

# Review of Strategic Partnerships

## FINAL REPORT

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review is a result of joint working between the Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association and Welsh NHS Confederation to solve a mutual problem i.e. simplifying complexities in Welsh public services working together.

It is worth noting from the outset of this report the scope of this review was to seek ways of simplifying and aligning the partnership landscape, working where possible within the current policy and leadership structures. The review was commissioned during a period when several other reviews into specific partnerships, such as Public Service Boards, Regional Partnership Boards and Regional Skills Partnerships, were ongoing. This review therefore sought to minimise additional burden on public services and has considered and incorporated observations from these wider reviews.

Views were sought to feed into this review and written submissions were received from 33 organisations, discussions were held with several national organisations, elected member and professional groupings and 16 in-depth interviews were held with various stakeholders.

The key issues raised were:

- The problem of ‘too many partnerships’ and ‘too many meetings’, particularly from those organisations that attend multiple partnerships in a given region.
- Despite the broad scope of the call for evidence a number of responses focused specifically on the Public Service Boards (PSBs) and Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs). For instance, there appear to be differing views on the distinction and overlap of interest of these boards.
- A majority of responses commented PSBs could be more effective if they had their own funding as some other partnerships do. They noted that their view is that the concept of pooled budgets is not generally happening in practice. The funding of policies in government departmental silos is seen by local government as promoting the proliferation of partnerships and shifting accountability from local communities to Welsh Government.
- Many of the current partnerships exist either through legislation or to manage a grant-funded programme of work on a mandated regional footprint. The nature of these usually leads to discrete – and unconnected - partnerships which can lead to additional bureaucracy through separate secretariat arrangements.
- With respect to improving the partnership landscape generally, there were a number of suggestions, but no consensus.
- It is clear the possible solutions, e.g. around pooling funding and determining footprints, are within the ambit of the current partnerships. Based on the

submissions so far there is little appetite for nationally imposed structural change through legislation.

One thing is clear is there was **no consistent request for Welsh Government to merge or abolish partnerships**. No-one proposed that any of these partnerships were not important, but responses focused on the resources required to maintain them or their effectiveness. The growth of partnerships in the past two decades coupled with the increasingly stretched resources of public services has meant that servicing these partnerships well and maximising impact has proven difficult. The dilemma, then, is satisfying both the need for, and benefit from, these partnerships against the pressure of doing more with less. Perhaps inevitably, there was not a consistent solution to this dilemma.

Perhaps most telling was the **consistent finding that a culture of collaboration and collegiate working developed locally was viewed as more important and powerful than rearranging geographical boundaries**. The general view is that collaboration is happening to an extent, but constrained by meeting the needs of the perceived lead or primary organisation first. Sometimes the issue of sovereignty was raised, particularly in respect of decisions around funding or accountability with partnerships seen as blurring responsibility for decision-making. Requiring people to work in a partnership does not necessarily lead to effective co-working, but it is a start. Despite decades of partnership working, there remains a need to develop the collegiate culture within organisations, beginning with the leaders, across public, private and third sector services.

It was clear that **in different parts of Wales, some solutions have already been sought to simplifying the partnership landscape**, capitalising on the flexibilities in the requirements of these partnerships and – usually – existing productive relationships. Given the range of views on the optimal solutions, the opportunities to use those flexibilities and the general resistance to a nationally-imposed restructure, this review has sought to focus its recommendations on the pragmatic i.e. what *can* be done rather than what *could* be done in a more perfect situation.

This report should be viewed as taking reasonable steps, based on the evidence of successful ‘self-improvement’, to work with the leaders in the system to improve the efficacy and visibility of partnership working and develop a collegiate working culture in public services.

## BACKGROUND

The complexity of the strategic partnership landscape in Wales is an issue which is raised frequently and has been consistently highlighted in independent reviews of Welsh public services over several decades.

*Beyond Boundaries: Citizen-Centred Local Services for Wales* (Beecham et al, 2006) noted that two critical success factors to more effective public services were partnership and citizen engagement. It also noted that whilst changing structures of public services wouldn't, by itself, achieve the changes in cultures needed, that it shouldn't mean that structures should not change to tackle capacity constraints and share expertise across areas and sectors. It noted that partnership is difficult and needs the investment of time, resources and leadership, but that it has a key role to play in delivering significant improvements in services. To achieve this, the whole architecture of public services, and the culture, skills and behaviours of those who work in them, needed to be made more conducive to shared delivery.

*Local, Regional, National: What services are best delivered where?* (Simpson et al, 2011) made 21 recommendations on how local government services could best be delivered, with a heavy focus on collaboration between councils. This review led to the signing of the Compact for Change between the Welsh Government and Welsh local government in December 2011. This was intended to provide a route map for new ways of organising public services with the aim of formalising a partnership approach across a range of council services, and to standardise collaboration in order to improve delivery and outcomes.

The *Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery* (Williams et al, 2014) came to the view that whilst collaboration and partnership working can have the potential to overcome some of these problems, the way in which it had been implemented had often compounded them. It felt that governance of partnerships needed to be clearer and stronger, with a sharper set of priorities, plans and outcomes. It concluded that local partnership structures must be radically streamlined and made more effective. Their conclusion was that the-then local service boards should take responsibility for maintaining a single register of local partnerships and local partnership structures.

Since those reviews, new partnerships have been established and it is not clear to what extent actions were taken to address actions from previous reports on the complexity, and importance, of partnership working. Consequently, many public service and third sector partners are engaged in several partnerships covering a range of issues, priorities or themes.

### Other reviews of Wales' strategic partnerships

This review sought to ensure that there was no duplication of other reviews into existing or new partnerships proposals, or where changes to current partnerships were planned, that this was taken into account during this review. Desk research noted the following work either under way or recently complete:

### *Working Group on Local Government*

A Working Group on Local Government was established in 2018 as part of an agreement between Welsh Government and local government to design and define together, the future of local government in Wales. Its core task was to develop a shared agenda for reform which ensures the sustainability of local service provision through appropriate structures and processes – whether collaboration, shared services or voluntary mergers

It was clear from the conversations within the Working Group, and mapping work undertaken by local government, that there was already a significant amount of collaborative partnership working on both a voluntary and statutory basis throughout Wales.

However, there was a recognition within the Working Group that this landscape was complex and this complexity was potentially limiting the effectiveness and efficiency of these arrangements.

The Working Group on Local Government considered emerging work on mapping partnerships and there was an appetite for further work to be undertaken to review the partnership landscape –which led to the commissioning of Review of Strategic Partnerships set out in this report.

### *Regional Skills Partnerships*

In October 2019, the National Assembly for Wales' Economic, Infrastructure and Skills Committee published an inquiry into Regional Skills Partnerships, investigating how well the partnerships identify and reflect employer demand for skills. The recommendations were designed to give the partnerships a clear, strategic mission with a strong focus on identifying and breaking low-skill traps. [[Report](#) and [Welsh Government response](#)]

### *Regional Partnership Boards*

Work is planned by the Welsh Government to review the Regional Partnership Board experience and frame recommendations for Ministers on the future of integrated working in Wales.

In February 2020, a Regional Partnership Board learning event reflected on lessons learned from developing partnerships in their area.

A Self-Assessment Tool has been developed with stakeholders to help RPBs reflect and understand their progress, identify strengths and successes of the Partnership, whilst also highlighting opportunities for improvement. A Pilot of the Tool was due to commence with two RPBs in March 2020 but has now been delayed due to Covid-19.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales' office have undertaken a project this year which analysed the effectiveness of Regional Partnership Boards. They visited each RPB, challenging all of the boards to make sure that they are prioritising the needs of children and young people with complex needs through disability or illness (which includes mental illness) and ensuring they get the best possible care.

### *Public Service Boards*

In October 2019, the Wales Audit Office published their review of Public Services Boards. The review concluded that PSBs are unlikely to realise their potential unless they are given the freedom to work more flexibly and think and act differently. They also noted that, generally, PSBs are *engaging with citizens, but are not involving them* in their work and that despite public bodies valuing PSBs, there is no agreement on how their role should evolve.

It recommended the Welsh Government enables PSBs to develop flexible models of working including merging, reducing and integrating their work with other forums such as Regional Partnership Boards. It also recommended that Welsh Government gives PSBs flexibility to receive, manage and spend grant monies (subject to PSBs ensuring they have adequate safeguards and appropriate scrutiny systems in place.)

Finally, the report made a recommendation that it should take account of, and explore, the findings of the Wales Audit Office review.

### *A Framework for Regional Investment in Wales*

There is a live public consultation which sets out the Welsh Government's thinking on the future of regional investment outside the European Union, developed working closely with our partners. It covers a set of proposals for investing replacement funding from the UK Government in a national framework that is underpinned by investments targeted and managed regionally. The consultation closes on 22 May 2020.

### *Emerging Arrangements across Regional Partnership and Public Services Boards*

PSBs and RPBs which cover different but overlapping regional and local footprints, and different but related priorities, particularly in the areas of health, care and wellbeing. Local and regional partners across Wales have been working hard to develop various operating arrangements for the Boards which help them secure the most effective use of their time and expertise in improving outcomes for people in Wales.

In March 2019, Professor Keith Moultrie considered the relationship between RPBs and PSBs in a workshop of leaders from PSBs and RPBs sponsored by the Welsh Government.

### *Regional review of partnership working - Gwent*

The Gwent group of public service leaders and chief officers (G10) seeks to lead on "strategic, long term planning" planning while PSBs deliver the local detail. The Gwent Strategic Wellbeing Assessment Group (GSWAG) brings together public service professionals from five local authorities, Police, Health and other partners such as NRW and WLGA as a self-supporting hub for peer-to-peer learning and networking. The group was initially formed to work together to produce well-being assessments using a unified approach and has since evolved into a highly-valued peer sharing support forum for regional well-being issues.

*Regional review of partnership working – North Wales*

In 2019, the North Wales Partnership Task and Finish Group were tasked with looking at the current North Wales regional partnership structures from a safeguarding and community safety perspective. As a result of their findings, eight partnerships will be reduced to five, with the CONTEST board remaining for the time being.

Other local and regional partnerships have undertaken similar reviews. Whilst national reviews tend to identify common themes, barriers or opportunities usually relating to the national financial, policy or statutory framework, locally driven and negotiated reviews may have a better opportunity to change the performance or behaviours of partnerships and their member organisations. It is therefore important that the Welsh Government provides sufficient local empowerment and flexibility

## METHODOLOGY

In January 2019, the Working Group on Local Government, chaired by Derek Vaughan, noted that the number of strategic partnerships in Wales – often apparently including the same member bodies – creates a feeling that existing resources are required to be stretched even more thinly. This raised questions over the efficacy of the partnership landscape and whether, collectively, something could be done to simplify this.

Subsequently, the Welsh Government and WLGA agreed to undertake a review of strategic partnerships, seeking to incorporate the observations of the wider reviews. The review's aim was to consider the broad partnership landscape and collectively identify the key areas where there was felt to be unnecessary complexity or duplication, working with partners to identify opportunities for simplification and rationalisation in a focused and pragmatic way. The review sought to identify:

- Action which could be taken immediately by the relevant partnerships to rationalise partnerships/improve alignment;
- Action the Welsh Government could take immediately to rationalise partnerships/improve alignment;
- Action which would require legislative change through the Local Government and Elections Bill.

### *Phase One – Call for evidence*

The first phase of the review involved a call for written evidence (**Annex A**) from a broad range of public service leaders and chairs of partnerships along with a desk-based analysis of existing partnership reviews. This took place in the Summer and Autumn of 2019 and 33 responses were received from across:

- Principal Councils
- Local Health Board
- Other public sector bodies
- Inspection / audit services
- Third sector representatives

The full list of respondents can be found at **Annex B**. The review team also met separately with the members of the Welsh NHS Confederation, the Children's Commissioner for Wales, local authority Heads of Policy and Community Housing Cymru to seek their views.

An interim report was considered at Partnership Council for Wales on 2 October 2019<sup>1</sup>. The key issues raised were:

- The problem of 'too many partnerships' and 'too many meetings', particularly from those organisations that attend multiple partnerships in a given region e.g. Fire & Rescue Services, Police Services and Natural Resources Wales. This can lead to repeated conversations across multiple footprints.

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<sup>1</sup> Partnership Council for Wales – [Papers](#) – 2 October 2019

Organisations are concerned that they do not have sufficient capacity to fully support the existing system of arrangements.

- Despite the broad scope of the call for evidence a number of responses focused specifically on the Public Service Boards (PSBs) and Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs). For instance, there appear to be differing views on the distinction and overlap of interest of these boards.
- A majority of responses commented that PSBs could be more effective if they had their own funding as some other partnerships do. They noted that their view is that the concept of pooled budgets is not generally happening in practice. The funding of policies in government departmental silos is seen by local government as promoting the proliferation of partnerships and shifting accountability from local communities to Welsh Government.
- Many of the current partnerships exist either through legislation or to manage a grant-funded programme of work. The discrete nature of these usually leads to discrete – and unconnected - partnerships which can lead to additional bureaucracy through separate secretariat arrangements.
- With respect to improving the partnership landscape generally, there were a number of suggestions, but no consensus.
- It is clear that the possible solutions, e.g. around pooling funding and determining footprints, are within the ambit of the current partnerships. Based on the submissions so far there is little appetite for nationally imposed structural change through legislation.

The prevailing findings from this exercise was that there was no consistent view on how to create a simpler partnership landscape and no support for a legislative solution.

At that meeting, the Partnership Council for Wales agreed that the review team would test further hypotheses for rationalising partnerships in to provide practical recommendations for a future Partnership Council meeting.

### *Phase Two – Testing emerging hypotheses*

The review team adapted the ‘priority review’ methodology<sup>2</sup> to develop the approach to fieldwork.

Firstly, information from the initial call for evidence was used to develop a definition of strategic partnerships along with a list of strategic partnerships in scope.

Secondly, the purpose and bases for these partnerships was determined in order to provide clarity as to whether these partnerships were established through legislation, funding or other means.

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<sup>2</sup> Deliverology 101, Barber et al (2011)

Thirdly, from this evidence, a number of initial hypotheses were developed covering the known problems and most likely solutions. These hypotheses formed the basis of semi-structured interview questions which were put to a range of relevant stakeholders through field work interviews. The interview candidates were selected to provide:

- Sufficient coverage of sectors included in partnership working
- Balance of sectors and perspectives to account for potential biases
- Coverage to ensure that key areas of Partnership Council contribute
- Sufficient evidence to triangulate findings and provide assurance of recommendations
- Availability within the interview timeframe.

Individuals were interviewed by teams of two (from different public services) and face-to-face, where possible. Interviewees were assured that individual comments would not be identifiable in the final report.

Further discussions were held with stakeholder forums, including the Partnership Council Local Government Sub Group in March 2020.

Responses from the fieldwork were analysed and synthesised under the broad headings of the questions i.e. the opportunities for aligning existing partnerships, the barriers (actual or perceived) to aligning partnerships and how we might measure the success of changes to the partnership landscape.

## DEFINITION

Initial written submissions clarified what stakeholders considered to be the definition and scope of strategic partnerships to be included in this review. The following definition of strategic partnerships below was adopted for the review:

*A partnership of decision-makers across the public services (including third and private sector partners) tasked with collaboratively connecting and delivering a policy or strategy of high strategic importance.*

*The partnership approach is required by Welsh and/or UK Government through legislation, policy or grants administration processes.*

The fieldwork demonstrated consistently that stakeholders felt that there were two types of strategic partnership: the first being **multi-purpose, high-level boards** with long term goals and objectives, and the second being **single-purpose policy boards** focused on issues of strategic importance, for which a partnership approach was appropriate. Although 'single-purpose' partnerships typically focus on a range of complex matters, they have been described as 'single-purpose' as they tend to have a specific policy, programme or thematic focus. Interviews fed back that the current multi-purpose boards had relatively clear purposes i.e. well-being and place-based services (Public Services Boards) and health & social care (Regional Partnership Boards).

It was also noted that there was a natural strategic partnership for economic issues (City Deals, Growth or Ambition Boards), although issues relating to these partnerships were rarely raised in discussions or submissions.

From the fieldwork, the partnerships in scope have been categorised as below:

### *Strategic Partnerships (multi-purpose)*

- Public Services Board
- Regional Partnership Board
- City Deals / Growth/Ambition Board

### *Strategic Policy Partnerships (single-purpose)*

- Community Safety Partnership
- Adult's Safeguarding Partnership
- Children's Safeguarding Partnership
- Regional Skills Partnership
- Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group
- Area Planning Board (substance misuse)
- VAWDA SV Partnerships
- Mental Health Partnerships

Single sector collaborations or joint services e.g. school improvement consortia or the proposed Corporate Joint Committees were not in scope for this review.

The partnerships are established on a range of bases and are not always dependent on legislation. **Annex C** outlines the mechanisms by which each partnership has been established, their purpose, membership and area footprint. It is a well known feature that the partnership landscape is complex, with a range of area footprints represented i.e.:

- Principal Councils
- Local Health Boards
- Economic regions
- Fire & Rescue Services
- Police Forces

## ALIGNMENT OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

This review was not remitted to investigate the scope, governance, membership or performance of individual partnership arrangements. It is how these partnerships best fit together under existing arrangements which is the purpose of the review.

In summary, many felt that closer alignment and connections between partnerships were sensible, but there remains no consensus on what an ideal structure would be. It was clear that a top-down restructure was not desirable, largely as it might damage successful solutions already happening in some areas.

A number of interviews observed that these strategic partnerships were established over a 20 year period by different Ministers and administrations, and – they believed – without adequate regard to acknowledging existing partnerships. Subsequently, a significant number of interviews noted that the current partnership landscape was siloed and there was a general lack of connection or inter-relationship between the partnerships. Although some work had taken place to align partnerships in some areas, this generally was not the case.

Stakeholders also reflected that different area footprints for different portfolios complicated matters. This has been a consistent issue of complexity identified in several previous reviews, as police forces, fire & rescue services, health boards and principal councils are not on the same area footprints. However, interviewees generally commented that policy alignment is more important than area alignment i.e. that having good links between partnerships of overlapping interests (e.g. relating to community safety) was more important than aligning all partnerships on the same area footprint. This theme relates to ownership. The greater the role partners play in establishing and managing the partnership, the greater the “buy-in” to the partnership. The City Deal and Growth Partnerships illustrate this principle.

A number of options for partnership alignment were raised during the review. The views varied by sector and by region, suggesting that there are several options rather than an optimal one, and that the most pragmatic solution may depend on local arrangements and existing relationships. No option was given more than once. Possibilities raised by interviewees for better aligned partnerships included:

- Community Safety Partnerships, VAWDASV and Safeguarding – could group together or connect their work.
- Community Safety Partnerships could report to PSBs (and do so in at least some areas).
- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) partnerships – although these partnerships should continue to work regionally on an RPB footprint, different respondents suggested they could report via PSBs or RPBs.
- There was an example of safeguarding boards being managed through the RPB (although the RPB did not have scrutiny arrangements through local government).
- There were comments around missed opportunities for alignments by not having police membership on the Regional Partnership Boards, for instance, to support joining up to support mental health in an area.

- There were comments around missed opportunities in not joining up Area Planning Boards (substance misuse) and VAWDASV partnerships as these often impact the same groups of people.

There were concerns expressed by some in the community safety and policing sectors that they sought closer engagement in partnerships involving health and social care partners. This was reported as impacting on the adoption of a more “social” model of policing based on learning from the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and a redefinition of crime to include exploitation and grooming of vulnerable people.

It was noted that alignment of partnerships need not be a permanent re-alignment, but could be based on current priorities. Therefore, some local flexibility is sensible. For instance, one interviewee noted that policing currently has four pressing strategic challenges which drive the front line experience that police have to respond to i.e.:

- Mental health
- Substance misuse
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Domestic violence and abuse

If all the strategic partnerships were able to align in such a way that these drivers could be met by all of the relevant partnerships working together, there could be a significant impact on the front line. The review team recognises that these priorities may change in 5-10 years and the option to re-align again could be a strength. A permanent, legislated solution could hamstring such responsiveness.

Some stakeholders commented that it is not always evident whether and how these boards connect. Reporting lines or merged boards are not always necessary, but if the partnerships were connected in some way, such as through common members (people, not organisations), updates or formal reporting lines, then the partnerships and the public could have confidence that partnerships are joined up, not duplicating efforts and working towards common aims.

There are examples of instances where an areas have already taken the initiative to rationalise the working of these partnerships. One example is the North Wales Leadership Board. A task and finish group reviewed the North Wales regional partnership structures from a Safeguarding and Community Safety perspective, in order to ensure that complex and cross-cutting issues could be managed in an effective way by partnerships across the region. It was felt that the signs and symptoms of specific issues may manifest themselves across a number of partnerships, without any one partnership having a clear view of the bigger, joined-up picture. The Board decided to reform eight partnerships into five, more strategic partnerships, initially with the intention to have four eventually. The new boards link into the Adult and Children Safeguarding boards and they are exploring the potential of the North Wales Adults and Children’s Safeguarding Partnerships merging.

In Gwent, the G10 leaders group and GSWAG operational group provide a means of joining up the activities across the constituent PSBs. The Chairs / Leaders and Chief Executives of the statutory members of the five PSBs in Gwent, along with the Chief Constable and Police & Crime Commissioner for Gwent, form a regional group called

G10. G10 is supported by nominated officers from their organisations (GSWAG) who work to identify and deliver common well-being objectives at a regional level and reduce duplication. This way of working also draws in external funding only available at a regional level.

In addition to the partnerships above, there were significant responses commenting on the relationship between Public Services Boards (PSBs) and Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs). Responses noted that these were two strategic boards focussed on (different, but inter-related aspects of) well-being, sometimes with an unclear operational relationship, which made the landscape more complex for some. Both have statutory bases and statutory requirements to fulfil, although it was noted that RPBs also serve significant operational purposes – the management of the Integrated Care Fund and Transformation Fund from Welsh Government. Substantial grant funds have been made available over several years and in future years RPBs will be funded to deliver a Healthier Wales and related change programmes. The PSBs do not have an equivalent operational role.

Interviews noted that the purposes for these boards were largely distinct – albeit with an overlap in care and support – and the membership varied (both by sector and seniority). Some felt that the RPB had become more operational in nature as it has responsibility for managing the Integrated Care Fund and Transformation Fund. Some reflected that the PSB had, in principle, a more strategic perspective as it looked at a broad range of public services across a place, including social services. However, others reflected that, in practice, RPBs had significant funds to manage and were seen as a more powerful, and quicker, vehicle for effecting action. Some expressed a desire for some of the money which was spent by RPBs to be spent by PSBs where the activities were more preventative in nature.

A minority of interviews suggested that a ‘strategic leaders’ board’ consisting of the most senior leaders from across the public services (with representation from the third and private sectors) could oversee all of these partnerships – mobilising operational partnerships as required. This would appear to be a modification of the North Wales and Gwent solutions. Reporting lines could then be clearer. However, under current legislation, this cannot be achieved and the existing PSB and RPB requirements would still need to be met, thus adding an additional layer of senior leaders’ meetings. It is not clear whether this would be supported across the public services. This would be a substantial undertaking, could create another partnership tier and would need further exploration. As proposals would likely impact on legislation, a Green or White paper would be needed to formally consult on such changes. It was not achievable via legislation in the short-term, but could be developed informally on a regional basis if partners were in agreement.

In Spring 2019, Professor Keith Moultrie (Institute of Public Care) reported on a workshop relating to emerging arrangements across Regional Partnership and Public Services Boards. His observations from that event included that:

- There is no desire for further legislation or guidance in this area
- Further joint working between the Welsh Government teams responsible for supporting RPBs and PSBs will be essential, and activities which they may want to undertake together in the next period include:

- i. Default position of joint communications from the teams to both PSBs and RPBs about issues relevant to both or either;
- ii. Regular liaison meetings between the teams to note developments and changes with both Boards;
- iii. Further occasional events to bring together partners from across Wales to share learning and different approaches that work.

Following that workshop and Professor Moultrie's report, the deputy minister for Housing and Local Government and the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services issued a joint letter to Chairs of these boards (**Annex D**).

An infographic has been co-developed outlining the responsibilities and relationships between the two boards (**Annex E**). The Welsh Government is also working together to align the processes for assessments of population needs and of local well-being – with a joint PSB and RPB workshop on this theme planned. Next steps will include alignment of board support and regular meetings of all Chairs of PSBs and RPBs.

## BARRIERS TO ALIGNING AND RATIONALISING PARTNERSHIPS

Given the range of options available to rationalising partnerships, and the instances where it had happened, it is important to consider why this wasn't more commonplace.

Interviews revealed a range of reasons why partnerships may not have realigned locally. In most cases, a combination of these applied. At a local level, feedback suggested rationalisation could be constrained by:

- Lack of awareness of options
- Risk aversion to change in case it proved less effective
- Lack of enthusiasm from relevant partners – particularly in contributing towards pooled funding
- Complexities due to overlapping area partnerships footprints
- Complexities due to differing priorities of boards in terms of actions
- Concern the purpose of more specific policy partnerships might get side-lined in any merged partnerships. There was some reluctance to allow what might be seen as a power grab or takeover
- Concern that some partners (e.g. third sector, citizens might get pushed to side-lines in a bigger board) where 'bigger hitters' dominate
- Size of new partnerships/board may be prohibitive to effective working if all members transferred
- Purpose of new boards may be confused and complex with a mixture of strategic and operational purposes
- Recognition that proposal may push meetings into sub-groups, which could create more meetings overall.

However, across the interviews, **the key perceived barrier to successful partnership working is cultural**. That is, working at partnerships is less effective where partners retain their siloed interests and find it hard to pool budgets and resources to support the partnership. Counter to that, the most successful examples of working across partnerships to simplify the administrative and delivery burden is where organisations are able to demonstrate leadership in putting the broader public service interest ahead of their own organisational interest – although in reality, it might be expected that these should broadly be the same.

**Where additional money is provided to a partnership to support delivery, this can make it easier to work on collective aims** (e.g. in the RPB). However, this slightly goes against the principle of joining up and pooling resources to meet mutual policy needs. Giving the partnership additional money does not incentivise changing this behaviour and could undermine partnership commitment if partners do not need to re-prioritise local resources but instead allocate national resources. In terms of the PSB, flexibility exists to use existing grant monies allocated to one of the public bodies within the PSB, provided it contributes towards the well-being objectives. However, this would appear not to happen as much as stakeholders believe it could. The review was made aware that some grants are given on a principal council basis, with some competition for that funding. In those cases, this does not necessarily reward joint working across a region in a PSB area.

It was reported in terms of **third sector representatives across these partnerships, that they may not be sufficiently supported to provide strategic input and insight** across them most effectively. This could be led by the Third Sector Partnership Council. The Third Sector Partnership Council and coordinated by County Voluntary Councils.

Overall, there was **no general support for a national restructure of partnerships**, largely due to the reasons given above. Also, there was no support for any particular partnership to be stood down. In addition, it was felt that local leadership was best placed to determine what would work best in their area. A locally-led approach was also felt to be more likely to have collective buy-in.

A minority of interviewees felt the Welsh Government could take a significant step by making fundamental changes to portfolio footprints and the partnership landscape to simplify delivery. However, this is likely to require considerable political, administrative, legislative and financial costs given few of the partnerships were statutory. This would require much further work of the scale of the Williams and Beecham Reviews.

Partnerships therefore need maximum local flexibility and proportionate governance and regulation to allow them to focus on outcomes and a smaller number of priorities. This would enable the partners to play a greater role in determining how to deliver outcomes and to work together in ways more suited to their capability and capacity.

That said, there is an acceptance that merely leaving things as they are is not a proactive way to rationalise partnerships. The appetite from some partners is that the Welsh Government could encourage and incentivise changes so long as it did not require particular structures.

## GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF PARTNERSHIPS

The focus of the review was to consider the alignment of partnerships and any actions to improve alignment or rationalise partnerships where necessary. Governance and accountability arrangements are a key features in the alignment or rationalisation of partnerships. It was important to note that wider, more in-depth work was ongoing during this period, notably the Wales Audit Office study of PSBs and the work around the relationship of PSBs and RPBs.

Contributions and evidence however considered governance and wider factors affecting the effectiveness of partnerships. Although these are not all necessarily within the scope of this review and are being considered in other reviews, they have been included here for completeness.

Feedback suggested that a reduction in the burden of meetings (in terms of meetings, travel and preparation of papers), resultant cost (and opportunity cost) savings, better outcomes for relevant policy areas, better connected partnership landscape and improved citizen visibility of their work.

### Links between Partnerships

Some interviews noted that if the partnerships were better connected – and were *seen* to be more connected – this could provide assurance of appropriate join-up and remove concerns of duplication. Interviewees who were members of some partnerships, but not others, often felt unsighted on work happening elsewhere, even if there were clear links. This made it harder for them to usefully and strategically contribute or join-up as they were not fully aware of the full picture across partnerships. A case in point might be that members of the Area Planning Boards may wish to be clearer on activities in the Mental Health Partnerships or VAWDASV partnerships given the overlap in interests.

Interviews generally made the point that **form should follow function**. Whilst reducing meetings and bureaucracy is an important aim, the primary focus must be on delivering better outcomes. In a similar vein, it was important that the partnership did added value to the policy areas, and did not just meet because it was required to do so. This meant the right level and number of delegates needed to attend to allow effective decision-making. The review explored whether any suitable (and non-bureaucratic) metrics might reveal this information.

### Meetings

Measuring the numbers of meetings and attendees would not provide intelligence on whether partnerships had simplified. It could be that more meetings are occurring in future, but shorter, more effective meetings with officers of appropriate level. Also, it is relatively easy to achieve the aim of fewer meetings but it does not follow that this will lead to better outcomes.

## Partnership culture

One of the dominant themes throughout stakeholder interviews was that the culture has a significant impact on partnership working. Whilst many are content with a degree of partnership working, in the main, organisational sovereignty of decisions and funding still trumps genuine joint working. Some of this is procedural i.e. the need to account for how an organisation's budget is being used to meet an organisational objective, or where the best scrutiny lies (e.g. with local democracy or Ministerial reporting). However, a significant amount of the reluctance is down to personal leadership. Partnership working is challenging, especially in a culture of silo working and different sets of accountabilities. Culture has been identified in several studies of partnerships from Beecham to Williams. Various approaches have been adopted to try to develop and embed a culture of collective leadership, including guidance, principles, training and development and legislation, most notably the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

## Collective Accountability

In a similar vein, some interviewees and submissions noted that we should look at the collective accountabilities in these organisations. That is, organisations feel that they are held to account through a mixture of long-term collective accountabilities as well as short-term organisational measures through grants or in-year performance. It was felt that this provided mixed motivations for organisations who will usually prioritise the shorter term measures as they are more valued by scrutiny committees or Welsh Government. Similarly, despite the Well-being of Future Generations Act, arguably society and some public services continue to place greater focus on remedies rather than preventions – which is harder to measure. More intelligent forms of accountability could further help these organisations and partnerships to show how they are benefiting their communities. It was noted that the ways in which the partnerships are measured will influence the behaviours and culture of partnerships and their leaders.

On the part of local government, many respondents commented that the regional nature of several strategic partnerships introduced by the Welsh Government, allied to the several attempts at local government reform, had led to concerns around the undermining of democratic local accountability and this was further affected by a lack of clarity given the complex pattern of partnerships, which impacted on scrutiny.

## Prescription and Proportionate Regulation

The contributions of regulators to the review often focussed on their concerns regarding the effectiveness of the partnerships under review. They emphasised the need for a better definition of outcomes being sought from partnerships and questioned whether partnerships are giving sufficient consideration to how they perform. There was a perception from some that **partnerships, particularly those long-established or set-up by Welsh Government policy or statute, can be seen to become ends in themselves, rather than a means to an end.** Administration and regulation become disproportionately burdensome, diverting energy and resources from delivering outcomes.

Many of those responsible for coordinating or supporting the partnerships feel there is over-regulation and too much prescription; the opportunities and value of local flexibility is undermined due to burdens from regulators or the expectations or national priorities of Welsh Government. Much complexity arises from detailed regulations and reporting requirements placed on multiple organisations and improvements could be achieved by relaxing the detail and scope. This would enable a greater focus on outcomes and fewer priorities which would aid decision-making and effectiveness.

## **Membership**

Some interviewees and submissions raised specific concerns over the **membership – or lack thereof – on certain partnerships**. There was a particular appetite from some to be included on PSBs or RPBs with rationale provided. However, interviews also noted that the subsequent size of the board could make it unmanageable and less strategic in nature. . Although, in some cases, legislation sets out the core membership of partnerships, it should be a matter for local discretion to review and if necessary extend membership as appropriate.

Organisational consistency within partnership working is also an issue– with scope for different representatives from an organisation turning up to different meetings of a partnership; and different representatives sitting on different partnerships. Both can make it difficult to ensure consistent approaches are adopted on issues.

## **Citizen Awareness and Involvement**

There was a general recognition of the need to improve citizen engagement in and understanding of partnerships. Interviewees noted that it was not clear in all partnerships where the citizen voice was valued or sought. It followed that citizen understanding of, at least some of these partnerships is, probably limited. Although citizens tended to be engaged or involved more through constituent public services, transparency of the work of partnerships was desired, as was clarity of purpose and impact. It was suggested that the partnerships should self-assess individually whether they could improve their citizen engagement and respond accordingly. This is entirely consistent with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations have been grouped under four key themes which emerged during the review. Where the owner is not named, the review team believes that a collective effort is needed to achieve the key outcomes of rationalising and simplifying the partnership landscape.

### **Theme A: Clarifying the strategic partnership landscape**

It is important to consider the existing strategic partnership landscape whenever new requirements for public services to work in partnerships emerge – to ensure that no unnecessary complexity, or duplication of activity, is added.

Recommendation 1. No new partnerships should be established or required without referring to the existing landscape or considering whether an existing partnership can deliver the outcome required.

Recommendation 2. No new functions should be given to existing partnerships without considering what obligations can be reviewed or removed or what additional resources may be required.

Recommendation 3. Welsh Government considers whether departments can reduce the partnership arrangements set up to administer specific grant programmes.

### **Theme B: Making use of flexibilities to provide local solutions to aligning partnerships**

The review has demonstrated throughout that there is no consensus on the optimal way of rationalising partnerships. Indeed, there were few consistent views. The optimal solution appears to be whatever works best in a given region based on local priorities and existing relationships. A legislative solution to rationalising partnerships at this stage, would be disproportionate and have limited impact given few of the partnerships have a statutory basis but that all partners should prioritise finding their own solutions.

Recommendation 4. Welsh Government to write to Chairs of all partnerships to clarify and confirm that flexibilities exist to for partnerships to review their own arrangements and alignment as appropriate – in terms of policy and geography.

Recommendation 5. All strategic partnerships in an area should seek to play an active role to ensure that they are aligned more closely so that there are fewer partnerships. The multi-purpose strategic partnerships (such as PSBs and RPBs) have a natural leadership role in initiating this.

Recommendation 6. Welsh Government to provide offer of facilitation for partnerships to review how they are aligned on their footprints.

Recommendation 7. Welsh Government to explore and communicate how funding might best be distributed across strategic partnerships where it may be sensible to do so and to consider the capacity of partners to support these partnerships.

Recommendation 8. All strategic partnerships should commit to, and invest in, board development and the development of collaborative cultures throughout the constituent organisations.

**Theme C: Making the work and impact of partnerships clear**

Citizens and those with a responsibility to represent citizens and scrutinise the work of public services, have a right to understand how public services and any partnerships are serving them.

Recommendation 9. All strategic partnerships should publish basic information online, which is easily accessible, outlining terms of reference, vision, membership, reporting on outcomes/progress and how citizens or communities can get involved.

**Theme D: Periodic Proportionate Review**

Partnerships should take a lead role in finding their own solutions, with the offer of facilitation and training to support changes. Most partnerships report on the delivery of objectives or outcomes and many produce annual reports and many already periodically self-review the continued relevance of their governance arrangements.

The Partnership Council, with representatives from public services who work together through a range of partnerships, is well placed to refer matters of concern from local or regional partnerships for the attention of Welsh Ministers.

Recommendation 10. As part of the normal cycle of review and reporting, all strategic partnerships should seek to build in periodic reviews of their terms of reference, governance arrangements, membership and alignment to other groups or partnerships

Recommendation 11. Partnership Council to periodically review the partnership landscape to consider whether, when and where Welsh Government policy or legislative change may be required.

## **ANNEX A – JOINT LETTER FROM THE LEADER OF THE WLGA AND THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

To: Leaders of Local Authorities  
Chairs of Public Bodies  
Chief Executives of Public Bodies

13 June 2019

Dear colleague,

### **Review of Strategic Partnerships**

We believe the time is right to undertake a review of the strategic partnership landscape in Wales – working together to identify the key areas where there is felt to be unnecessary complexity or duplication and to identify opportunities for simplification and rationalisation.

The review will seek to identify:

- Action which can be taken immediately by the relevant partnerships to rationalise partnerships/improve alignment
- Action the Welsh Government can take immediately to rationalise partnerships/improve alignment
- Action which would require legislative change

This is something which should be done in partnership, with those who are involved in strategic partnerships or have an interest in the effective and impact of these partnerships.

As a first step we are keen to get a view from you, as the people directly involved in these partnership arrangements, on where we should target our attention. What do you see as the main challenges, and opportunities for simplification and rationalisation?

We are conscious that many areas have already conducted local reviews of their partnership arrangements, or fed into wider national reviews such as that undertaken

on community safety, and would welcome any insight you have gained from these reviews – both in terms of key areas to look at and action already taken locally to rationalise partnerships/improve alignment that other areas could learn from. We are aware that other national reviews of specific partnership arrangements are currently being undertaken and these will feed into our review.

The review will be undertaken as a proportionate and pragmatic task and finish piece of work, rather than a lengthy exercise – taking around six months from instigation to completion.

We would welcome any views you have **by 5 July**. We are then envisaging a period of targeted engagement over the summer before providing a final report with recommendations to the meeting of the Partnership Council for Wales on 2 October.

I attach the terms of reference for information.

If you would like to discuss the review please contact [claire.germain@gov.wales](mailto:claire.germain@gov.wales) or [stephen.jones@wlga.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.jones@wlga.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,



**Councillor Debbie Wilcox**  
**Leader of the WLGA**



**Julie James AC/AM**  
**Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol**  
**Minister for Housing and Local Government**

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURES –TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Background:

1. The Working Group on Local Government considered emerging work on mapping partnerships at its meeting on 25 January and there was an appetite for further work to be undertaken to review the partnership landscape. The perception of a crowded partnership landscape has also consistently been raised with Minister for Housing and Local Government.

2. The timing of the review will inform the development of regional working proposals for the Local Government and Elections Bill. Undertaking the review will include consultation with local authorities and their partners on a regional basis to gather evidence on what does and does not work in terms of strategic partnership arrangements and the extent to which the strategic partnership landscape should be streamlined.

### Purpose of the review:

3. The purpose of the review will be to review the partnership landscape and consider whether there is any unnecessary complexity or duplication; and identify opportunities for simplification and rationalisation.

4. The objectives would be to

- Identify key partnership arrangements where there are felt to be overlapping remits.
  - o Consider whether the purposes for which these partnership arrangements were established remain valid;
  - o Consider whether the mechanisms for achieving these purposes (and supporting arrangements) remain appropriate or could be achieved in a more efficient / effective way
  - o Consider what governance and accountability arrangements are required
- Make recommendations on:
  - o Practical action which can be taken immediately by the relevant partnerships to rationalise partnerships/improve alignment within the current legislative framework
  - o Action the Welsh Government can take immediately to rationalise partnerships/improve alignment within the current legislative framework
  - o Any aspects which would require legislative change

### Scope of the review:

5. The focus of the review will be on “strategic partnerships”. An initial task for the review will be to agree a definition of a strategic partnership.

6. The review will take account of other nationally commissioned reviews of specific partnerships, for example:

- The OECD Multi-Level Governance Review, which has been commissioned to inform the implementation of the 'Economic Action Plan' as part of 'Prosperity for All' and the development of the replacement regional investment approach to replace EU Structural Funds post-Brexit.
- Independent Review of the Regional Skills Partnerships
- WAO local government study on Public Services Boards and the effectiveness of partnership working
- Joint inspectorate work on the progress of new local models of health and social care, and the effectiveness of Regional Partnership Board joint working

### **Approach:**

7. The review will be undertaken as a shared endeavour with local government

8. It is broadly envisaged that, to inform its considerations, the review would need to:

- Gather evidence about partnership arrangements, and how they currently operate / align (including taking stock of reviews of regional arrangements which have already taken place)
- Engage with those involved in the partnership arrangements to seek their views
- Engage others with an interest as to the effectiveness and impact of these partnerships
- Engage the relevant Ministers and policy officials with an interest in each partnership to seek their views

9. Engagement could take the form of a series of regional events, similar to those undertaken in 2016 which informed the Resilient and Renewed White Paper, as well as individual interviews with Leaders, Ministers and others involved in/with an interest in the partnership arrangements being explored.

### **Governance:**

10. A joint secretariat will be formed comprising of Welsh Government and WLGA officials to oversee the work. Additional support for evidence gathering and engagement will be secured from within local government as well as the Welsh Government.

11. The review will report to the Partnership Council for Wales, with an update on progress to the meeting on 12 June and final report to the meeting on 2 October.

### **Timescales:**

12. It is envisaged that the review would be undertaken as a proportionate/pragmatic task and finish piece of work, rather than lengthy exercise – taking around six months from instigation to completion.

## **Annex B – REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSIPS – EVIDENCE GATHERED**

### **Call for evidence – Written Responses – July 2019**

- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Cardiff Public Services Board (council and partners)
- Carmarthenshire County Council
- Ceredigion County Council
- Conwy County Borough Council
- Denbighshire County Council
- Gwynedd Council
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
- Neath Port Talbot County Council
- Torfaen County Borough Council
- Vale of Glamorgan Council
- Hywel Dda Health Board
- Velindre Trust Health Board
- Public Health Wales
- North Wales RPB
- Gwent APB
- Mid and West Wales Fire Service
- South Wales Fire Service
- Natural Resources Wales
- North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- South Wales Police
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- Future Generations Commissioner (2 submissions)
- Care Inspectorate Wales
- Estyn
- Health Inspectorate Wales
- Wales Audit Office
- Welsh NHS Confederation
- Care and Share Cymru
- Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services
- WCVA
- WISERD

#### Interviewees:

- Carol Shillabeer – Chair, Powys RPB and Chief Executive, Powys Teaching Health Board
- Eleri Thomas – Deputy PCC, Gwent
- Adrian Crompton – Auditor General
- Rachel Rowlands – Chair, Cwm Taf Morgannwg RPB and Chief Executive Age Connect
- Kath Peters – Policy Officer, Caerphilly CBC
- Ann Lloyd – Chair, Aneurin Bevan UHB
- Sally Holland - Children’s Commissioner
- Peter Davies – Chair, WCVA
- Alun Michael – PCC, South Wales
- Sue Cooper – DSS, Bridgend CBC and President of ADSS Cymru
- Helena Herklots – Older People’s Commissioner
- Michelle Morris – Chief Executive, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- Dilwyn Owen Williams – Chief Executive, Gwynedd Council
- Ian Bancroft – Chief Executive, Wrexham County Borough Council
- Teresa Owen, Chair, North Wales RPB and Director of Public Health, Betsi Cadwaladr UHB
- Nicola Stubbins, Chair, Leadership Group, North Wales RPB and Corporate Director: Communities, Denbighshire County Council

#### Additional discussions and meetings:

- Heads of Inspectorate
- Local Authority Heads of Policy
- Social Services Policy Group (local authority Cabinet Members for Social Services and ADSS)
- Welsh NHS Confederation members
- Community Housing Cymru
- Partnership Council Local Government Sub Group

## ANNEX D - REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS – LEGISLATIVE STATUS OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership	Statutory?	Provision	Purpose	Partners	Footprint
Public Services Board	Yes	WFG Act (2015), Part 4	Each public services board must improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of its area by contributing to the achievement of the well-being goals.	<u>Statutory</u> Local authority, relevant Local Health Board, relevant Fire & rescue authority, Natural Resources Wales.	LA (generally)
Regional Partnership Board	Yes	SSWB Act (2014), Part 9	Local authorities must work together with Local Health Boards better and work with other partners who deliver care and support.	Local Health Board, Local Authorities (Social Care, Education, Housing), third sector, carers, citizens	Health Board
Community Safety Partnership	Yes	Sections 5-7 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998	A legal responsibility for chief executives of local authorities and health boards, chief constables and chief fire officers and chief officers of probation services to work in partnership to prevent and reduce crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, behaviour adversely affecting	Local Authorities, Police, Youth Justice, Area Planning Board, Fire & Rescue, Probation Service and the Health Board	Local Authority

			the environment, substance misuse and re-offending.		
Adult's safeguarding partnership	Yes	SSWB Act (2014), Section 134	Section 135(2) of the SSWA 2014 specifies the objectives of a Safeguarding Adults Board, which are to protect adults in its area who have needs for care and support and who are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect, and also to prevent adults with needs for care and support from becoming at risk of abuse or neglect.	Local Authorities, Social Services, Health Board, PHW, Police, National Probation Service, Office of the Police Crime Commissioner, Housing, Third Sector Organisations	Health Board
Children's safeguarding partnership	Yes	SSWB Act (2014), Section 134,	Section 135(1) of the SSWA 2014 specifies the objectives of a Safeguarding Children Board, which are to protect children in its area who are experiencing or are at risk of abuse, neglect or other harm and to prevent children in its area from becoming at risk of abuse, neglect or other harm.	Local Authorities, Social Services, Health Board, PHW, Police, National Probation Service, Office of the Police Crime Commissioner, Housing, Third Sector Organisations	Health Board
Regional Skills Partnership	No	The Policy Statement on Skills (published January 2014) set out the policy direction for regional skills delivery, under the heading "Skills That Respond to Local Need" and the announcement of 3 Regional Skills Partnerships	Regional Skills Partnerships are voluntary bodies in place to drive investment in skills by developing responses based upon local and regional need. They produce Regional Employment and Skills Plans	Businesses, Industry bodies, Higher and further education institutions, Training providers, Schools, Local authorities and the Welsh Government	North, South East, and South West & Mid Wales

			to analyse and influence the provision of skills based on regional economic need, to support growth and key infrastructure projects in each region. The Regional Employment and Skills Plans build on and support priorities identified by Enterprise Zones, City Deal, City Regions and cross border collaborations.		
City Deals / Ambitions Board	No	<a href="#">City Deals and the Regional Economies of Wales</a>		Welsh Government, Local authorities, DWP, Businesses, Industry bodies, Higher and further education institutions, Training providers, Schools	
Regional Collaboration Committee (supporting people)  From April 1 2020, Regional Housing Support Collaborative Groups	No	Driven through grant funding conditions  Details in Supporting People Programme Guidance	The aim and overall focus of the RCCs is to provide strategic direction and scrutiny, at a regional level, for the Programme. Producing the Regional Strategic Plan, including a Spend Plan, to be shared with the Social Services and Well-being Regional Partnership Service Boards and the Welsh Government	Local authorities, Health, Probation, Supporting People Service Providers and Landlords	6 Committees covering the 22 LA areas – broadly in line with LHB footprint

Area Planning Board	No , though brought together previous arrangements which do have a statutory basis	<p>Driven through grant funding - Substance Misuse Action Fund (SMAF)</p> <p>Established in 2010 as part of the new arrangements to deliver the Welsh Government Substance Misuse Strategy 'Working Together to Reduce Harm'.</p>	APBs were intended to provide a regional framework, to, strengthen partnership working and strategic leadership in the delivery of the substance misuse strategy; and, enhance and improve the key functions of planning, commissioning and performance management.	Local authorities, Local Health Board, Substance Misuse Service Providers, Police, Youth Justice, Probation Service, CPS	LA
VAWDASV	Yes	<p>Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015, s5, s15 (stat guidance)</p> <p>Statutory guidance notes they should seek to work regionally on RPB footprint.</p> <p>Community Safety Partnerships also have a statutory responsibility to reduce and prevent all forms of crime &amp; disorder including VAWDASV</p>	Requires local authorities and Local Health Boards to prepare a strategy for the local authority area for tackling violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV).	Local authorities, Police, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Health Board, Wales Ambulance Service Trust, Probation Services, Registered Social Landlords, Supporting People Regional Collaborative Committee, Fire and Rescue Service, Safeguarding Boards, VAWDASV specialist sector partners and voluntary sector organisations	LA/LHB

## **ANNEX D – LETTER FROM DMHSS AND DMHLG**

12 July 2019

Dear all

On the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019, we held an event in Cardiff to take stock of how Public Services Boards (PSB) and Regional Partnership Boards (RPB) are working together in practice. We would like to thank everyone that attended the event for sharing experiences, and participating in the rich discussions which took place throughout the day.

The two pieces of legislation which underpin the Boards are complementary. The Social Services and Well-Being Act focuses on the health and social care needs of individuals in a region to promote their individual well-being. The Well-being of Future Generations Act addresses the wider determinants of well-being including social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being.

Both Acts provide us with a common set of whole system, cross sector principles, namely; long-termism, prevention, collaboration, integration and involvement. However, while the Boards have shared areas of interest, they do have distinct roles, and different purposes and this is reflected in their work and membership.

The joint event emphasised the importance of Boards seeking to align their work – so they complement rather than duplicate each other. The event was independently facilitated, and we have now reflected on the key themes and observations from the day.

The key message from the day was clear - the way that Boards arrange their work so that it complements rather than duplicates is best considered and determined locally, where the needs and requirements of the local population are best understood.

The extent to which RPBs and PSBs have interacted has varied across Wales. The consensus on the day was that there is not a single model that fits all. There was also discussion that getting this right had proved more challenging for some regions than others. However, partners did convey a clear intention to build stronger and clearer links between the Boards in the future.

Partners were positive that this was achievable as in many areas there is already good progress in developing compatible assessments, plans and ways of working. There was also a clear view that any further legislation or guidance in this area be kept to a minimum, and that the focus should now be on delivery.

Both boards are already in a good position to build on improved communication and alignment given their cross over in relation to their membership. Both include representation from health, local government and third sector and a number of these

representatives are members of both boards. We can learn from such approaches to develop a seamless link between the boards' priorities and activities.

Welsh Government is committed to providing the most effective support to both boards enabling them to improve their alignment through straightforward means. To support this process the Welsh Government confirms its commitment to:

- supporting the work already underway to improve communication and alignment internally and with the Boards;
- scheduling regular meetings between the chairs of the PSBs and RPBs, and expand these discussions to the wider bodies which support the delivery of the Boards across Wales in order to share further learning and raise the awareness of different successful approaches; and
- establishing a joint development programme for members of both Boards focusing on the demands of operating as part of multi- agency partnerships.

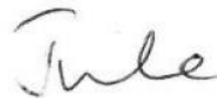
In recognition of this we expect and encourage both RPBs and PSBs to work together and provide a coherent local and regional response to the wellbeing needs of individuals, which will include preventing poor health and wellbeing in our communities.



**Hannah Blythyn AC/AM**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Tai a Llywodraeth  
Leol

Deputy Minister for Housing and Local  
Government



**Julie Morgan AC/AM**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd a Gofal  
Cymdeithasol

Deputy Minister for Health and Social  
Services

# ANNEX E – RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARDS



## Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Regional Partnership Boards

Part 9 of the Act aims to improve outcomes and well-being of people, as well as improving the efficiency and effectiveness of health and care service delivery through principles of well-being, co-operation, prevention and citizen control.

Established seven Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) to bring together local authorities, local health boards, the third sector and service users and carers to co-operate together in planning and delivering services in relation to adults with needs for care and support, carers and children.

Regional Partnership Boards operate on the footprints of each of the seven Health Boards in Wales.

### RPBs must:

- Produce a regional population assessment
- Produce a regional area plan
- Provide a regional annual report
- Demonstrate citizen engagement and co-production.

## Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: Public Service Boards

The Act aims to ensure that public bodies carry out "sustainable development" and improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, taking account of prevention, collaboration, integration, involvement and adopting a long term view.

Established Public Service Boards (PSBs) to bring together a range of public bodies to collectively improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their area.

Most PSBs operate on local authority footprints although some have decided to merge together. There are currently 19 PSBs in Wales.

### PSBs must:

- Produce an assessment of local well-being
- Produce a local well-being plan
- Provide an annual report
- Set out how they intend to involve people.

**RPB Membership**  
Health, Social Care, Education, Housing, Third Sector, Carers, Citizens.

**PSB Membership**  
Statutory members: Local Authority(ies), Local Health Board, Natural Resources Wales, Fire and Rescue.  
Statutory invitees: Welsh Ministers, Police and Crime Commissioners, Police, Probation services, Third sector.

