



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

### **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Virtual meeting of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 7 December 2023 at 10.00 am.

This meeting was recorded, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

### **County Borough Councillors – Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members were present:-**

Councillor A Whitcombe (Caerphilly CBC) (Chair)	
Councillor R Bevan	Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
Councillor P Davies	Bridgend CBC
Councillor S Garratt	Monmouthshire CC
Councillor P Hourahine	Newport CBC
Councillor D Isaac	Merthyr Tydfil CBC
Councillor N Yeowell	Torfaen CBC
Councillor J Turner	Rhondda Cynon Taf Council
Councillor Lloyd-Selby	Vale of Glamorgan
Councillor L Dymock	Monmouthshire CC
Councillor S Griffiths	Bridgend CBC
Councillor O Jones	Cardiff Council
Councillor D Williams	Torfaen Council
Councillor R Leadbetter	Blaenau Gwent CBC
Councillor I Perry	Vale of Glamorgan Council

### **Officers in attendance**

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication  
Ms K Beirne, Director Cardiff Capital Region City Deal  
Mr C Maheffey Head of Data and Innovation Cardiff Capital Region City Deal  
Ms J La Grua Monitoring Officer Cardiff Capital Region City Deal  
Mr T Williams Cluster Development Manager Cardiff Capital Region City Deal  
Ms S Daniel, Principal Democratic Services Officer

### **Other Members in Attendance**

Councillor A Morgan – Cabinet Member CCRCD  
Councillor H David – Cabinet Member and Chair of Regional Transport Authority

### **Apologies for absence**

Councillor M Cross    Blaenau Gwent CBC  
Councillor P Wong    Cardiff Council

## **9 Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from:  
Cllr P Wong – Cardiff Council  
Cllr M Cross – Blaenau Gwent

**10      Declarations of Interest**

None

**11      Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 27 July as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**12      INVESTMENT ZONES & BUILDING REGIONAL CAPACITY FOR INNOVATION INVESTMENT**

The Director Cardiff Capital Region City Deal presented the report to Members of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CCRCD JOS) with the opportunity to review the work completed to date in response to UK Government Investment Zone policy

Following conclusion of the presentation the chairperson invited questions from Members

In response to a question on timescales of the project and investment in skills the Director commented that investment in skills and talent is high on the agenda for the region, particularly in relation to the venture graduate programmes and with micro-credentials becoming increasingly important.

In terms of timescales, certain processes from Welsh and UK Government need to be followed to ensure the right areas are targeted including the Northern valleys and not just the M4 corridor areas.

A Member commented that Welsh Government Apprenticeship funding will be reduced in future years and asked how this will impact skills development. The Director responded that she is hopeful that the Investment Zone will be able to bridge some of the gap as workplace apprenticeships are very popular allowing young people to earn and learn at the same time. Plans are in development to shape around this initiative.

A Member asked how we present this to the communities throughout South Wales that this is a 10 Local Authority approach to benefit the the whole of the South East Region and change the perception that money is “being sent to Cardiff”

The Director replied that as the process develops we will define the areas of benefit and share as widely as we can and align with the launch of projects such as Northern valleys fund a 50m commitment made by the Regional Cabinet which will hopefully bring more private sector investment in to the area. We will need to ensure that we use the investment zones and incentives to drive benefit into those areas.

The Cabinet Member for the CCRCD and Chair of the Transport Authority added that they will be ensuring that the message gets across to people that the CCRCD is supporting each and every Local Authority area and ensuring that residents understand the projects and how they benefit their communities in a direct way to ensure the investment zone benefits the whole region.

A Member recommended the CCRCD look to increase the collaboration with Higher Education and Further Education sectors to provide improved support to

upskill our graduates but also non-academics with different skillsets, as there are many with huge interest in technology who are willing to learn and develop their skills outside of the university setting. The Member gave the example of gaming which is a burgeoning industry with many young people interested in this field who are not necessarily graduates. He encouraged the CCRCD to look included non-graduate institutions to the plans. Another Member added that the focus should be on building a future workforce and ensuring we do not leave less qualified people behind.

The Director CCRCD commented that there is specific targeted support provided through Prosperity funding which is short intensive training to get students certified to demonstrate that they can do the work which has been a huge success across the region. She also commented that throughout the process they have found that a lot of graduates are leaving South East Wales, in search of graduate roles, she continued that the focus is to keep them here in the region and placing them in small to medium firms who wouldn't previously have considered recruiting a graduate and with developments such as Investment Zones, this will support that drive to build a future workforce.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Review positioning paper (Item 8) presented to Regional Cabinet on 9 October 2023, attached at Appendix B.
2. Review the agreed position taken at Regional Cabinet on 9 October 2023.
3. Consider most recent updates presented to the Regional Cabinet briefing for discussion on attached at Appendix C.
4. Consider and determine any other matters that members may wish to scrutinise over the period from the initial Spring Budget announcement that an at least one Investment Zone would be located in Wales.
5. Bring forward a future item in relation to Skills and Development across the Region.

### **13 SOUTH EAST WALES CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE: REGIONAL TRANSPORT PLAN & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Head of Data and Digital Innovation presented the report to Members with the opportunity for them to review the work completed to date on the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) and Strategic Development Plan (SDP), per the Regional Cabinet report of 9 October 2023

A Member commented that there should be a bigger focus on bus strategies if we are to achieve our long term goals for low carbon sustainable transport system. He added that impact assessments should be undertaken on their usage throughout the whole of the region– particularly in valley and more rural areas where public transport by bus is the only option to get people into their places of work. The Member commented that there needs to be a rebalance of investment from Capital investment into the operational costs

The Director CCRCD replied that the challenge in this area is funding around the transport plan which is often ring-fenced for certain projects and that support is prioritised first and foremost for promotion of walking and cycling options. She explained that the Regional Transport Authority is exploring the options and costs of franchising but there are no easy solutions with challenges such as the operating environment, the cost of living crisis and current interest rates. She

concluded that as a Region we need to focus on what the priorities are in supporting the wider economy such as Transport Planning fitting in with our economic objectives and lobby these with Welsh and UK Government.

A Member stated that it is important that this is prioritised as the public can see the other investments in capital projects. The Member added that it is also important that the constraints are effectively communicated to the public around the bus transport as there are lots of frustrations around this area.

A Member stated that in many of valley and out of town areas, people are struggling to find adequate parking close to transport links with cars left around residential streets near train stations etc. The Member asked if this could link to active travel plans where rental bike / sharing schemes, park and ride

The Director CCRCD advised that the majority of the Metro Plus locations have a park and ride component with the potential to adapt this to create park and cycle options. She added that a car sharing club linked to Electric Vehicles will also be developed soon as there is clear demand for it and a requirement to respond to the Climate Change emergency. She highlighted that this will prove to be more challenging in more rural locations however.

The Leader of Bridgend Council and Cabinet Member stated that as well as the immediate challenges in the bus industry around revenue support across wales, we also have the challenge of responding the climate change emergency and to decarbonise the fleet which requires significant capital expenditure. He advised that whilst there is technology on the market to power vehicles in a different way, it is very expensive and sometimes impractical in some of our rural / valleys communities. The Director CCRCD added that the Regional Transport Plan will also have to address the road user charging and how this can leverage future funding opportunities in this area. Another Member commented that we should be considering learning from other Regional Transport Plans when developing our own and consider what lessons can be learned from these and how they could be integrated into our own plan.

Following consideration of the item it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Review the paper presented to South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEWCJC) on 9 October 2023, attached at Appendix A.
2. Review the agreed position taken at SEWCJC on 9 October 2023.
3. Consider and determine any other matters that members may wish to scrutinise over the coming period.
4. To bring an item forward for future scrutiny consideration on Active Travel Plans including the Car Sharing Club initiative

## 14 Urgent Items

None

**Councillor A Whitcombe**

**Chair.**