
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS (WALES) BILL

Purpose

1. To inform members of local authorities' proposals for potential footprints of future Corporate Joint Committees.

Background

2. The Minister for Housing and Local Government wrote to the WLGA in November seeking proposals from local authorities for 'footprints' for future Corporate Joint Committees.
3. It was agreed at the Executive Board meeting on 31st January 2020 that authorities would be encouraged to provide views to the WLGA in order to provide a response to the Minister ahead of the meeting of the Local Government Sub-Group of the Partnership Council 11th March.
4. It is proposed that the letter will reaffirm the WLGA's commitment to collaboration based on the agreed collaboration principles (Annex A), notably that all collaborative arrangements (including CJsCs) should be subject to periodical review and reiterate the Council resolution from the 29th November:

"Whilst we welcome the new and revised approach to local government by the present Minister, the WLGA has fundamental concerns over the principle of mandation which is seen as undermining local democracy but will continue to engage and seek to co-produce the Corporate Joint Committee proposals."

5. Following discussions at Management Sub-Committee and feedback from any outstanding authorities, it is proposed that a letter to the Minister will be drafted for approval by the WLGA Group Leaders.

Local Authority Responses

6. Fifteen authorities have either written directly to the Minister already or provided formal or informal views to the WLGA. Five authorities are yet to respond and two have confirmed they do not intend to submit a view.
7. In summary, the responses indicate that authorities' overwhelming preferences are that any new CJsCs should be based on existing footprints for city/growth deals (economic development, planning and transport) and school improvement consortia. This is in line with the agreed collaboration principles.

8. Other than in North Wales, city deals/growth and school improvement consortia footprints are not coterminous. Feedback from some authorities in the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal area is that the current two school improvement footprints (EAS and Central South) are appropriate and should remain. There are ongoing discussions in the ERW region regarding the future shape of the current 6 authority approach and whether ERW should remain or be reconfigured to align with the city and growth deal footprints or other alternative footprints.
9. Anglesey and Gwynedd noted that collaborative arrangements on a North Wales footprint were working well, but also stated that sub-regional arrangements should be considered, notably based on existing planning arrangements between the two authorities. Gwynedd also noted that transport may be more appropriate on a sub-regional basis and expressed concerns about the imposition of a single footprint.
10. Several authorities noted the need for flexibility to continue working with other authority partners outside of a CJC footprint, including Anglesey and Gwynedd, Powys (given its boundaries with several English and Welsh authorities), and Flintshire and Wrexham (given their links with the Mersey Dee Alliance).

CJC Footprint Responses by authority

Local Authority	Economic development, planning and transport	Education
Anglesey	'Recognition should be given to existing arrangements...on a North Wales level'. Also reference to existing sub-regional arrangements, such as planning.	
Blaenau Gwent	City Deal	
<i>Bridgend</i>	<i>TBC</i>	
<i>Caerphilly</i>	<i>TBC</i>	
Cardiff	Confirmed it is not responding	
<i>Carmarthenshire</i>	<i>TBC</i>	
Ceredigion	Mid Wales (Ceredigion and Powys)	ERW currently being reviewed
Conwy	North Wales	North Wales
Denbighshire	North Wales	North Wales
Flintshire	North Wales – flexibility with working with Mersey Dee Alliance	North Wales
Gwynedd	CJC should not be imposed and no single footprint would be acceptable.	Existing footprint of GWE is working, but the Council does not want fixed footprint as may wish to consider alternatives

	<p>North Wales appropriate for economic development.</p> <p>Some sub-regional e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • planning (Anglesey and Gwynedd), • some aspects of transport (Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Powys) • some aspects of economic development (ARFOR - Gwynedd, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Anglesey) 	depending on future needs (e.g. North West Wales).
Merthyr Tydfil	City Deal	Central South Consortium
Monmouthshire	City Deal (<i>Unofficial response</i>)	EAS (<i>Unofficial response</i>)
Neath Port Talbot	City Deal (<i>Unofficial response</i>)	ERW currently being reviewed
Newport	<i>TBC</i>	
Pembrokeshire	City Deal	ERW currently being reviewed, but preference is to base it on City Deal footprint.
Powys	Mid Wales (Ceredigion and Powys, but ability to work with other LAs)	ERW currently being reviewed
Rhondda Cynon Taf	City Deal	Central South Consortium
Swansea	City Deal	ERW currently being reviewed, but preference is to base it on City Deal footprint
Torfaen	Confirmed it is not responding	
Vale of Glamorgan	<i>TBC</i>	
Wrexham	North Wales – flexibility with working with Mersey Dee Alliance	North Wales

Recommendations

11. Members are asked to consider the contents of the report.

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Annex A

Collaboration Principles

Collaboration, shared services or voluntary mergers should:

- Be locally-driven and subject to local democratic direction.
- Be underpinned by a locally agreed business case that:
 - Outlines mutual benefit and a clear understanding of shared costs
 - focuses on outcomes and whether, on balance, it is likely to lead to better public service outcomes - a service collaboration or shared services is not an outcome, but a means to an end. be centred on the delivery of clear outcomes / benefits for the citizens and communities. and ensuring accessible and seamless delivery of services to stakeholders and customers.
- Where appropriate, take account of existing collaborative arrangements e.g. City deals, Growth Deals and or shared services.
- Be shaped by appropriate engagement with service users and stakeholders
- Seek to strengthen strategic and operational collaboration and improve the integration of front line services across public service providers.
- Maintain transparent and flexible governance with clear local democratic accountability and appropriate scrutiny arrangements established from the start
- Be developed with due consideration of “Prosperity for All” and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and, in particular, the ‘5 ways of working’.

In addition, collaborative arrangements or shared services:

- Will be treated like all services and will be subject to scrutiny and will be reviewed periodically; if an established collaborative arrangement or shared service is underperforming or is not providing value for money for one or more local authorities, it may be appropriate to review, reform or even withdraw from such arrangements. Such decisions will not be made lightly and withdrawal from an established collaborative arrangement should not be viewed as a rejection of the concept of collaboration or a lack of a commitment to reform, but a business decision based on performance, delivery of outcomes or value for money.