



## Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Audit Committee – 30 June 2020

# A Review of Partnerships in the City and County of Swansea

<b>Purpose:</b>	This report provides an overview of some of the key Partnerships and describes the arrangements for both governance and the assessment of risks and issues.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Legal, Finance, Access to Services.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that:  The committee review and discuss this report.
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The main aim of this paper is to outline the background and context into Partnership working in Swansea, to identify some of the key Partnerships and to describe their governance arrangements including arrangements for assessing risks and outcomes.
- 1.2 There are a large number of Partnerships and collaborative groups which Swansea Council participate in, which vary in terms of their scale, scope and structure. It is not therefore the intention of this paper to identify and describe each Partnership or collaboration, but to focus on formally constituted Partnerships and those groups which have a significant impact on the work of the Council in terms of resource requirements and outcomes for local residents.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The partnership landscape locally, regionally and nationally is crowded and complex, with many areas of duplication and different arrangements for assessing risks and outcomes. Partnership arrangements in the Council reflect national and regional arrangements which have been driven by Welsh Government legislation and new policy developments.
- 2.2 A working group on Local Government in Wales commissioned a review of Strategic Partnerships in Wales in July 2019. The review aimed to examine whether there were any unnecessary complexity or duplication and to identify opportunities for simplification and rationalisation. Although the review is ongoing, feedback from Local Authorities, partners and individual interviewees have confirmed that Partnership arrangements are complex and burdensome, and the demands on senior leaders (professional and managerial) as well as corporate partnership support were significant.
- 2.3 Interim findings also revealed that some Partnerships were better resourced than others and there were examples of 'mission creep' for existing Partnerships with expectations that existing Partnerships take on new priorities outside of or ill-fitting with their original remit, particularly when their agendas and capacity were already overstretched. Moreover, examples were also cited where the most appropriate Partnerships were not always approached for new priorities or funding due to the lack of clarity and understanding about their roles.

## **3.0 Partnerships in Swansea**

- 3.1 A Scrutiny Inquiry into Regional Working concluded that (as of September 2017) the Council was involved in more than 100 Partnerships, which required 594 days of Officer days per year and a cash contribution from the Council of £496,110 (cash contribution to partnership working not equivalent Officer time or any payment in kind). An analysis of the Partnerships reveals that there was a mixture of formally constituted Partnerships, sub groups of Partnerships, informally constituted groups and other forms of collaborative working groups across the Council and working with partners.
- 3.2 The Inquiry resulted in a number of recommendations which were used to develop a Cabinet Action Plan. Work is ongoing in relation to implementing the recommendations of the Inquiry including work to improve and strengthen governance arrangements, influencing the Welsh Government agenda in relation to regional working and seeking to assess the value of Council's involvement in respective Partnerships.
- 3.3 A report on the annual progress made by three key regional Partnerships; ERW (Education through Regional Working), the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership and the Swansea Bay City Deal was considered by the Council in July 2019. Although the report identifies that good progress

has been made in some areas (albeit at different rates), the report also identifies a number of challenges for each of the regional collaborations. Each of the three key regional Partnerships have frameworks for assessing risks and outcomes albeit different ones.

#### **4.0 ERW (Education through Regional Working)**

- 4.1 ERW (Education through Regional Working) was established in 2014, as a result of the Welsh Government's introduction of the National Model for Regional Working (Welsh Government 2014). The model aimed to provide a regional single school improvement service for each of the constituent Local Authorities. Welsh Government placed a requirement on Local Authorities to participate in consortia arrangements, including shared consortium services, or suffer financial penalties, including the withdrawal of Better Schools Funding.
- 4.2 ERW is one of four regional education consortia established in Wales and covers the South West and Mid Wales including Swansea, Talbot, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Powys Councils. Key functions of ERW include; developing school improvement strategies that improve learning and teaching and leads to improvements to pupil attainment at all levels and across all contexts. It includes data collation, analysis, and delivery of the model of national categorisation. It also includes supporting the development of school leadership and delivery of the new Curriculum for Wales 2022 and the Welsh Medium Education Strategy. The programme is managed by a Managing Director and supported by a Senior Leadership Team, a Curriculum Team, a Secondary Specialists Team and a Central team.
- 4.3 ERW is governed by a Joint Committee, whilst statutory responsibility is retained by constituent Local Authorities. The Joint Committee is made up of the five local authority Council Leaders and is advised by the Executive Board of Directors, external school improvement experts, Head teacher representatives and the Managing Director. The Joint Committee regularly reviews the Corporate Risk register which contains strategic business risks (threats) to the achievement of the ERW's Vision and Aims. Corporate business risks (threats) are scored against the risk (threats) evaluation matrix using the probability and impact criteria. The Corporate Risk Register is a live document which is subject to regular review by the ERW Managing Director and formally reviewed by the ERW Executive Board.
- 4.4 The work of ERW is scrutinised by an ERW Scrutiny Councillor Group which is made up of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the five Local Authorities' Education Scrutiny Bodies. The purpose of the group is to support consistent and effective scrutiny across the six Local Authorities, providing critical and objective challenge and contributing to effective governance.

- 4.5 A report considered by Cabinet in March 2020 on the future working arrangements of school improvement in Swansea suggested that ERW has struggled to function effectively as a consortia since its inception. The challenges ERW have faced have been as a result of the size and diversity of the geographical area, several changes in managerial and political leadership, staffing issues, increasing disengagement and the dissatisfaction with arrangements and the performance of the organisation expressed by key partners and the compartmentalisation of school improvement which not align to economic developments and skills. Neath Port Talbot issued their intention to leave the consortia in 2019 which came into effect at the end of March 2020, leaving the five authorities.
- 4.6 The introduction of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill by the Welsh Government in 2019 has provided an opportunity to reconfigure a new framework and arrangements for regional working. Although collaboration is still a requirement, local Councils now have the discretion to determine the most effective model. Cabinet have agreed in principle for a new model of school improvement to be based on the Swansea Bay City Deal footprint ( which includes Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire) and to withdraw from the current consortium arrangement by 1 April 2021. Discussions are ongoing with City Deal partner Councils and the Welsh Government to agree the future collaboration arrangements for school improvement.

## **5.0 The West Glamorgan Regional Partnership**

- 5.1 The West Glamorgan Regional Partnership (formerly Western Bay) was established in 2012. The Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014, placed a statutory duty on Local Authorities and Health Boards to produce a regional plan to meet the health and social care needs of the population and focus on opportunities for prevention and early intervention. The West Glamorgan Regional Partnership is one of seven Regional Partnerships for Health and Social Care services across Wales. Currently, the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership consists of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot Councils and the Swansea Bay University Health Board.
- 5.2 The West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board is not an autonomous decision making body and therefore any decisions arising from the Board requires Cabinet and Health Board endorsement. Each of the constituent Local Authorities have their own internal scrutiny processes to reflect organisational individual accountability. Currently there are no joint scrutiny arrangements. The West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board consists of Local Authority Leaders, the Chairman of the Health Board, Cabinet Member Portfolio holders, Chief Executives of the Local Authorities and the Chief Executive of the Health Board, Directors of Social Services, the Director of Strategy for the Health Board and representatives from Education, Housing, the Third Sector, Carers, Providers and Service Users.

- 5.3 The West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board is supported by three Transformation Boards; Adult Transformation Board, Integrated Transformation Board (covering issues that straddle across Adults and Children such as Carers) and Children and Young People Transformation Board. Each board has membership from the Local Authorities, Health Board, Third Sector and Citizens. The West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Programme Team is led by a Programme Director who works under the direction of the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board. The West Glamorgan Programme focusses solely on the delivery of strategic transformation across Health and Social Care. The priorities of the programme include the development of community services that support older people to stay well at home, the development of a Hospital to Home service which is in the current climate is remodelled as the Rapid Discharge Process, safely reducing looked after children numbers, improving mental health support and improving outcomes for individuals with a learning disability and development of regional strategy for dementia and carers.
- 5.4 Every project and work stream within the programme has a strategic lead which helps drive the change at both a strategic and political level. The Regional Programme supports collaborative working between statutory partners and the third and independent sectors along with representation from Citizens and Carers. A Regional Coproduction Group was established 2018 which supports the programme to ensure that coproduction is embedded across the programme and to develop a strategy for increasing awareness and involvement of citizens in the Partnership's activities.
- 5.5 Overall, the Partnership has a good track record of delivery, reducing costs and improving outcomes. An independent evaluation of Intermediate Care Services (part of the Community Services programme) undertaken by Cordis Bright in 2017, concluded that the new model and approach has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of unplanned hospital admissions of people aged 65yrs + in the region. and has saved around £4.9 million. Similarly, it has been estimated that the Commissioning for Complex Needs Programme has also realised savings in the region of £5 million, whilst also supporting people to live more independently and achieve their personal well-being goals. The Programme has also won a number of national awards.
- 5.6 As a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, new governance arrangements have been introduced as a response to the situation across the West Glamorgan footprint to manage the crisis through the establishment of the Covid-19 Silver Community Command. This group has replaced the Transformation Boards in the interim, in addition to the introduction of a number of new work streams to respond to specific issues which report through to the Silver Covid-19 Community Meetings.

5.7 These extraordinary new governance arrangements for West Glamorgan Partnership have been established in the form of a new Health and Social Care Interface Board and an Extraordinary Regional Partnership Board with the statutory partners as the decision makers.

## **6.0 Swansea Bay City Deal**

6.1 Although there is no statutory requirement for the Council to participate in the Swansea Bay City Deal, both the UK Government and Welsh Government Policy frameworks encourage local Council participation in the development of regional economic development partnerships. The Swansea Bay City Deal represents a £1.3 billion investment in the regional economy and includes Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot Council and Pembrokeshire Councils.

6.2 It has been estimated that the Swansea Bay City Deal will create over 10,000 high quality jobs in the region over the next 15 years. The City Deal consists of 11 transformational projects which subject to business case approvals, will be funded by the UK Government, the Welsh Government, the public sector and the private sector. It is envisaged that the City Deal will transform the City Region into a centre of excellence for the application of digital technologies, life science and well-being, energy and advanced manufacturing. City Deal funding is made up of £241 million from the UK and Welsh Governments, £396 million from other public sector funding, and £637 million from the private sector.

6.3 City Deal projects include a City and Waterfront Digital District in Swansea, the 'Yr Egin' creative sector hub in Carmarthen, Life Science and Well-being Campuses, a Centre of Excellence in Next Generation Services, a Steel Science centre, a Factory of the Future development, a Life Science and Well-being Village, and Pembroke Dock Marine, which will include an off-shore testing area for marine energy technologies. A Homes as Power Stations project is also planned across the region and a Skills and Talent Initiative which aims to give local people a pathway to access the well-paid employment opportunities.

6.4 The Swansea Bay City Deal is being led by Carmarthenshire Council, Swansea Council, Neath Port Talbot Council and Pembrokeshire Council - together with the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Hywel Dda University Health Boards, Swansea University, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, and private sector partners. The Swansea Bay City Deal is overseen by a Joint Committee. The role of the Joint Committee is to develop and implement appropriate governance structures for City Deal projects, planning and agreeing the City Deal's strategy and delivery, and managing the performance of the City Deal programme.

6.5 Membership of the Joint Committee is made up of the Leaders of the 4 Councils, the Chairman of the City Deal's Economic Strategy Board (Non-Voting co-optee), and senior representatives of Swansea University, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, (Non-Voting co-optees) Swansea

Bay University Health Board (Non-Voting Co-optee), and Hywel Dda University Health Board.

- 6.6 An Economic Strategy Board has been established to provide strategic direction for the City Deal and strategic advice to the Joint Committee on matters relating to the Swansea Bay City Region. Its functions are to monitor progress of City Deal delivery, oversight of business case production and consideration of regional added value and to identify opportunities for investment. Membership of the Economic Strategy Board is made up from representatives of the private sector who are experts in energy, life sciences, skills, manufacturing, housing and business.
- 6.7 An internal review and an independent review of the Swansea Bay City Deal were commissioned by the Welsh Government and the UK Government during 2019 with a number of recommendations to improve the governance arrangements of the programme including the appointment of a Managing Director for the City Deal Regional Office.
- 6.8 A Programme Board has been established to prepare recommendations for the overall City Deal programme, to oversee performance and project delivery, advise on the strategic direction of the Economic Strategy Board and work on a regional basis to improve public services, especially in the areas of economic development, housing, regeneration, transport, planning and strategic land use. The Programme Board consists of the Chief Executives from all four regional councils and co-opted representatives from Swansea University, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Hywel Dda University Health Board, and Swansea Bay University Health Board.
- 6.9 A detailed Programme Risk Register has been developed for the Swansea Bay City Deal Programme and is managed, revised and updated by the Regional Office. The risk register is updated on a quarterly basis or as otherwise required. The Programme Board reviews the risk register at each Programme Board meeting and escalates key risks to the attention of Joint Committee via a risk register summary and will be tabled at every Joint Committee meeting. Each Swansea Bay City Deal project carries its associated risks which are mitigated throughout the application and delivery process. A detailed risk analysis has been undertaken for all projects by the Project Delivery Lead as part of the development of the 5 case business model process, with a project specific Risk Register established to assist in the ongoing management and mitigation of all risks. These are made available to Joint Committee as project business cases develop.
- 6.10 A Joint Scrutiny Committee has been established to scrutinise the Swansea Bay City Deal. Its functions are to scrutinise the City Deal, to consider whether the City Deal is operating in accordance to the Joint Committee Agreement and to monitor progress and make recommendations. The Joint Scrutiny Committee is made

up from 12 members in total - 3 each from the 4 Councils and does not include Executive Members.

## **7.0 Swansea Public Service Board (PSB)**

7.1 Swansea Public Services Board is a partnership of public service agencies who work together collectively to improve local social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being. The four statutory members of the Board are Swansea Bay University Health Board, Natural Resources Wales, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Council.

7.2 The Board also involves other organisations that have an interest in the well-being of the area for example the Police and the Universities. Support for the partnership arrangements is provided by the City and County of Swansea. The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has placed a requirement on every local Council area in Wales to have a Public Services Board (PSB) and to conduct an Assessment of Well-being and produce a Local Well-being Plan.

7.3 Swansea's Local Well Being Plan focuses on four key objectives, the Early Years, Live Well and Age Well, Working with Nature and Stronger Communities. Each objective has an identified Lead Officer from a statutory partner and an action plan. Lead Officers produce a highlight report and an update risks at every meeting of the Joint Committee. The governance arrangements for Swansea's PSB were reviewed in 2019 aiming to streamline the structure, improve accountability and achieve a more efficient use of resources.

7.4 The Review recommended a change in governance arrangements and to replace existing structures with a Joint Committee - to fulfil basic statutory requirements consists of Statutory Members of the Partnerships and invited participants and the establishment of a wider Partnership Forum in order to encourage wider participation from stakeholders. The Review also included a revised terms of reference for the PSB and a Memorandum of Understanding which sets out arrangements regarding the relationships between the various organisations that work together to deliver the Local Well-being Plan's Local Wellbeing Objectives.

7.5 The various work streams have a risk log that is reviewed at each meeting of the Joint Committee and the Strategic Lead Officer for each of the work streams also attends the Councils Scrutiny Committee to be scrutinised on the years activities.

## **8.0 Other Key Partnerships in Swansea**

8.1 There are a number of other key Partnerships in Swansea which involve the Council working with external partners and internally with partnerships across the Council. Partnerships between the Council and other external partners include; the Safer Swansea Partnership, the Regional Learning



Partnership, the Regional Transport Forum, the Wales Road Reduction Casualty Partnership and many more. In addition there are new Partnerships under development such as the Western Gateway which transcend typical collaborative footprints and political boundaries across Wales.

## **9.0 Safer Swansea Partnership**

- 9.1 The Safer Swansea Partnership was been established in 1998 as a result of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It has a statutory responsibility to undertake an annual review of Crime and Disorder in the local area and then to identify measures to reduce these problems and direct resources to address them. It is a multi-agency partnership co-chaired by the Council and Police.
- 9.2 The Safer Swansea Strategy was revised in 2018 to incorporate new and emerging challenges such as domestic violence, substance misuse, child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, modern day slavery, radicalisation and extremism. The strategic priorities focus on; Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, Substance misuse, Safe, confident and resilient communities, Evening and Night Time Economy and Hate Crime and Community tension monitoring.
- 9.3 The Safer Swansea Steering Group is the management and leadership group for the Safer Swansea Partnership where all key decisions are made on behalf of the Partnership. It provides leadership on the Safer Swansea strategy and liaison with the Police and Crime Commissioner on funding and strategy. The membership of the Steering Group consists of key representatives from statutory partners and other organisations with an interest and influence in community safety issues.
- 9.4 The Strategy is delivered within a multi-agency, partnership framework. The priorities identified in the Safer Swansea Strategy priorities form the basis of a four year action plan which outline outcomes and identifies leads and key partners who can contribute to progressing the actions and the outcomes identified. Each of the strategic objectives have different arrangements for monitoring progress and managing risk, although overall progress is reported to the Safer Swansea steering group and outlined in an annual report.
- 9.5 In addition to the four year action plan, priority areas identified by the PSB are channelled to the Safer Swansea partnership and then monitored through the PSB. A recent example of this is the Swansea High Street initiative.
- 9.6 The Safer Swansea Partnership has links and interdependencies to a number of other regional collaborations including Community Cohesion, Contest and Western Bay Safeguarding Boards. The Safer Swansea Partnership also has a number of links and interdependencies to local partnerships such as Channel, Prevent, Asylum Seekers and Refugees,

the Public Protection Executive Board and the Children and Young People Partnership Board.

- 9.7 The Safer Swansea Partnership is overseen by the Public Services Board and an update report along with issues and risks

## **10.0 Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs)**

- 10.1 Regional Skills Partnerships are voluntary, non-statutory board made up of employers, education providers and others. The boards make recommendations to Welsh Government on full-time college and apprenticeship courses and learner numbers. The partnerships are tasked by Welsh Government to produce a 3-year Regional Employment and Skills Plan (RESP) and reports on progress.
- 10.2 There are three RSPs across Wales which were created at a different times between 2007 to 2014, and each have evolved independently, shaped by their own regions and more lately, their respective City and Growth Deals. Swansea is part of the South West and Mid Wales Regional Learning and Skills Partnership (RLSP): which is linked to the Swansea Bay City Deal and is providing support to the proposed Growing Mid Wales Partnership.
- 10.3 The South West and Mid Wales Regional learning and Skills Partnership was established in 2007, originally to bring together training providers and ESF funded projects together to deliver a skills programme for the region that would increase the number of people with higher level skills and encourage people with no skills at all to participate within the programmes available.
- 10.4 In 2015 the partnership re-established itself as an employer led organisation working with Further Education, Work Based learning, Apprenticeship and Higher Education, Careers Wales, DWP, Third Sector and the City and Growth Deals..The RLSP is a voluntary partnership working through Carmarthenshire County Council as the financial accountable body.
- 10.5 Welsh Government have recently commissioned a review into RSPs with a view to explore how well the partnerships were working and to make clear and constructive recommendations on improving their work and effectiveness in line with the developments of the new Economic Growth Deals across Wales.
- 10.6 The RSP is also tasked with leading on the skills strand of the city deal and is currently developing the daft business case due to be considered by the joint committee in the coming months.

## **11.0 Regional Transport Forum**

- 11.1 Although Welsh Government removed the requirement for Councils to produce Regional Transport Plans in collaboration in 2014, Councils are still required to produce Local Transport Plans relevant to their own areas with discretion to work collectively to produce Joint Local Transport Plan. The Regional Transport Forum for South West Wales was established in 2014 and is a collaborative body made up of the four South West Wales Local Authorities, working with a range of providers and users of transport in and beyond the region. It provides a framework within which strategic transport issues could be planned and delivered.
- 11.2 The four Local Authorities prepared and submitted a joint Local Transport Plan covering the period 2015 – 2020 and was endorsed by the Swansea Bay City Region Board and approved by the Welsh Government in 2015.
- 11.3 At the end of 2019 it was agreed that this forum would sit as a sub group of the City Deal Board and operate under their Governance structure.

## **12.0 Conclusions**

- 12.1 This paper does not provide a comprehensive overview of all Partnerships and collaborative arrangements in which the Council participates. Instead it provides a description of some the key Partnerships which are significant in terms of scale, cost and outcomes.
- 12.2 It also provides a description of the different forms, structures of Partnership working and processes for managing risks and assessing outcomes. It also highlights the different drivers including statutory requirements placed on Councils which mandate the requirement to work collaboratively. The Partnership landscape locally, regionally and nationally is both crowded and complex and whilst there is evidence of some benefits gained from working collaboratively, there also remains a number of challenges for the Council in Partnership working.
- 12.3 The introduction of the Local Government and Elections Bill (Wales) in November 2019 provides an opportunity to re-think collaborative working for the Council, however risks remain that the challenges related to Partnership working will persist or become further complicated without clarity of purpose, process and outcome at a national, regional and local level.

## **13. Equality and Engagement Implications**

- 13.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

13.2 Our Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

13.3 There are no equality and engagement implications associated with this report.

#### **14. Financial Implications**

14.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

#### **15. Legal Implications**

15.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

**Background Papers:** None.

**Appendices:** None.