



Appendix B: Summary of Swansea Council's Responses to the White Paper

Operational boundaries for regional working

Each of the models brings its own complexities. It is the view of the Council that where regional working is proposed it is undertaken across the Economic 'City Deal' region, regardless of the activity.

Proposed Governance Arrangements for Regional Working

In terms of proposed governance arrangements, it is the opinion of this Council that:

- A Joint Governance Committee (JGC) would appear to be the most appropriate model for governance of regional arrangements
- Any proposals must include provision for adequate scrutiny of JGC decision making
- Financial arrangements should not include the ability for direct precept of individual Councils effectively pre-deciding democratic resource allocation.
- We would not support a mandatory framework for financing JGC expenditure
- Welsh Government should consider the implications on Regional working on the Capital as well as revenue budgets of LA's.

The Council is of the opinion that delegation of these powers on a regional basis should only be undertaken where the scale and impact of the proposals is best delivered at a regional level – it should not, for example, include lower level activities such as the management and development of managed workshops to support local business within a specific locality.

It is also of the opinion that there is no justification for extending regional working beyond the current agreed City deal region.

Whilst the Council recognises the potential benefits of regional transport planning inevitably it imparts a level of complexity between National transport infrastructure (e.g. electrification of main line trains), regional infrastructure and local infrastructure.

The Council also recognises the difficulty in devolving any elements of Capital expenditure on a regional basis due to the impact on individual LA's and the question of ultimate asset ownership.

In respect of Land Use Planning and Building Control whilst the Council again recognises the potential benefits from regional working it is clear that, once again, regionalisation may well introduce an added level of complexity, with planning matters potentially being decided at more than five levels from National Government down to Community level.

The Council is not convinced that Building Control needs to be provided on a regional basis.

The Council recognises the fact that Regional working in line with the Swansea Bay City deal region does not conform with Health boundaries but that is closely tied up with significant decision to be made regarding regional working for Bridgend County Borough Council.

The Council acknowledges the potential for the ongoing regional agenda for Education Improvement and ALN services

This Council does not believe that matters relating to licensing, specifically relating to Taxi licensing, street trading, entertainment and sex establishments should be undertaken other than on an individual LA basis.

The Council understands the potential for regional collaboration on Housing Policy matters but believes strongly that for those LA's who retain Housing stock then matters relating to the management and development of LA Housing stock should remain a local issue.

It is clear that the statutory reporting requirements of LA's, the legal framework in which they operate, the existence of different pay and grading models and differing terms and conditions are such that this Council would not support the transfer of support requirements to the NHS shared services arrangement.

The Council would support further exploration of regional support services but at recognition of the potential significant transition risk both financially and operationally that could arise from the adoption of consistent systems and processes and would seek assistance in mitigating those costs.

Other Issues Highlighted

The Council is of the opinion that wherever possible the footprint of the PSB's should follow that suggested for regional collaboration.

The Council recognises this possibility but considers that it is unlikely that there will be support for such mergers at the current time.

This Council would not support a return to the Committee system and believes there should be one model of operation across all LA's in Wales.

This Council does not support at this time the concept of regional statutory officers which would have to be carefully considered in the light of current statutory obligations, potential conflict of interest and workload constraints.

Most of these issues are a matter for political level debate and response but the Council would urge the Welsh Government to take forward changes to the elections and voting arrangements with caution as it is crucial that the electorate maintain full confidence in the democratic process.

There is a proposal in the white paper to phase out Returning Officer Fees for Welsh Elections. The Chief Executive has a pecuniary interest in this matter and, as the main author of this report, offers no views on the matter (and he will be declaring an interest at the Council meeting).