrutiny meeting he was not generally in favour of such initiatives as he saw these as a back door to the reorganisation of Councils and concurred with Councillor Dr. Johnson's comments in relation to scrutiny arrangements. However,

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he felt that the SEWCJC was an initiative that should be supported and signalled that his Group would be supporting the report proposals.

Councillor Wilson, echoing previous comments in support of the proposals including the importance of appropriate scrutiny arrangements and local accountability, considered that the current approach outlined by the Leader was the sensible way to progress the issue which would allow any new Administration to progress those outstanding matters to allow the SEWCJC to be fully implemented.

The Leader in summing up, indicated that in terms of erosion of power it was an issue that everybody was concerned about, but it was a case, in the current context, of working in tandem with others. He did not necessarily accept the concept or the premise of the CJC that Councillor Dr. Johnson had put forward. Referring to housing as an example and related drafting of a Strategic Development Plan, this had to be put on hold due to the issue of implementing CJsCs, but it had been an issue uppermost in the minds of the City Deal Regional Cabinet particularly, the need for delivering housing above the M4 corridor however, he did not think this would form part of the work going forward. He accepted that scrutiny arrangements needed to be more robust but, pointed out that that was more to do with Members of other Council's failing to attend the CCR scrutiny meetings which could not then go ahead. He had attended related CCR Cabinet meetings he was required to attend as did his predecessor.

In concluding, the Leader reiterated that he had brought the matter to Council to ensure openness and accountability considering the proposed use of CCR financial reserves to implement the SEWCJC. He wished to ensure that Council took the decision to grant him the necessary authority to use those reserves on the basis of the information contained in the report and thanked those Members who indicated that they would be supporting the proposals.

The Leader Moved (seconded by the Deputy Leader) that the recommendations as set out in the report be approved.

The below Recorded Vote took place on the approval of the report recommendations.

Members	For	Against	Abstain
Julie Aviet	√		
Vincent Bailey			√
Rhiannon Birch	√		
Jonathan Bird	√		
Bronwen Brooks	√		
Lis Burnett	√		

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George Carroll			√
Christine Cave			√
Janice Charles			√
Millie Collins	√		
Geoff Cox	√		
Robert Crowley			√
Pamela Drake	√		
Vince Driscoll			√
Stewart Edwards			√
Ben Gray	√		
Owen Griffiths	√		
Stephen Griffiths			√
Sally Hanks	√		
Nic Hodges	√		
Hunter Jarvie	√		
Gwyn John	√		
Ian Johnson	√		
Gordon Kemp			√
Peter King	√		
Kevin Mahoney			√
Kathryn McCaffer	√		
Anne Moore	√		

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Neil Moore	√		
Michael Morgan	√		
Jayne Norman	√		
Rachel Nugent-Finn			√
Andrew Parker	√		
Bob Penrose			√
Sandra Perkes	√		
Andrew Robertson		√	
Leighton Rowlands			√
Ruba Sivagnanam	√		
John Thomas	√		
Neil Thomas	√		
Steffan Wiliam	√		
Margaret Wilkinson	√		
Edward Williams	√		
Mark Wilson	√		
TOTAL	30	1	13

The Motion was carried.

RESOLVED –

(1) T H A T the interim governance and delivery model for implementation of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee and the ‘twin track’ arrangements proposed across operation of Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, alongside initial enactment of a ‘bare minimum’ Corporate Joint Committee – and until such time the proposed ‘lift and shift’ approach could occur, be noted.

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(2) T H A T the requirement for the Corporate Joint Committee to set and approve a budget on or before 31st January, 2022 and the steps set out in the report to enable this be noted.

(3) T H A T the risks and issues set out in the report which required ongoing monitoring, mitigation and management be noted.

(4) T H A T the request made by Cardiff Capital Region of Welsh Government to amend the Corporate Joint Committee regulations to change the date on which immediate duties commenced under the Regulations from 28th February, 2022 to 30th June, 2022 be noted and supported.

(5) T H A T it be noted that the draft Standing Orders for the Corporate Joint Committee which were being written were to be considered at the inaugural meeting of the Corporate Joint Committee on 31st January, 2022.

(6) T H A T the work ongoing by Cardiff Capital Region and its constituent Councils to work with Welsh Government, Audit Wales and advisors as appropriate, to help inform resolution of the remaining issues wherever possible be noted.

(7) T H A T the interim Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Managing Director and Leader, be granted delegated authority to agree the Council's contribution to the budget of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee in line with paragraph 4.9 of the report by 31st January, 2022, and funded as detailed in paragraph 4.10 of the report.

(8) T H A T, subject to Resolution (7) above, it be noted that the Leader had a duty, together with the Leaders of the other constituent Councils, to consider and set the first budget of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee by 31st January, 2022 in order to ensure the Council was complying with the legislation as required.

(9) T H A T the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services be granted delegated authority to serve formal written notice in accordance with Clause 2.1.2 of the Cardiff Capital Region's Joint Working Agreement following the inception of the Corporate Joint Committee.

Reasons for decisions

(1-6) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting.

(7) To provide delegated authority to enable the Council's contribution to the budget of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee to be determined and agreed.

(8) Having regard to the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting and to allow for the transition from the Cardiff Capital Region to the Corporate Joint Committee in due course.

(9) To allow for the transition from the Cardiff Capital Region to the Corporate Joint Committee in due course.