

Committee: **Governance and Audit Committee**
 Date of meeting: **17th January 2024**
 Report Subject: **Audit Wales: Corporate Joint Committees – commentary on their progress**
 Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Steve Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member Corporate Overview and Performance**
 Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Interim Chief Executive**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance and Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
		06.01.24	17.01.24					

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Governance and Audit Committee with the Audit Wales Report, ‘*Corporate Joint Committees – commentary on their progress*’ (Appendix 1).

2. Scope and Background

2.1 Audit Wales published their report, ‘*Corporate Joint Committees – commentary on their progress*’ in November 2023.

2.2 The Audit Wales report focusses on the four Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs):

- South-East Wales CJC
- South-West Wales CJC
- North Wales CJC
- Mid Wales CJC

2.3 The Audit General for Wales looked at their progress in developing their arrangements to meet their statutory obligations and the Welsh Government’s aim of strengthening regional collaboration. Initial work was undertaken in Autumn 2022 and then further work between April and June 2023 to update the findings.

2.4 The report identified 5 recommendations for CJCs to implement:

Governance arrangements

R1 The four CJCs should ensure that their governance arrangements are up and running and are effectively providing the necessary checks and balances to support robust and transparent decision-making and effective scrutiny.

Strategic development planning and regional transport planning

R2 The four CJCs should ensure that they take action to further progress with these functions over the next 12 months in order to facilitate an

integrated, efficient and consistent approach to strategic planning in line with Welsh Government's aims.

Public sector duties

R3 The CJsCs need to ensure that they meet their public sector duties where they haven't already done so. For example, to publish child poverty action plans and biodiversity reports. But more significantly, the CJsCs need to ensure they actively take account of these duties in their decision-making and activities.

Partnership working and National Park Authorities

R4 Whilst South West Wales CJC has co-opted different organisations and the NPAs into its arrangements, the other CJsCs need to determine more fully how they can engage and work with other bodies to make the most of resources and expertise. This includes exploring how they can maximise the involvement of the NPAs beyond their statutory strategic development planning role.

Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015

R5 North Wales and Mid Wales CJsCs should ensure that they progress with developing their well-being objectives in line with requirements. More broadly, the four CJsCs should ensure they effectively apply the sustainable development principle, so they are well placed to improve the well-being of the populations they serve and can demonstrate that they have proper value for money arrangements.

Options for Recommendation

- 3.1 Governance and Audit Committee note the content of the Audit Wales Report, '*Corporate Joint Committees – commentary on their progress*' and receive any future reports from Audit Wales on the progress of the CJsCs.

4. Monitoring Arrangements

- 4.1 The progress of the CJsCs will be monitored by Audit Wales.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Audit Wales Report – 'Corporate Joint Committees – commentary on their progress'