

Regional Working Scrutiny Enquiry Panel

26th January 2018 - People Directorate

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Due to the size and varied nature of the Directorate, there are many existing regional and collaborative working arrangements in existence across the whole range of Directorate services. Just for clarity, this covers the following service areas:-

- Adult Social Services
- Child and Family Social Services
- Education
- Poverty and Preventative Services.

Appendix A summarises the existing regional and collaborative working, which are a mixture of formal and informal arrangements depending on the area and subject matter. Outlined below are some examples.

2 ERW (Education through Regional Working)

2.1 The purpose of consortia is outlined in the National Model for Regional working and seeks to outline how ERW will deliver a single school improvement service on behalf of Swansea. The national model covers the following core functions that ERW is expected to undertake on behalf of Swansea Council:

- school improvement – which is defined as challenge and support strategies delivered by regional consortia that improve the teaching and learning in classrooms and lead to improved pupil attainment and progress at all levels and in all contexts;
- data collation, analysis and application – which is defined as collating from local authorities and schools the data on school and pupil performance and progress across each region (based on the core data sets established by the Welsh Government), using that data to benchmark and challenge school performance and, with schools, set challenging targets for improvements;
- delivery of the national system for categorising schools, which has been co-constructed by Welsh Government, local authorities, consortia, unions and the profession. This system has replaced the previous individual systems developed by each consortium. This consistent national approach supports schools in their self-evaluation and development planning via a core entitlement to support;

- supporting the development of school leadership at all levels – which includes developing opportunities for emerging and senior leaders to develop their experience and expertise by having assignment and secondments in other schools, in addition to commissioning, and co-ordinating the provision of training and development programmes;
- making sure that school improvement support includes ensuring that schools are mindful of learner wellbeing and supportive of improved standards of behaviour and attendance;
- ensuring that the delivery of the national Literacy and Numeracy frameworks is effective across all schools and co-ordinate and quality assure the provision of training and development to achieve this;
- providing challenge to the performance and delivery of Foundation Phase settings and assess the need for and then commission, co-ordinate and quality assure provision of training and development support;
- aligning national and local 14-19 strategies across the wider consortium area to help raise standards in the core subjects of English/Welsh and mathematics, ensure high quality courses offer relevant training for pupils and contribute effectively to regeneration strategies;
- working with local authorities to ensure that their plans for developing and implementing strategies for 21st Century schools go hand-in-hand with plans for school improvement;
- enabling the aims of the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium Education Strategy (WMES) to be delivered by ensuring the alignment of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESP) and the Welsh in Education Grant (WEG) across each of the local authorities within the regional consortia, so that there is consistency in the development of excellence in pedagogy not only across both the Welsh-medium and bilingual sectors, but also in the delivery of Welsh as a second language;
- devising or commissioning, coordinating and quality assuring delivery of high quality governor training and advice services including the requirements for mandatory training for governors;
- providing or ensuring the availability of specialist human resources advice to support headteachers and governing bodies in dealing with performance management and capability issues; and
- ensuring that teacher assessment is undertaken accurately and consistently and that the results of teacher assessments are rigorously moderated on a regional and wider basis.

- 2.2 Swansea benefits from capacity building grants targeted at schools causing concern and has received some financial recompense to support schools within and beyond the local authority. Swansea benefits from receiving support and challenge that is consistent with other local authorities. However, school performance in Swansea was at a high baseline to begin with. Schools have benefitted from support to improve the accuracy of teacher assessment and have received support to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of their pupils. More recently, schools have benefitted from accessing clear support to develop leadership. In most cases, Swansea still has the capacity to deliver what is required by WG, without adding additional resource into the consortium.
- 2.3 Welsh Government asked local authorities to ring fence a proportion of core funding in 2014 to support each of the four regional consortia. In Swansea, the total amount is currently £1.3M. Challenge advisers in schools make up most of this cost equivalent to 12 FTE. However, local subject specialists and staff have also been employed by Swansea to ensure delivery of national priorities.
- 2.4 Included within the £1.3M resource originally ring fenced by ERW (this has reduced year upon year in line with core funding reductions,) Swansea directly contributes £69K to maintain the ERW central team. Also, small amounts of grant monies are retained by ERW for administration of grants and to support wider regional priorities.

3 WESTERN BAY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

- 3.1 The Western Bay Programme delivers integrated health and social care models for older people, children with complex needs, mental health and learning disability services and support for carers.
- 3.2 The Local Authority Chief Executives, Directors of Social Services, Heads of Service across Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea together with ABMU Health Board senior leaders have been working together under the auspices of the Western Bay programme since 2012. Swansea Council has been the host authority for the programme since its inception. The Western Bay programme has evolved, and supports collaborative working between the four statutory partner organisations, together with the third and independent sectors.
- 3.3 The benefits of this approach are described in a variety of ways from economies of scale through shared learning, to the advantages of integrated services at the front end of service delivery for service users, from joint commissioning arrangements to sharing good practise. This may involve an integrated approach through formal partnership arrangements and where appropriate, the pooling of funds. On other occasions, the four organisations continue to undertake commissioning activity in parallel but with a shared and co-ordinated regional approach.

- 3.4 The Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 brought about new requirements on statutory partners in the way that services are delivered and the outcomes for citizens. Part 9 of the Act specifically imposes legislative obligations on partners relating to Partnership Arrangements. It requires Local Authorities and the Health Board to make arrangements to promote co-operation with their relevant partners in relation to adults with needs for care and support, children and carers.
- 3.5 It also provides Welsh Ministers with regulation making powers in relation to formal partnership arrangements, resources for partnership arrangements (including pooled funds) and partnership boards.
- 3.6 There is a statutory requirement for Directors of Social Services to ensure that partnership working arrangements are in place and are delivering improved effectiveness and efficiency in relation to the delivery of services to address care and support needs of citizens, including carers, as identified in the Population Needs Assessment.
- 3.7 The regional partnership infrastructure arrangements and work programmes are supported by the Western Bay Programme Office, hosted by the City & County of Swansea. The Programme Office works across partner organisations to deliver on the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) priority areas of work and provides business support to the RPB and the supporting transformational Programme and Project Boards.
- 3.8 The SSWBA requires the Local Authorities and HB to establish a Regional Partnership Board to oversee the integrated health and social care arrangements. The Board is not an autonomous decision making body, therefore any decisions arising from the Board require Cabinet and Health Board endorsement. In terms of scrutiny, it is for each Local Authority and the Health Board to scrutinise the work of the Board and the Programme.
- 3.9 The Western Bay Regional programme covers the following service areas:-
- 3.10 Tier One – Key change projects which are overseen by the RPB and supported in the main by the Western Bay Programme office.
- Community Services (Frail and Elderly)
 - Carers Partnership Board
 - Heads of Children’s Services
 - Commissioning for Complex Needs
 - Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)
 - Integrated Autism Service (ASD)
 - Workforce Development
 - Learning Disability & Mental Health
 - Area Plan
- 3.11 Tier two – business as usual projects which have been through a programme of transformation and report to the RPB by exception only.

- Regional Adoption Service
- Regional Safe Guarding
- Integrated Family Support Service
- Regional Collaborative Committee Supporting People
- Regional Area Planning Board
- Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service

3.12 Since the programme's inception, Welsh Government funding has supported the delivery of Western Bay priorities. Integrated Care Fund (ICF) formerly Intermediate Care Fund was allocated to Swansea Council on behalf of the region, although more recently has been allocated to the ABMU HB for the region. In 2017/18 £6.5m of ICF funding was allocated to the programme against these priorities:

Themes	ICF Grant allocation 2017/18 £
Older People	5,889,079
Learning Disabilities	743,691
Children with Complex Needs	709,809
Carers	40,000
Third Sector Allocation	386,397
Integrated Autism Service (IAS)	318,200
WCCIS	257,898
TOTAL	8,345,074

3.13 Capital funding of £1,770,074 is also allocated to the region in support of integrated health and social care schemes.

3.14 For three years in advance of implementation of the SS&WB (Wales) Act, Welsh Government provided a specific grant to support the LAs and partners to prepare for implementation of the Act (Delivering Transformation Grant). This funding was subsequently included in the Revenue Support Grant allocation to the LAs.

Partner	£	%
Bridgend CBC	127,000	26
Neath Port Talbot CBC	141,000	29
Swansea Council	223,000	45

3.15 Additional contribution from Intermediate Care Fund (held by ABMU HB). Older People Fund, proportion for regional staffing costs for Intermediate Care Services: £169,146 LD Fund, proportion for regional staffing costs for Contracting and Procurement Project: £112,330. Total funding in pooled budget arrangement, £772,476.

3.16 Western Bay Programme Infrastructure Costs 2017/18

Western Bay Programme Office Core Salary Costs	£341,088
Overheads, Training, Expert Advice, Events, Workshops, Citizen Panel Meetings, RPB meetings	£37,000
Additional Regional Resource Requirements (Expert advice for Care Homes, Third Sector Social Enterprise Costs)	£112,912
SUB TOTAL RSG Funded Costs	£491,000
Community Services Programme - Salary Costs	£169,146
Contracting and Procurement Project – 2 key regional posts: WB Implementation Manager and WB Contracting Officer	£112,330
SUB TOTAL ICF Costs	281,476
TOTAL COSTS	£772,476

3.17 The Welsh Government's reform agenda is giving clear indication of the direction of travel with some areas of work across Western Bay already mandated to be delivered regionally; for example: Integrated Autism Service, Safeguarding, regional adoption services and a pooled fund for care home accommodation.

3.18 Currently the future of Bridgend CBC as part of the Western Bay partnership is uncertain; the consultation period for the proposal for Bridgend to move from ABMU HB and align with Cwm Taff University Health Board for healthcare service delivery ends on 7th March 2018. If this change is progressed, then there will be the need to disaggregate Bridgend from the Western Bay programme. The impact on Swansea specifically should be minimal. A mapping prioritisation exercise is being progressed.

4 WESTERN BAY REGIONAL CONTEST BOARD

4.1 Contest is the UK Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy has been in place since 2003 and most recently amended in a third edition of the Strategy in July 2011. The aim of the Strategy is '*to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from international terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence*'.

4.2 CONTEST comprises of four elements:

1. Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks
 2. Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism
 3. Protect: to strengthen our protection against terrorist attack
 4. Prepare: where an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact
- 4.3 The Western Bay Contest Board consists of representatives from all agencies that have a remit or role under the strategy; these include Health, Fire & Rescue, Prison Service, Probation, South Wales Police, WECTU, Education, Welsh Government and Local Authorities.
- 4.4 All three local authorities (LA) within the Western Bay partnership are represented, meeting quarterly to receive updates from the four strands of the strategy, share intelligence; best practice, escalate concerns or uncontrolled risks to national level and effectively plan as a collective to improve the protection of our communities.
- 4.5 The chair of the Board is nominated from the local authorities of Swansea Council, Bridgend County Borough and Neath & Port Talbot County Borough Councils. The chair is rotated annually with the meetings held in the authority area of the chair. The LA chair will be a Senior Officer such as a Director or Head of Service from a department with particular responsibility for the Contest Strategy.
- 4.6 The Chair of the Board is invited to attend the All Wales Contest Board which is jointly chaired by Welsh Government and South Wales Police. The group also comprises representation from Prevent, Protect, Prepare and Pursue, commonly referred to as the 4 P's, from across the region.
- 4.7 Prevent, Protect & Prepare sub groups are in place within the region to ensure the objectives of the strategy are met. Each sub-group is coterminous with its local authority boundary and works closely with the Emergency Management/Resilience Service.
- 4.8 The Board has a strategic action plan, which is reviewed at the quarterly meetings.

5 PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

- 5.1 Establishment of Public Services Boards (PSB) is a requirement for each local authority. Currently across the Western Bay footprint there are three PSBs, one in each local authority area. The PSB statutory members have a responsibility to produce a Wellbeing Assessment and a Wellbeing Plan. The Wellbeing Plans are currently going through the consultation process and must be published by 4 May 2018. These Plans outline the agreed objectives of partners to maximise their contribution to the Wellbeing Goals.
- 5.2 In 2017/18, a small amount of funding was made available to regions to consider regional implications of PSB delivery and to seek greater

coherence and alignment between them. This funding was made available on a Western Bay footprint and was used to employ a coordinator, who gave notice after a short period in the job. The allocation of funds, however, gives notice of the direction that Welsh Government sees for the future of PSB arrangements. Informal discussions are ongoing about the potential for alignment of PSB arrangements across a Swansea/NPT footprint, and these are far from concluded.

5.3 Potential initial learning from Swansea PSB experience of developing the Wellbeing Plan would be:

- Agreement on vision and long-term thinking, drawing on where passion and interest lies can really help drive partnership working.
- It remains a challenge to retain ownership and drive across all partner organisations.
- Fundamental to strong partnerships is the development of relationships based on trust. So much depends on the individuals involved and their personal approach to the partnership.
- It remains a challenge to retain focus on achieving a smaller number of top priorities, and not get dominated by detail.
- There is an appropriate balance between bottom up and top down approaches that needs to be struck in terms of agreement on delivery.
- Governance arrangements help to provide assurance but do not guarantee successful outcomes.

6 OTHER REGIONAL COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY

6.1 Community Cohesion

Community Cohesion Funding for a co-ordinator post has been received from the Welsh Government (WG) since 2009 for the implementation and support of the overall aims and objectives of Welsh Government's *'Getting on Together – A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales'* (i.e. to achieve a fair and just society). Swansea Council is the Grant Recipient Body for the Western Bay Region for the current Community Cohesion Programme grant. The grant pays for one post, the Western Bay Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator, based in Swansea, who is coordinating the delivery of the plan across the region. The three Community Cohesion leads from Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend monitor the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator's work. They meet regularly to check and discuss progress against the agreed work plan, which aligns with each local authority's Community Safety Partnership arrangements on a local level rather than a regional board.

6.2 Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

In 2018-2019 new arrangements will be established for the Welsh Government (WG) VAWDASV Grant on a regional basis between Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, aligned to the Police Basic Command Unit. The grant allocation for 18/19 has been calculated using the combined local authority allocations awarded in 2017-2018. Work is ongoing to develop a regional needs analysis and commissioning plan which will inform allocations from 2019-20 onwards. During 2017-2018 we have been developing structures in readiness for the roll-out of the regional approach for the VAWDASV grant and improving collaboration between all relevant partners for the delivery of VAWDASV services, through jointly identifying priorities at a regional level.

This collaborative approach will continue during 2018-19, with the further development of key areas of governance and leadership, communications, monitoring and performance management, partnership working and information sharing in relation to VAWDASV services.

7 POTENTIAL FUTURE RISKS

Whilst the above summarises, at a very high level, the existing regional working, Welsh Government's reform agenda is giving clear indication of the direction of travel with more formalised areas of collaboration in a greater number of service areas. Whilst this presents opportunities, it also raises some important risks.

7.1 Changes to Health Board footprint

Welsh Government will shortly be consulting on changes to the ABMU Health Board footprint, to cover only Swansea and Neath Port Talbot, with Bridgend being served by Cwm Taf in future. At the time of writing, the negotiations are continuing, and it is unlikely that this will be fully implemented before 1 April 2019, and potentially could be later. This will impact primarily on the Western Bay arrangements and plans are in development to manage the transition smoothly.

7.2 Population profiles

Welsh Government by-pass local authorities by sending some grants straight to regional partnership arrangements, especially in education. There is a risk that formulas disadvantage urban areas like Swansea in the attempt to address rural sparsity or other issues that remain important in other localities, but less so in Swansea.

7.3 Potential Loss of Locality Focus and/or Duplication

With an increasing focus on regional working and a need to dedicate capacity to ensuring these arrangements work effectively, there is a risk that the local voice and local difference is masked or lost entirely. This is particularly true when the partnerships include a wide population. This in turn in some cases

has led to us introducing additional local arrangements to provide ourselves with assurance that work is progressing well in our locality in addition to the regional arrangements.

7.4 Resilience

As budgets shrink, there are increasing concerns that some services, particularly in smaller Councils are unsustainable by individual Authorities in isolation and greater collaboration is one way to address such challenges.

8.0 SUMMARY

8.1 As such, whilst the debate about further regional working is inevitable, it's important for the Council to be active in whatever the emerging picture should look like and to share in its future. It needs to understand the benefits of local delivery but also be mindful of the national and regional picture and the potential opportunities that working on that footprint may bring.

8.2 If regions are too large or the footprint differs across various sectors, this could lead to confusion and a loss of democratic accountability. Whilst given the current unsustainable nature of public finances, such debates are will continue and it is important to understand the implication of any decisions that are likely to be made.

Appendix A: Existing Collaborative Arrangements