



City and County of Swansea

Notes of the **Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Regional Working**

Committee Room 4, Guildhall, Swansea - Guildhall

Monday, 30 October 2017 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)
C A Holley

Councillor(s)
B J Rowlands

Councillor(s)
T M White

Officer(s)
Michelle Roberts

Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): J A Hale and M H Jones

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.
None

2 Notes from previous meeting on 2 October 2017
The notes from the previous meeting were received.

3 Regional Working: The Financial Picture
Geoff Dong, Chief Treasury and Technical Officer attend to present the report and answer questions. The following points covering the financial aspects of the three larger partnerships and the smaller examples of regional working across the Council were discussed:

City Deal

- The City Deal is in the development stages of practical formation and detailed agreement even though the head of agreement has not yet been signed between Government and the local partners. So there is not a level of detail yet to confirm and clarify the final position for Swansea individually. There is a Joint Working Agreement Panel and Swansea's financial representative is the Section 151 Officer. There is no formal agreement currently but recent good progress had been made and it is anticipated all local partner councils will take reports to their respective Cabinets in November.
- The overall financial position as it stands currently is detailed in the [report](#) however the exact amount has not yet been confirmed. At the moment the only cash contribution Swansea makes is an annual payment of £50,000 and seven other authorities have agreed to make identical payments. For each project that this put forward a full business will need to be made. The panel recognise that over and above this the senior officer and member time is also significant.

- The panel recognise the difficulty in giving a definitive timescale in the context that the drawdown time for capital is over 50 years.

Western Bay

- Western Bay is currently a partnership between Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and the ABMU Health Board. The primary purpose is to provide a strategic mechanism for co-ordinating a programme of change through a number of projects that have been identified as of common concern.
- Swansea's contribution currently is £223,000 per annum for administration of the project. The total cost of administration is £1.5m. Although Swansea bears this cost, the funding has ultimately been provided by Welsh Government.
- For Adoptions, Swansea leads on this service and each of the three local authorities contribute £949,000 each.
- For Youth Offending Service Swansea's core element is £743,500, with grant also being received for £791,600, so the total spend for Swansea is £1.535m
- These are classed as spend on services rather than on Western Bay. There are further services benefitting from Western Bay Partnership. *The Panel agreed to look into Western Bay projects in much more depth when they speak to the Chief Social Services Officer in January including getting a breakdown of the spend mentioned.*

Education Through Regional Working (ERW)

- ERW is a partnership of 6 local authorities: Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Powys, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire Councils.
- For 2016/17 the total spend of the group came to £68.3m, £68.1 of which was grant funded (mainly be Welsh Government. Of the £68.5 spend £68.3 was passported directly to individual authorities.
- In 2016/17 Swansea received £17.9m, and this includes the Pupil Deprivation Grant. In addition to this each authority is required to ring-fence a level of financial contribution to the regional provision. In Swansea this is currently £1.3m in core education budgets but almost all is still Swansea spending on Swansea staff supporting Swansea schools directly.
- Swansea's contribution to the ERW central Team is £68,750 and this is based on percentage of pupil numbers.
- The Panel will look in more detail at ERW and other education partnerships when they meet with the Chief Education Officer on 1 Dec. *The panel have also asked the scrutiny officer to provide the panel with, ERW statement of accounts, the governance framework including scrutiny arrangements, for their pre meeting.*

Smaller Partnerships

- Swansea has a number of smaller regional working partnerships. There is estimated to be around 100, the report supplied details those where a direct financial contribution is made. Two of these which have significant contributions include WLGA (£123,745) and the Joint Archives Service (£183,900). The total contribution to smaller partnerships at present is £329,010.

The Panel recognise that there is a significant officer time implication in regional working. The panel would like to find out if there has been an assessment of the

financial cost of officer time spent on regional working activities. Scrutiny Officer will email the Chief Transformation Officer for more information on this.

Councillor also wanted to find out if and how regional working partnership financial arrangements are audited. The scrutiny officer will email the Chief Finance Officer for further information.

4 Project Plan Work Programme

The next meeting will take place on Monday 13 November where the panel will look at regional working within the Place Directorate.