
NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE
07/10/2022

Present:

Voting Members - Councillors:- Jason McLellan (Denbighshire Council), Carwyn Elias Jones (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Charlie McCoubrey (Conwy County Borough Council), Mark Pritchard (Wrexham County Borough Council) and Dyfrig Siencyn (Cyngor Gwynedd).

Snowdonia Member: Councillor Annwen Hughes (Snowdonia National Park Authority).

Chief Officers - Emyr Williams (Snowdonia National Park Authority), Dylan Williams (Isle of Anglesey County Council), Iwan Davies (Conwy County Borough Council), Neal Cockerton (Flintshire Council), Ian Bancroft (Wrexham County Borough Council), Graham Boase (Denbighshire Council) and Dafydd Gibbard (Cyngor Gwynedd).

Officers in attendance - Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer), Dewi Morgan (Section 151 Officer), Dafydd L. Edwards (Lead Officer Joint Committee Project), Sian Pugh (CJC Group Accountant) and Annes Sion (Democracy Team Leader).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Llinos Medi (Isle of Anglesey County Council) and Emyr Williams (Snowdonia National Park Chief Executive).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2022, as a true record.

5. NORTH WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE PROJECTED EXPENDITURE 2022/23

The report was presented by Sian Pugh (CJC Group Accountant).

DECISION

To note and accept the Corporate Joint Committee's projected expenditure for 2022/23 as submitted in Appendix 1. To agree that the underspend at the end of the financial year will be earmarked to a reserve fund to finance future one-off costs.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that it was a financial review from September 2022. The main points were highlighted, whilst showing the budget and the estimated position until the end of the year. It was explained that they were estimating an underspend of £50k under the Employees heading. It was explained that the budget had been based on employing / seconding two employees in the field of Transportation from July 2022 and three employees in the Strategic Planning field from December 2022, no appointments had been made to date. Cyngor Gwynedd's Finance Service had also provided projections for the costs of the Portfolio Director from October onwards, and the Finance Service would work with the Ambition Board over the coming months on this.

A likely underspend of £2.5k was highlighted on the Travelling heading as well as a £45k underspend on the supplies and services heading. It was explained that there was a £1k underspend on the miscellaneous supplies heading, £4k on the engagement and meetings heading, and £40k on the external consultations heading.

It was expressed that the net underspend of £3.5k was anticipated on the Support Services heading. It was noted that there was an overspend of £10k on finance costs since the role of the Project Lead Officer had continued for longer than originally anticipated. An £11k of underspend was highlighted on the Corporate Support heading due to a reduction in the number of formal meetings.

It was explained that there had been a further delay with legislating to give section 33 status to Corporate Joint Committees and that this was now unlikely to be in place until 1 March 2023. It was expressed as a result of this that it would not be possible to reclaim VAT on any financial transactions attributed to the previous period and based on the projected overspend during that period, it was estimated that around £41k of VAT could not be reclaimed.

It was expressed that this would leave a projected position for 2022/23 as an underspend of approximately £60k that would be transferred to a reserve fund.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Enquiries were made about the budget and levy of the CJC for 2023/24, noting that serious consideration should be given to all 2023/24 levies, including the Corporate Joint Committee, because the financial projections for next year looked so poor. It was noted that a discussion would be held on the budget when the budget would be created. It was noted that this report referred to this year's money and that it was difficult to find savings this year since the budget was the least possible but the need to discuss the next budget was acknowledged.
- It was asked why the money was being earmarked to a reserve fund and it was explained that the Joint Committee only had one reserve fund and therefore the money would be earmarked for one-off costs in the future.

6. STANDING ORDERS AND CONSTITUTION

The report was presented by Iwan G Evans (Monitoring Officer).

DECISION

1. To agree to adopt
 - a) Standing Orders for the Sub-committees
 - b) Terms of Reference for the following Sub-committees;
 - Strategic Transportation
 - Strategic Planning

- Governance and Audit.
2. To delegate the power to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Monitoring Officer to complete co-option agreements with Transportation and Strategic Planning Sub-committee Members and to arrange through the Proper Officer to call initial meetings of the Sub-committees.
 3. To agree on the principles of appointment to the Governance and Audit Sub-committee and to authorise the Chief Executive to seek expressions of interest and to report to the December meeting of the CJC to appoint.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented and it was noted that this report followed the report that had been submitted back in June. It was explained that the first half of the report noted adopting the Standing Orders and Terms of Reference of the Sub-committees. It was explained that only three of the sub-committees were being highlighted since the Statutory Officer was still waiting for the regulations for the Standards Committee. It was also noted that it was premature to discuss the Ambition Board.

It was expressed that the second aspect of the decision related to co-opting to the Sub-committees. It was noted in accordance with the act that there was a need to create and complete co-opting agreements with the members of the Organisation and Statutory Planning Sub-committees in order to commit them to being members before a meeting was convened. The need to establish a Strategic Transportation and Strategic Planning sub-committee calendar was highlighted.

It was noted that the regulations noted the need for the Sub-committee to create a Governance and Audit Sub-board. The need to proceed to establish them was explained, and that the membership as Local Authorities was 1/3 lay members and 2/3 Councillors. It was expressed in terms of the recommendation regarding the procedure that the membership would come from amongst the Councils' Governance and Audit committees, and a request was made for expressions of interest from amongst the lay members. It was explained that the nominations needed to be a representation from amongst the region, with a balance of skills. The Monitoring Officer believed that this was the most pragmatic way of securing the membership.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the numbers for Audit Committees were 9 members, 6 elected members and 3 lay members and the procedure for this. It was explained that there would be a need to ask for nominations for the lay members and that a selection process would be needed via the Joint Committee, ensuring a cross-section and a balance.

7. SECONDMENT TO THE CJC CHIEF EXECUTIVE ROLE

The report was presented by Dafydd Gibbard (CJC Chief Executive).

DECISION

To appoint Alwen Williams as the CJC's part-time Chief Executive, on a temporary secondment basis, until the position is reviewed again by the CJC at the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

To delegate power to the Chief Executive of Cyngor Gwynedd to confirm formal arrangements for the secondment.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that this item had been discussed back in July, when it was agreed to make a request to the Ambition Board to release Alwen Williams to be a part-time Chief Executive until the end of the financial year. It was explained that the item had been discussed at the Ambition Board last week and had supported the request to second her on a part-time basis and her time had been released for two days a week.

It was explained that this report confirmed the appointment of Alwen Williams and explained that a paper about the post to the future would be submitted to the Joint Committee soon.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted in terms of the wording of the decision that it needed to be adapted to note that the post was being reviewed before the end of the financial year since the original wording suggested that no discussion would be held until the end of March 2023.
- It was asked why there was a need to delegate powers to the Cyngor Gwynedd Chief Executive to confirm the formal arrangements for the secondment, surely the decision on the secondment should return to the Joint Committee. It was explained that the Human Resources element only was being done in order to secure employment, since Cyngor Gwynedd as the lead body was the legal employer. It was emphasised that the Chief Executive only authorised the administrative element of employment, to confirm that Alwen Williams was being appointed, and it did not commit the Joint Committee beyond March 2023.
- It was expressed that this decision attempted to identify a solution to the problem and that it was a pragmatic answer to be able to move on and commence the work.

The meeting commenced at 12.00pm and concluded at 12:35pm.