



City and County of Swansea

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

Councillor Meeting Room 235, Guildhall

Friday, 2 February 2018 at 10.30 am

Present: Councillor L R Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

J A Hale
M Sykes

Councillor(s)

C A Holley
T M White

Councillor(s)

M H Jones

Other Attendees

Carmarthenshire Lead for City Deal
Waste Partnership (Bridgend)
South West Wales Regional Transport Partnership

Officer(s)

Michelle Roberts

Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): B J Rowlands

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Cllr Mike White (Personal Interest Agenda Item 3)

2 Roundtable meeting with Place Directorate related partners

The Panel invited representatives from some of the Councils external partner organisations that fall within the Place Directorate area to gain their views on issues relating to regional working and its partnerships. The following points have been noted:

Representative from South West Wales Waste Partnership from Bridgend Council

- Working across region particularly around procurement matters, good for economies of scale and Welsh Government is encouraging local authorities to work together around waste.
- Tangible benefit last year: new food waste procurement including Bridgend and Swansea. Welsh Government supported it with 25% funding. It is proving financially beneficial to both LA's. The facility was built in Bridgend and has also resulted in employment opportunities.
- Very positive but this took a substantial time to deliver. With the initial process starting in 2008 when a number of other LA's were involved and the preferred

bidder pulled out. After the failed procurement situation some of the LA's lost appetite for it or found other solutions. So when we tried again with the current procurement fewer LA's involved but it has worked out well anyway. It has been a long winded, extended project but a successful one all the same.

- Some of the barriers/challenges include: the amount of time and effort that it takes to go through this procurement activity, also challenges with getting everyone on board and on the same page.
- Welsh Government funding for this positive but the systems that they require you to go through are onerous and time consuming. The business case and procurement very challenging but good result for Swansea and Bridgend.
- It was a time consuming process, it was led by Swansea (felt that smaller authorities may find difficult to lead such a process with less resource and expertise behind them).
- It is important that all the necessary departments within your own council are working together and are on the same page when you are involved in a regional process.
- Would it have worked even better with more than the two LA's? The Panel heard that it was difficult to say because some aspects do need a local structure. But with the procurement aspect yes bigger buying will power drive better deals and save money for all as a result.
- It was felt that better guidance and a more streamlined service from Welsh Government would be beneficial. It is a long and drawn out process applying for Welsh Government Funding. The panel recognise that it is important that the public sector go the extra mile for due diligence and governance when spending public money but would be keen to see the process simplified if regional working is to be developed on a large scale. It was felt that there needs to be a better balance between the onerousness of the process, the needs of due diligence and the time it takes/bureaucracy this entails.

Carmarthenshire Lead for City Deal

- Swansea Bay City Deal has 11 projects spread throughout the region with a total funding of 1.3 billion pounds.
- 241 million is for the Swansea Bay City Deal project and is funded through UK Government and Welsh Government, LA's and the private sector. The deal was signed on 20 March 2017 and is an agreement in principle for the 11 projects over the next 15 years. 5 years for delivery and 10 years to realise the impact. Carmarthenshire is the lead Council.
- Have used the Welsh Government 5 case business model, which has proved to be time and resource consuming.
- 8 out of the 11 business cases have been submitted to both governments. Is a complicated process because these business cases then go to 3 different departments within government.
- Swansea has two projects: City Deal and the Swansea City and Waterfront. All business cases are currently in draft form.
- These two projects total 168 million of that 50 million combined from UK/Welsh government, public sector 94 million and 24 million from private sector.
- The predicted GVA benefit to Swansea economy in the form of uplift will be, after 5 years 64million, after 10 years 190million and after 15 years 319million, with 265 jobs after 5 years, 1178 after 10 and 1323 after 15 years. Although more

work on the predicted value of these jobs needs to be done. The panel feel it is important that many of these are higher paid jobs.

- The Panel heard about the talent and skills initiative where people in the local area are upskilled so they will be able to access the jobs that result from these 11 projects. Working with universities, colleges and schools including primaries.
- Currently working with Leaders and Chief Executives across the region to put together a legal governance structure. There are currently a couple of issues to resolve with the two governments, one is around capitalisation.
- Letters have been sent to Governments on the capitalisation issue: that is being able to turn some project capital monies into revenue spend. Cardiff has been able to do this, but so far this has not been accepted for the Swansea City Deal. Panel were supportive of the representations being made to be able to use some of the monies for revenue purposes.
- The panel raised the issue of the part of the Deal that includes European Funding. The panel were told that those aspects that are ERDF can be front loaded where possible. There has been no agreement about how any monies that may be lost through no longer being in the European Union will be replaced. The EU funding element is included within the 94m public monies part.
- One of the barriers can be the practicality of working across 4 local authorities. But for the City Deal the relationship has matured and issues like protectionism has improved as all partners see the overall benefits of this.

Transport Strategy Officer Swansea (South West Wales Regional Transport Partnership)

- Governance of a partnership very important. South West Wales Regional Transport Partnership currently does not have a formal governance structure as the Consortia were dissolved in 2014. Partners across the region have agreed it is important to keep the partnership going as they do not want to lose the good partnership working, skills and knowledge of its members and have to start from the beginning when they need to work together formally again, so it is currently working together informally in the meantime. The Authorities in the partnership recognised its value. The regionally legally mandated structure for transport has completely gone. It was thought that it would be included in the new city deal developments but this has not happened. There is currently no voice at national level because the governance structure has been stripped away.
- Do need to have a formal Welsh Government mandated partnership for the region for Transport, we cannot rehash SWITCH as things have developed, it needs to be formed in its own right and/or built into the City Deal. WG does need to clarify the governance issue around transportation policy.
- There are close links with the Wellbeing and Future Generation Act especially around issues like reducing Carbon Emissions etc.

3 Inquiry Project Plan

The Panel will at their next meeting on the 16 February speak partners related to the People Directorate including Western Bay and Education through Regional Working.