

# Achieving regional integration in South West Wales

Transport Planning Society  
Bursary Competition 2025

December 2025



**TransportPlanningSociety**

## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Transport Planning Society for the opportunity to present this research, and to Mott MacDonald for supporting the time commitment. I gratefully acknowledge the thoughtful mentorship provided by Graham James. I would like to thank all those who participated in this research for their openness, insights and suggestions for the path ahead. Diolch yn fawr.

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## Disclaimer

All views in this report are the authors own and do not reflect those of Mott MacDonald.

Word count – 4997 (Excluding Executive Summary and Figure 1.1 - 1.2)

## Abbreviations

**CJC** – Corporate Joint Committee

**RTP** – Regional Transport Plan

**SDP** – Strategic Development Plan

**SWTRA** – South Wales Trunk Road Agent

**SWW CJC** – South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee

**TAN 18** – Technical Advisory Note 18 (Transport)

**TfW** – Transport for Wales

**WG** – Welsh Government

**WLGA** – Welsh Local Government Association

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# Executive Summary

Wales has established **Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs)** with a remit for regional transport planning, strategic planning and economic development. This model could enable a more 'vision-led' approach, but regional entities are often fragile.

This research includes a case study of **South West Wales CJC** (SWW CJC). A document review was complemented by semi-structured interviews. Key findings to the research questions are:

How are transport planning decisions made in SWW CJC and to what extent have lessons been learned from previous governance models?

- CJCs are seen as a **logical, but fragile** arrangement. Whilst some lessons have been learned, **culture change** is needed to build trust and clarity between all parties

To what extent will the emerging model in SWW CJC reflect a 'vision-led' approach to transport planning?

- A vision-led approach is possible for SWW CJC, but this requires **deeper integration** and **investment** to achieve a bold vision

What are the emerging opportunities and risks for regional integration in SWW CJC?

- The outlook for CJCs is multi-faceted and their evolution likely to be **iterative**. Visioning can help to build **momentum** and weather uncertainties

The following are key recommendations:

## Build trust and add clarity



- Explore a Memorandum of Understanding to agree the basis for regional working

## Develop strategic capacity



- Recruit regional officers in SWW CJC, explore secondments and leverage TfW to strengthen in-house expertise
- Consider a Burns Commission style arrangement to maximise Metro and Freeport development

## Strive for integrated plan-making



- Coordinate a strategic, rather than sequential approach to maximise impact
- Use the period 2025-2030 for fresh thinking and pilot schemes for vision-led developments
- Upskill and develop leadership in systems thinking across all organisations

## Advocate for a bold vision



- Build widespread consensus for a vision which challenges constraints (e.g. to 2050)
- Continued investment and national leadership from Welsh Government / TfW

Integration requires more than structural reform. **Leadership, culture change, investment and resilience** are essential.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Context

Wales is undergoing a significant process of regional integration. Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) have been established with a statutory remit including:

Figure 1.1



CJCs are proposed to better coordinate priorities, realise efficiencies and give greater say to regional partners. For transport practitioners, the regional scale has significance, often more closely aligning with functional travel areas than local authority boundaries.

Through Regional Transport Plans (RTPs), CJCs develop the policies and projects that will implement the overarching priorities of Llwybr Newydd<sup>1</sup>. From 2026, a Regional Transport Fund will consolidate several national funding streams into a single source, with CJCs rather than Welsh Government (WG) deciding how funding is allocated. In theory, CJCs have the remit to realise a more 'vision-led' approach.

However, regional entities have been described as 'soft spaces' (Heley, 2012); inherently fragile and lacking the public understanding deeply embedded in local authorities. Such fragility was exemplified in 2015, when Wales' previous Regional Transport Consortia, labelled an "additional layer of bureaucracy" by the then Minister, were abolished in favour of a local authority-based model (Wales Online, 2014).

Overcoming these fragilities and achieving regional integration is said to require time, resources and supportive working cultures (Fischer et al, 2013). Barriers include persistent siloes, political uncertainty and a tension between coordination or autonomy.

This research explores how these factors are shaping the efficacy of CJCs as an emerging model of integration. The Welsh experience offers comparative insights for devolution occurring elsewhere in the UK and broader debates about at which scale outcomes are best achieved.

<sup>1</sup> Wales Transport Strategy (2021)

**Figure 1.2**

## 1.2 Study area

The South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SWW CJC) was chosen as a case study. Transport issues vary across the region, from urban Swansea to rural areas of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. Considerations include the extent of collaboration between partners and the coherence of a transport, spatial and economic vision across a diverse region.

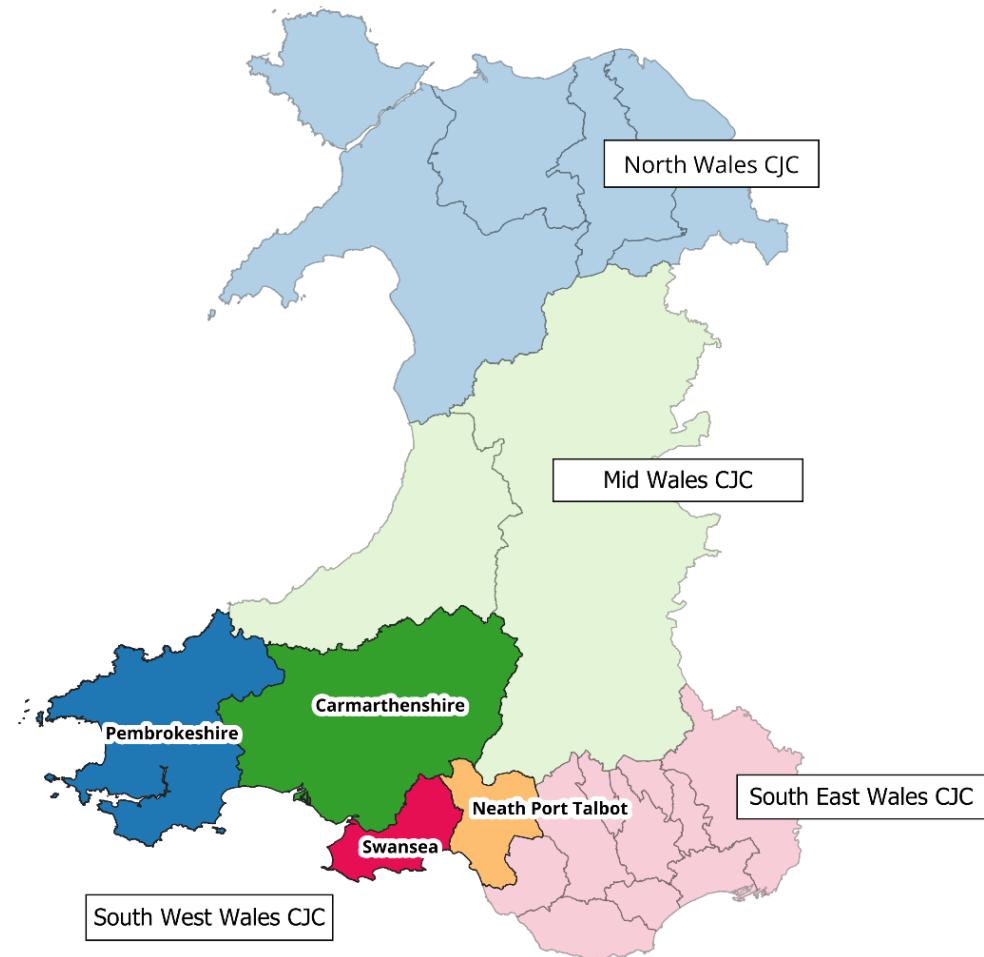
Figure 1.2 shows the local authorities in SWW CJC and broader makeup of CJC in Wales.

## 1.3 Research questions

During a fluid period of change, this research aims to provide helpful insights on progress and practical improvements moving forward for all partners (e.g. CJCcs, WG, TfW).

The research questions are:

- How are transport planning decisions made in SWW CJC and to what extent have lessons been learned from previous governance models? (**Chapter 4**)
- To what extent will the emerging model in SWW CJC reflect a ‘vision-led’ approach to transport planning? (**Chapter 5**)
- What are the emerging opportunities and risks for regional integration in SWW CJC? (**Chapter 6**)



Source: Author, 2025

## 2 Literature review

Lines of enquiry arising from the general and specific (Welsh) literature are as follows.

### 2.1 General

Transport policymaking is becoming more complex, with intermediate bodies between local and central government raising questions about the extent to which policies align or diverge (Mackinnon & Vigor, 2008). These questions also apply to CJs and their intended purpose.

Strategic planning requires an ambitious, place-based vision which acts as a golden thread for policymakers and practitioners (CIHT, 2019). The extent to which CJs are achieving such strategic and multi-disciplinary working requires investigation.

### 2.2 Specific

Wales has oscillated between local and regional governance, with Stafford (2023) identifying challenges encountered by the former Regional Transport Consortia:

- A lack of transparency and public image
- A desire to reach consensus hampering strategic efficacy
- Inadequate resourcing to meet expectations

CJs are viewed as a more coherent and democratic mechanism than previous arrangements (OECD, 2024). Nevertheless, these historic challenges remain pertinent, along with questions regarding:

- The appetite of national, regional and local actors to evolve CJs beyond an initially loose set of regulations
- The capacity to act regionally when subject to local electoral accountability

The evolution of CJs is anticipated to be circular and iterative rather than linear. Recommendations from the Hunt / Medi Group (2025) which will be explored in this research include:

- Better sharing of skills and joined up working
- Aligning national and regional plans
- Better informing people about CJs

## 3 Methodology

This section outlines the mixed-method approach undertaken.

### 3.1 Policy and document review

Key policy, guidance, minutes and other documents were reviewed from the CJC, Welsh Government and others. Documents are listed in Appendix A.

### 3.2 Interviews

Fourteen semi-structured interviews were completed with various local, regional and national actors. This included practitioner, political and third sector perspectives. The interview guide, consent form and list of interviewees can be found in Appendix B.

### 3.3 Analysis

A reflexive thematic analysis was undertaken, based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) methodology. The stages of analysis are shown in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1**

Deductive coding framework generated from literature review

Initial codes used to systematically analyse document excerpts and interview transcripts in MS Excel

Coding framework refined based on data insights. All data re-analysed

Codes grouped into broader themes

The themes arising from the one-page summaries in the following analysis chapters.

MS CoPilot was used as a complementary means of review and gap analysis, with all coding and ascription completed by the author.

The coding framework can be found in Appendix C.

### 3.4 Risks

A case study approach limits the applicability of insights to other CJs, particularly as there appears to be significant variation in their setup and relationships between actors.

The nascent status of CJs and ongoing development of RTPs at the time of writing posed two key risks:

- The answers to the research questions being not yet fully apparent
- A lack of openness and/or partial perspectives provided by interviewees

These were mitigated through triangulation with the document review and anonymisation of interviewees. Perspectives from transport operators and the wider public would benefit future research.

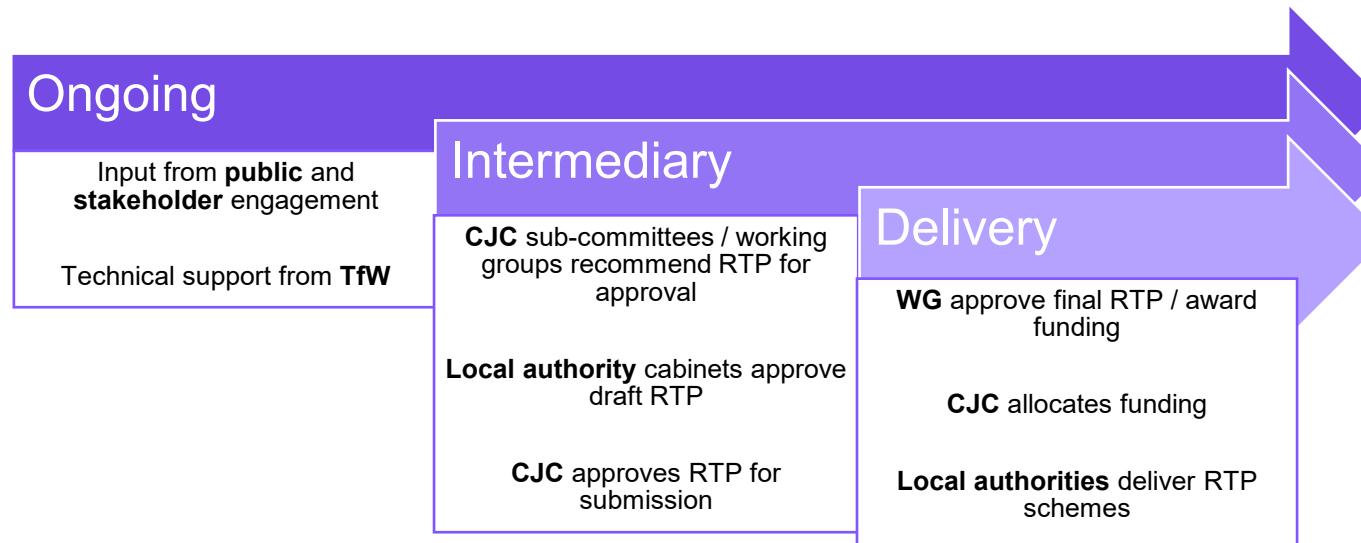


## 4 Governance

Figure 4.1 summarises the decision-making process for the RTP.

The following summaries cover how far lessons have been learned from previous arrangements.

**Figure 4.1**



## Added value of CJsCs

A statutory remit and democratic governance give CJsCs greater authority to address regional issues. Practitioners recognise the efficiencies of integrating at scale, such as sharing modelling expertise and pan-regional programmes. Funding reform signals more collaborative than competitive practices.

The role of TfW is a clear improvement from previous arrangements, an in-house resource which CJsCs can utilise for strategic insight and peer review.

### Documents

WG / TfW regional teams shall “strongly support the CJsCs to develop and deliver their Regional Transport Plans, such as through co-ordinating regional advice to the CJC from the TfW Analytical Unit”

(Welsh Government, 2023)

“ULEV developments and the influencing travel behaviour programme present opportunities for a regional approach (...) achieving economies of scale”

(RTP, 2025, p.88)

### Interviews

“The biggest point across all of this is where are the opportunities for doing things better on the regional scale. It's not about just doing it for the sake of it”

(Welsh Govt. official)

“The difference this time with regional government is it's got teeth”

“Neighbours (were) competing for the same pot of money. That drove certain behaviours, you could have a bus service that stopped at the border of a local authority because the next one wasn't going to pay for it” (Consultant)

“Our hope is we can set national standards, standardise the way that transport is delivered or standardised the way it looks (...) how it gets implemented is something for the region to grapple with” (TfW officer)

## Outlook

Periodic review of where there are sustainable opportunities to work regionally will help to retain buy-in for CJsCs. If inadequately funded, regional programmes risk diluting rather than adding value. To realise further efficiency, WG / TfW regional teams should facilitate more standardised practice and learning between all four CJsCs.

## Practitioner adaptation challenges

Practitioners are apprehensive about the risk of duplication in an already crowded field and whether a consolidated funding stream would reduce workload. Changing soundings from Welsh Government on funding have accentuated adaptation challenges.

### Documents

*"It would not be unreasonable for WG to allow the CJs to establish themselves over the next ten months and then focus on the RTP once governance structures mature, realistic budgets set and there is a clear indication of what level of funding is available."*

*"This is exactly what happened with the last RTP, where all regions were required to develop an ambitious programme, but WG then limited the funding available for delivery"*

**(SWW CJC, 2023)**

### Interviews

*"Very localised planning has took the focus for the last 10 years (...) it's a massive change in mindset again (for officers) who have worked in a very tight framework"*

*"The real challenge is that the budget is just not what was expected or communicated by officials (...) that's what's got the politicians backs up" (Consultant)*

*"There's going to be less being done on the ground because we're going to be spending more time just doing paperwork and sitting in meetings discussing about what we should spend our money on" (Local authority officer)*

## Outlook

Ambitious transport policy goals require change to working cultures. Cross sector training in systems thinking, possibly via WLGA, could equip practitioners for regional collaboration. CJs should strengthen leadership capability in long-term funding strategy, aiding resilience beyond government funding cycles.

Notwithstanding an uncertain fiscal climate, Welsh Government communication could help CJs to better balance ambition with deliverability. Clarifying the extent of information required for Regional Transport Fund applications is a quick win.

More extensive funding reform could follow integrated settlements for English combined authorities.

## Autonomy or alignment for CJC<sub>s</sub>?

An ongoing uncertainty is the balance between CJC<sub>s</sub> being a mechanism to align priorities versus providing flexibility to tailor approaches. A discernible change in tone from politicians towards the latter contrasts with practitioner perceptions of more prescribed guidance. There are tensions relating to Welsh Government / TfW being both a critical friend and financial controller.

### Documents

*"When it comes to transport (...) what's important is that we recognise that now there is a need to work on a regional basis and that the priorities set, going forward, need to be those that are agreed by the CJC<sub>s</sub>"*

**(Eluned Morgan MS, 2025)**

*"The top down approach of the guidance with CJC<sub>s</sub> and Councils expected to deliver the priorities in the NTDP and WTS does not allow the freedom to influence the RTP with the priorities and needs of the region" (SWW CJC, 2023)*

*"Future Wales does not seek to take decisions that are most appropriately taken at the regional or local level. It has policies on issues where the Welsh Government considers them a national priority" (Future Wales, 2021, p.15)*

### Interviews

*"It doesn't as yet feel like the new model is reducing bureaucracy, which is what the Minister wants it to do (...) at the moment there's reluctance to let go and fully devolve the powers" (Local authority officer)*

*"It's been felt at a local authority level that perhaps TfW have taken away from the funding that would have otherwise been allocated to local authorities" (Regional officer)*

*"Their only lever is a financial one (...) they (WG / TfW) cannot mandate what we do on our highway" (Local authority officer)*

## Outlook

A Memorandum of Understanding to agree the basis for regional working could satisfy Welsh Government that its strong direction for transport is being advanced whilst respecting subsidiarity for CJC<sub>s</sub>.

The scale of transformation required in the region cannot be achieved without significant leadership from Welsh Government and TfW, however. Whether through a Burns Commission style arrangement or other, clarity is needed on a form of partnership and funding which works for all.

## CJCs strategic efficacy

Practitioners are satisfied at reaching agreement for a RTP which balances the needs of a disparate region. A TfW matrix and informal ‘horse-trading’ were integral to prioritisation. The current lack of dedicated regional officers and a pre-eminent CJC structure is a concern both for generating momentum and the region’s ability to take strategic decisions.

### Interviews

*“The first (prioritised) scheme for Pembrokeshire was about #45 in the list and wouldn’t get funded until year three. So clearly they’re not going to say yes to that”*

*“You need to do some sort of weighting and jiggling about just to come up with something which is sort of realistic” (Local authority officer)*

*“There needs to be a critical mass that enables local authorities to be able to think and act strategically (...) (SWW) doesn’t have the political or economic maturity to take that strategic view and so then it just becomes a bunfight for resources.”*

*“You end up just giving everybody some crossing upgrades or a roundabout rather than taking a view of what piece of infrastructure would make a difference” (Politician)*

*“It’s going to be this kind of (...) round table discussion, but there’s no key person in that meeting who can make that decision”*

*“It’s felt like a bit of a bun fight (...) there is that kind of criticism from going back to political if we don’t argue for enough money for our council”*

*(Local authority officer)*

*“We’ve got probably the right geography, but the old process” (Academic)*

### Outlook

Ongoing recruitment of regional officers will strengthen SWW CJCs strategic ability, including managing under / overspend in local authorities tasked with delivering the RTP. CJCs should monitor the strategic impact of RTP interventions, such as on regional movements.

Clarifying whether SWW CJC is to become the principal decision-making body (similar to Cardiff Capital Region) would add transparency and address concerns that it is a “rubber stamp” for decision-making.

## 4.1 Discussion

CJCs are seen as a logical, but fragile solution to delivering at scale and with consistency.

### **Evidence of learning from previous arrangements include:**

- A statutory remit, stronger set of powers and democratic governance
- Intent to reduce administrative burdens and realise efficiencies
- A greater focus on pan-regional programmes in the RTP
- TfW's role as a centre of excellence at the CJCs disposal

### **The following echo with previous concerns, however:**

- Scepticism of the added value of more collaboration and impact on the ground
- The extent of autonomy from WG / TfW to tailor approaches
- Communication from Welsh Government around likely funding
- Transparency as to whether the CJC is a “rubber stamp” or pre-eminent
- Consequently, a “bunfight” for resources risking a strategic approach to decision-making

Transitioning to regional working requires greater trust and clarity between all parties. SWW CJC has achieved several internal milestones in a short period and must now face outwards as a maturing and strategic body.



## 5 Vision-led planning

A vision-led approach starts with the outcomes desired and the actions, working backwards, to achieve them.

The following summaries cover the extent of vision-led planning in SWW CJC.

## Developing a vision

The RTP sets out a vision firmly grounded in Llwybr Newydd's desired outcomes. The South West Wales Metro and Celtic Freeport could anchor transport within an integrated spatial and economic vision. TfW, as a single guiding mind, can help to translate alignment in principle into a tangible change in outcomes.

### Documents

*"A transport system that drives sustainable economic growth, supports the decarbonisation of the transport system, and ensures efficient, accessible mobility within and beyond the region for all" (RTP, 2025, p.48)*

*"Several major development sites require strategic transport interventions for success. While mitigation is standard, the region aims to go further" (RTP, 2025, p.61)*

*"Planning authorities should plan growth and regeneration to maximise the potential opportunities arising from better regional (Metro) connectivity" (Future Wales, 2021, p.157)*

*"A regional view of planning will help us better plan our communities that may be close to one another, but in different local authorities"*

*(Cllr Rob Stewart, 2022)*

*(TfW) "will support partners to think regionally, and to think multi-modally (...) Land-use and planning are critical to making modal shift work; we want to end the perverse practice of new developments being built without thought for how people will get there by public transport or active travel."*

*(Lee Waters MS, 2024)*

### Interviews

*"How do we maximise the opportunity of the Freeport (...) it would be criminal if we didn't do that" (Politician)*

## Outlook

SWW CJC should pilot a vision-led delivery approach for large-scale developments e.g. Coed Darcy. Close joint working with WG / TfW / SWTRA, similar to the Burns Commission, could maximise what is seen as undercooked potential in the Metro and Freeport. Updating TAN 18 is a quick win and could support this ahead of the SDP.

## Vision-led or business as usual?

Delivering the RTP to a tight deadline required the pragmatic use of existing information. Whilst insiders are satisfied of a rigorous approach, outsiders perceived the RTP as overly operational rather than visioning. Public consultation was significantly improved compared to the RTPs predecessor, but opportunities remain to embed fresh thinking and consensus amongst a wider audience.

### Documents

*“RTPs should be developed collaboratively, drawing on knowledge and experience of previous local and regional transport plans” (RTP guidance, 2023, p.10)*

### Interviews

*“We are going to need some pretty significant projects. And perhaps quite different projects to those that we've seen in the past”*

*(Welsh Govt. official)*

*“The problem in treating this as a grant mechanism is that you come up with a plan which meets a funding envelope rather than one that comes up with a plan which is a vision for getting you somewhere different”*

*(Politician)*

*“We need to move away from local authorities making decisions and doing them in a top-down way towards co-production” (Third sector)*

*“It's more like a list of things they want to do at a very granular level (...) It's a big local transport plan but it doesn't give the region something to kind of argue for in terms of the big project.”*

*(Academic)*

*“The RTP is fairly short term (...) with it being a five-year plan”*

*“There's a high expectation to deliver stuff, but without the resource or the money to do so (...) if we'd have been given a lot longer to produce the RTP, would we have a more meaningful output?”*

*(Regional officer)*

## Outlook

A longer horizon until the next RTP should be used for fresh thinking on the interventions required to meet stretching policy goals. An approach built from first principles and peer review, rather than existing prospects awaiting funding, should be adequately supported by Welsh Government / TfW.

Co-production could sustain buy-in for a vision which purposefully challenges current constraints, such as to 2050.

## Persistent siloes for vision-led planning

The Roads Review and Burns Commission provided templates to overcome siloed working, but daily practice in the region remains difficult to change. Misalignment with other plans and barriers to the flow of information between partners compromise early collaboration and integrated solutions.

### Documents

*"We DO want the Strategic Development Plans and the Regional Transport Plans to be developed together" (RTP guidance, p.1, 2023)*

*"Delivery and governance of transport capital schemes has historically largely been in modal silos"*

*"Identification and prioritisation of transport capital schemes should be based on a strategic, evidence-based analysis (...) This is best done at a regional scale by a multi-disciplinary team"*

*(Roads Review, p.31, 2023)*

### Interviews

*"We've ended up writing an RTP before an SDP, which is crazy" (Consultant)*

*"There's more emphasis on short term decision making than there would have been if the spatial plan was emerging at the same time." (Consultant)*

*"They're (SWTRA\*) a very, very difficult organisation to get any information from. They're very quiet" (Local authority officer)*

*"The share of information is limited at the moment. I think that they're (TfW) not willing to share too much with us. And likewise, I think we're hesitant to share too much with them" (Regional officer)*

## Outlook

A strategic, rather than sequential approach to plan-making would maximise impact. Re-orienting the CJs Transport Sub-Committee to focus on the SDP would aid site allocation and robust scenario planning for modal shift.

Open access dashboards could help to address daily barriers to information flow. However, longer term culture change is required to align priorities between CJs, TfW and SWTRA.

## 5.1 Discussion

SWW CJC has, in theory, been empowered to take a more vision-led approach.

### **Encouraging signs are:**

- Clear policy alignment with Llwybr Newydd and top-level outcomes
- Major developments such as the Celtic Freeport and South West Wales Metro which could underpin an integrated spatial and economic vision

### **Areas for improvement include:**

- Disrupting a sequential approach to plan-making, identifying opportunities for a strategic and multi-disciplinary approach
- Closer relationships with SWTRA and TfW to maximise major developments and ensure integrated solutions on the 'spines of the network'
- Co-production which builds the CJC's public image and generates momentum for an ambitious vision

Producing the first RTP alongside establishing a new organisation is widely seen as an achievement amidst ongoing pressures on local government. A longer lead-in to the next RTP (c.2030) provides bandwidth for first principles thinking and meaningful alignment with the SDP.

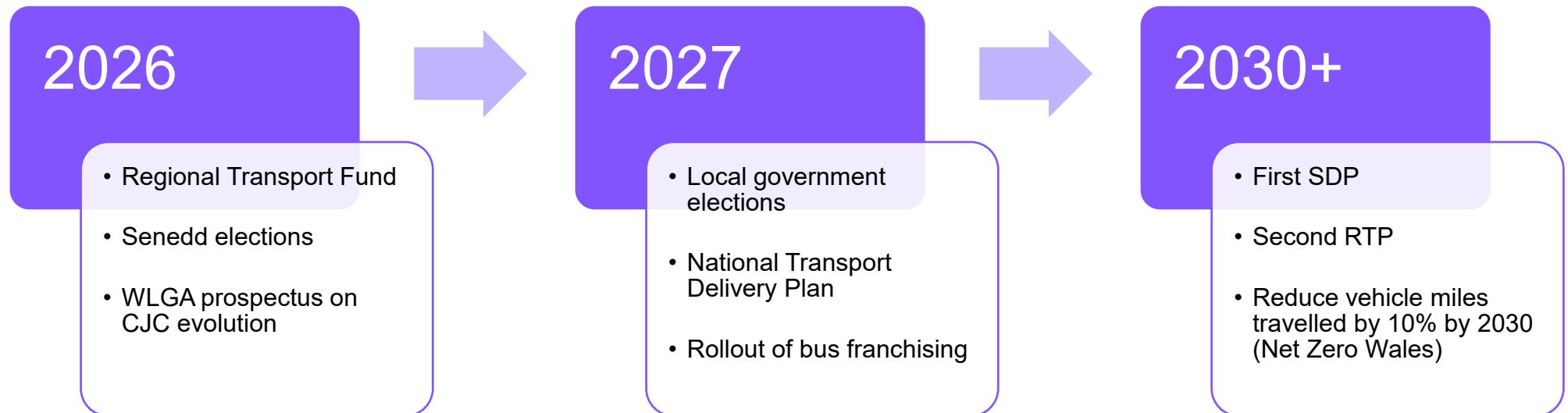


## 6 Risks and opportunities

Figure 6.1 provides a timeline of selected risks and opportunities for SWW CJC.

The following summaries cover the key risks and opportunities for integration.

**Figure 6.1**



## Embedding a regional approach

Buy-in for regional working is currently strongest at a senior political and practitioner level. Extending this to non-cabinet level councillors would build credibility and mitigate against disenfranchisement or more parochial needs detracting from a strategic approach. Low public awareness for CJC's is a parallel risk, particularly in delivering difficult changes to transport.

### Documents

*"We expect CJC's to use creative ways of reaching people whose behaviour we want to change to achieve modal shift." (RTP guidance, p.10, 2025)*

*"We can only achieve this transformation in the way we live by developing evidence, engaging widely and building consensus on how we want to deliver this in Wales"*  
**(Net Zero Wales, p.10, 2021)**

### Interviews

*"Sometimes we don't necessarily engage particularly well on what we're trying to do (...) or paint the picture to the public about what it is we're trying to achieve" (Regional officer)*

*"That's just an inevitable sort of byproduct of a democratic process where you have all the local authorities and their local leaders. They will obviously want to see things in their local authority" (WLGA officer)*

*"I've even heard it spoken of as, (from local authorities), we will do the bare minimum that is needed to cooperate through the CJC" (Third sector)*

*"Colleagues have had 10 years worth of ploughing their own furrow. They've come together because they've recognised the need to get over the line. And actually chief officers in the authorities have been very rigorous about policing that the parochialism has been left outside the door." (Consultant)*

## Outlook

An active marketing strategy is required to establish CJC's in the public consciousness. WLGA could support this through learning materials aimed at local elected members. Demonstrating quick wins is a common aspiration for CJC's, although this carries its own risks to longer-term strategy.

Renewed leadership from Welsh Government and TfW in shaping public debate would give CJC's confidence to address more difficult challenges.

## Uncertainty and constraints

Political and fiscal uncertainty risk destabilising the CJC's ability to meet expectations. The rollout of bus franchising and funding of major projects highlight the gap between policy ambition and operational reality. The capacity to think regionally and deliver transformational schemes is constrained by daily pressures on officers and budgets.

### Documents

*"A shortage of in-house transport planning expertise within local authorities risks undermining the delivery of RTPs (...) TfW's technical support and independent evaluations will be essential to ensuring alignment with national priorities" (Senedd Cymru, p.13, 2025)*

*"The Region has identified a small number of high-priority major projects where costs exceed £20 million, potentially posing challenges to delivering a comprehensive programme within the five-year RTP" (RTP, p.89, 2025)*

### Interviews

*"There are a few parties that are not entirely sold on the regional working approach and we have elections next year" (Politician)*

*"The implication on funding hasn't landed with people (...) we're not going to get anywhere near those net zero targets" (Academic)*

*"Very difficult to sell a (bus franchising) network, a new network to the public if there's no improvement" (Consultant)*

## Outlook

Bus franchising provides an opportunity for CJC's to better leverage the technical expertise of TfW, for highway authorities to lead on delivering the associated infrastructure improvements, and for Welsh Government to meet ambition with investment. Secondments could help upskill in-house expertise and assuage regional recruitment concerns.

A separate fund for 'transformational' projects would aid forward planning and reduce the risk of these projects being crowded out by more granular but no less essential local schemes. SWW CJC could mimic Cardiff Capital Region in actively leveraging non-government funding.

## Evolution and regional advocacy

Advocacy is widely seen as a weakness in the region. A perception of missing out on its share of funding exemplifies the need for a more compelling vision and savvier working in a competitive environment. Evolution of SWW CJC could include rationalisation with the Swansea Bay City Deal, strengthening its ability to draw investment.

### Documents

*"We see the evolution of CJC's building on what we've already achieved around our city deal"* (**Cllr Rob Stewart, 2022**)

*"The duty for producing the RTP rests with the CJC – it is essential the CJC take the lead, and not a Burn's Commission type arrangement."* (**SWW CJC, 2023**)

### Interviews

*"We've got a good level of technical work. The case now has to be made, the case now has to be advocated. To influence the rounds of UK government funding or private funding (...) that can come much more strongly from a collective CJC rather than individual local authorities"* (**Welsh Govt. official**)

*"The south west as a political voice is very weak, it just has not as a lobby group been able to mobilise"*

*"There wasn't the skill in place to deliver the (South Wales) Metro (...) it didn't start off with what skills do we have, what funding do we have. They created a vision, got buy-in for that and then worked out a plan of how they were going to deliver it"* (**Politician**)

*"That's the benefit of having a growth deal body like Ambition North Wales (...) you've actually got a physical body sat in an office employing staff. It feels very different."*

*"They need to walk the talk I suppose around integration and systems thinking and that's driven by leadership"* (**Consultant**)

## Outlook

Securing funding for an ambitious RTP requires a more streetwise CJC. Ongoing efforts to produce an overarching prospectus for the region should be expedited and aim to outlast political and economic cycles. A WLGA report on the outlook for CJC functions could provide a template for the SWW CJC to evolve as an institution.

## 6.1 Discussion

CJCs remain nascent and the outlook for integration is multi-faceted.

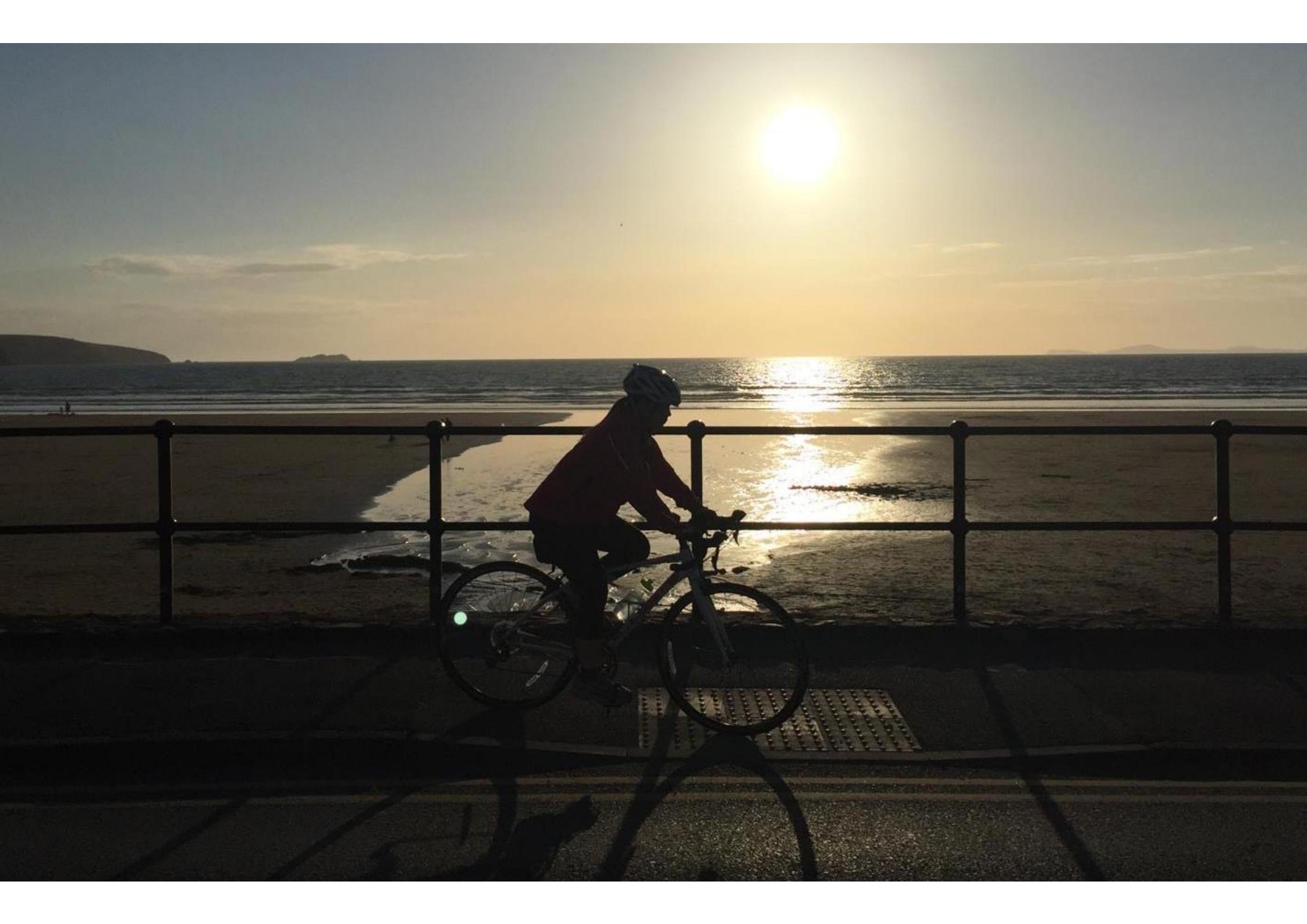
### **Risks on the horizon include:**

- Strains on initial goodwill for big picture thinking, particularly as the political mandate for CJCs is local rather than regional
- Daily constraints limiting both funding and visioning
- Interdependency on Welsh / UK Government for funding and infrastructure improvements not within the CJCs control

### **Broader opportunities include:**

- Establishing the CJC beyond key actors and in the public consciousness
- Building consensus around a bold vision for the region which outlasts cycles and challenges current constraints
- Evolving the CJC into a more mature body capable of leveraging funding and taking on more complex challenges

Achieving an optimal model of integration is accepted to be an iterative, not linear process. Leadership, resilience and savviness are key behaviours for SWW CJCs success.



## 7 Conclusion

This report explored the complexities of regional integration in Wales and the emerging efficacy of CJsCs.

Section 4.1, 5.1 and 6.1 provide concluding remarks to the research questions set in section 1.3. These are summarised as follows:

- CJsCs are seen as a **logical, but fragile** arrangement. Whilst some lessons have been learned, **culture change** is needed to build trust and clarity between all parties
- A vision-led approach is possible for SWW CJC, but this requires **deeper integration and investment** to achieve a bold vision
- The outlook for CJsCs is multi-faceted and their evolution likely to be **iterative**. Visioning can help to build **momentum** and weather uncertainties

Those interviewed recognised the achievement of producing a Regional Transport Plan alongside establishing a new organisation, particularly amidst substantial pressure on public resources. As OECD (2024) concludes, CJsCs must now be allowed the space to learn by doing.

### 7.1 Recommendations

Figure 7.1 outlines key recommendations.

#### Figure 7.1

##### Build trust and add clarity

- Explore a Memorandum of Understanding to agree the basis for regional working

##### Develop strategic capacity

- Recruit regional officers in SWW CJC, explore secondments and leverage TfW to strengthen in-house expertise
- Consider a Burns Commission style arrangement to maximise Metro and Freeport development

##### Strive for integrated plan-making

- Coordinate a strategic, rather than sequential approach to maximise impact
- Use the period 2025-2030 for fresh thinking and pilot schemes for vision-led developments
- Upskill and develop leadership in systems thinking across all organisations

##### Advocate for a bold vision

- Build widespread consensus for a vision which challenges constraints (e.g. to 2050)
- Continued investment and national leadership from Welsh Government / TfW

## 7.2 Wider implications

This research highlights that integration requires more than structural reform and is iterative rather than linear. Leadership, culture change, investment and resilience are essential.

A framework for collaboration, such as a CJC, is a first step towards deeper integration. Realising the full benefits requires:

- Clear roles and trust between partners, enabling them to leverage rather than duplicate each other's capabilities
- A bold vision which is agreed widely, integrating diverse perspectives and plans for different sectors
- Leadership and resilience which grows relationships and enables benefits to emerge in a period where instant results are increasingly expected

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## Appendix A – Document review

Type	Source
National (Welsh Government)	Llwybr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy (2021)
	National Transport Delivery Plan (2022)
	Well-being of Future Generations Report (2025)
	Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (2021)
	Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (2024)
	Regional Transport Plans - Guidance for Corporate Joint Committees (2023)
	Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 (2021-2025)
	The Future of Road Investment in Wales (2023)
	Remit for TfW 2.0 – Ministerial letter (2023)
Regional	South West Wales Regional Transport Plan (2025) – Includes associated appendices
	Joint Transport Plan for South West Wales (2015-2020)
	South West Wales Regional Economic Framework (2021)
	Meeting minutes from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWW CJC (Main committee)</li> <li>• SWW CJC Transport Sub-Committee</li> <li>• SWW CJC Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee</li> </ul>

# Appendix B – Interview materials

## B.1 Example interview guide

### Warm up

- Describe your current role and relationship with the CJC / RTP?

### Governance

- How are decisions made in SWW CJC? / Who sets the pace and priorities?
- To what extent will your role change with the shift to regional working?
- Where were the areas of agreement and/or tension in the RTP? / Is the CJC equipped to make potentially difficult decisions around funding?
- What lessons have been learned? / How far is it a different model to those before?
- Where does the balance lie between being empowered to tailor your approach versus delivering national policy?

### Visioning

- What are the key outcomes SWW CJC is trying to achieve?
- On a scale of 1-10, how differently will you be able to do planning and development? / Example schemes and projects
- How cohesive does the vision feel across the region?
- How achievable do national targets and outcomes feel on the ground?
- Specific questions on bus franchising, Metro, Celtic Freeport, new general hospital

### Risks and opportunities

- What are the key risks facing the region?
- Senedd elections in 2026 and interaction with local elected members
- How adequately resourced is the region to deliver the RTP? / Does it manage expectations?
- How will the CJC working culture evolve in the next 5-10 years? / What appetite is there for innovation?
- Where are improvements most needed?

### Close

- What would your advice be to others / other places looking at this model of integration?

## B.2 Consent form

### Consent form to participate in Transport Planning Society research

#### Name:

**Purpose of study:** The study explores the ongoing shift to regional transport planning and funding in Wales. Key areas of focus include the impact of these changes on decision-making, outcomes, and opportunities and risks going forward.

This consent form is being sent to you ahead of a short interview which will explore the research questions set out in the covering email. The study output is a short report, published in December 2025, which can be made available to you.

**My position:** I work as a Transport Planner for Mott MacDonald in Cardiff. I am originally from Llanelli and take a strong interest in improving the south west region's transport network.

**Terms of participation:** Please understand that at all times your participation is voluntary and that you are free to withdraw your consent at any time. The interview will be recorded and transcript analysed as part of answering the research questions (set out in covering email).

Where useful, quotes from the interview may be included in the final report. Your personal identity will be anonymised throughout the research, including only a generic role and organisation e.g. "Transport planner, Transport for Wales" / "Elected member, Pembrokeshire Council".

Please indicate (✓) whether you are happy for interview quotes to be used in the research, following the format above

Please indicate (✓) whether you would also like your role and organisation to be anonymised in any quotes

Please indicate below if you give consent to participating in this study.

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Signature of participant

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Date

### B.3 List of interviews

Ref.	Interviewee	Date
1	Welsh Government official	02/10/25
2	Local authority officer	03/10/25
3	Private consultant	08/10/25
4	Academic	09/10/25
5	Regional officer	10/10/25
6	Local authority officer	14/10/25
7	Politician	17/10/25
8	Private consultant	20/10/25
9	Third sector representative	20/10/25
10	Local authority officer	03/11/25
11	Local authority senior official	06/11/25
12	Politician	06/11/25
13	WLGA representative	07/11/25
14	TfW representative	14/11/25

## Appendix C – Coding framework

### Initial codes

Setup and decision making	Ref
Roles and responsibilities	A1
Transparency and accountability	A2
Collaboration and prioritisation	A3
Capacity, efficiency, added value	A4
Legacy and learning	A5

Vision and outcomes	Ref
Strategic alignment (spatial)	B1
Strategic alignment (economic)	B2
Regional cohesion and urban bias	B3
Modal shift, decarbonisation and integration	B4
Data and foresight	B5
Flexibility vs. National agenda	B6
Short termism vs. long term, strategic thinking	B7

Risks, opportunities and outlook	Ref
Regional friction and wicked problems	C1
Political cycle and uncertainty	C2
Public image/support/understanding	C3
Deliverability (Funding constraints and levers)	C4
Evolution and monitoring	C5

**Refined codes**

Setup and decision making	Ref
Roles and expectations (WG, CJC, LA)	A1
WG guidance and soundings vs. reality	A2
Decision making and accountability	A3
Collaboration and prioritisation	A4
Efficiency and added value	A5
Legacies and learning	A6
Leveraging and managing funding	A7
New ways of working and adaptation challenges	A8
Role of and resistance to TfW	A9
Lack of CJC leadership	A10
Autonomy and flexibility	A11

Risks, opportunities and outlook	Ref
Parochialism vs. Regional thinking	C1
Political cycle and uncertainty	C2
Public engagement and understanding	C3
Funding volatility	C4
Major schemes and third-party interdependency	C5
CJC evolution and maturity	C6
Outcomes and demonstrating value	C7
Visioning and advocacy	C8
Monitoring	C9
Resource constraints (skills, people, administrative burden)	C10
Satisfaction with progress	C11

Vision and outcomes	Ref
Spatial vision and alignment	B1
Economic vision and alignment	B2
Regional cohesion and urban versus rural needs	B3
Modal shift and decarbonisation	B4
Persistent siloes, business as usual and short term thinking	B5
Data and foresight	B6
National policy alignment	B7
Long-term and strategic thinking	B8
Misalignment of plan timelines	B9
Metro and integrated transport planning	B10
Bus franchising emerging lessons	B11