

**Meeting of the Partnership Council for Wales**  
**10.00-12.00pm, Thursday 10 May 2018,**  
**Conference Rooms C and D, Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay.**

**Minutes**

**Attendees**

**Members**

Alun Davies AM, Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services  
Rebecca Evans AM, Minister for Housing and Regeneration  
Cllr Ellen ap Gwynn – Cyngor Sir Ceredigion  
Rt. Hon Alun Michael – Police and Crime Commissioner Representative  
Cllr Tudor Davies – Fire and Rescue Authorities' Representative  
Cllr Mike Cuddy – Community Councils Representative  
Ann Lloyd – National Health Service Wales and Local Health Boards Representative  
Owain Wyn - National Park Authorities' Representative  
Martin Mansfield – Wales TUC

**Observers**

Steve Thomas – Welsh Local Government Association  
Chris Llewelyn - Welsh Local Government Association  
Peter Davies – Wales Council for Voluntary Action  
Ruth Marks - Wales Council for Voluntary Action  
Lyn Cadwallader – One Voice Wales  
Jane Holownia – Auditor General Wales

**Welsh Government Officials**

Reg Kilpatrick  
Tracey Burke  
Claire Germain  
Claire Bennett  
Debra Carter  
Lisa James  
Angharad Thomas - Richards

**Apologies**

Cllr Debbie Wilcox – Newport City Council  
Cllr John W Thomas – Vale of Glamorgan  
Cllr Huw Thomas – The City of Cardiff Council  
Cllr Ieuan Williams – Anglesey County Council  
Cllr Mair Stephens – Carmarthenshire County Council  
Cllr Glynog Davies - National Park Authorities Representative  
Cllr Aaron Shotton – Flintshire County Council  
Cllr Rob Stewart – City and Council of Swansea  
Cllr Andrew Morgan – Rhondda Cynon Taf

## **Action Points**

1. Community safety to be added to the Forward Work Programme for the 20 September meeting. (**Paragraph 1.2**).

### **1. Welcome and Opening Remarks**

- 1.1. The Cabinet Secretary opened the meeting by welcoming members and thanking them for their time.
- 1.2. The Cabinet Secretary turned first to the minutes of the last meeting and asked if there were any comments/matters arising or if members were content. Alun Michael raised the forward work programme and asked that community safety be added, given its fit with the wider partnership agenda. The Cabinet Secretary agreed and asked that an item be tabled at the next Partnership Council meeting in September.
- 1.3. Peter Davies noted that the WCVA had followed through on the action from the last meeting to discuss common ground with the Community and Town Council sector; he informed the Cabinet Secretary that a paper on the way forward on a shared community council and third sector agenda was being prepared. Mike Cuddy agreed there had been a positive meeting.
- 1.4. The Cabinet Secretary indicated he was interested in the emerging findings of the independent review looking at the future of Community and Town Councils and how they can play a larger role; he felt the emphasis should be on consistency rather than uniformity and that synergy with the third sector would be key.
- 1.5. The minutes were agreed with no further comments.

### **2. Local Government Reform**

- 2.1 The Cabinet Secretary reported that the Green Paper consultation had been launched in March and would continue until 12 June. He reiterated that he saw this as a positive process which recognised the importance of local government and sought to strengthen it. He indicated he had been encouraged by the response over the last two months. He has heard broad concerns across Wales that the current structures were not fit for purpose and no arguments to retain 22 local authorities.
- 2.2 Cllr Ellen ap Gwynn indicated she would present the case for retaining her own local authority as an example.
- 2.3 The Cabinet Secretary responded that in his meetings with Leaders no argument had been made for the current structures, and all the meetings he'd had reflected a desire for change. The question therefore was what sort of change. The Cabinet Secretary spoke of the need for increased powers and a move away from a currently immature relationship between national and local government. He wanted to see local government with more

independence to with raise money, to spend money and to act. But he wished for this power to be passed to a reformed local government, not the current structures.

- 2.4 The Cabinet Secretary said he was open to alternative ideas but had not seen a significant contrary proposal or a different route to an empowered and resilient local government. If there were alternative ideas he would be interested to hear them. He emphasised his desire for a more robust debate about where we are, and a conversation rooted in financial reality. He was looking forward to a positive response to the consultation.
- 2.5 Cllr Ellen ap Gwynn agreed that finances were tight but noted that there was funding available for regional working (citing funding in relation to education, housing and social services). She did not believe that returning to the old Dyfed footprint would work because Ceredigion worked with a range of other local authorities depending on the topic and what was needed instead was the flexibility for Ceredigion to work in whichever ways work for them. She indicated that the leaders of Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire were also unsupportive of a 'Dyfed' structure.
- 2.6 Cllr Ellen ap Gwynn raised concerns that Ceredigion had lost out when previously part of a larger local authority because of the emphasis on the M4 Corridor. The Cabinet Secretary responded that this was not his experience of Ceredigion in this era. Cllr Ellen ap Gwynn pointed to a lack of investment in schools; the Cabinet Secretary felt this related to a period of general cuts to local government and this was a different situation.
- 2.7 Cllr Ellen ap Gwynn raised the issue of reduced funding for schools, and the impact of salary increases. The Cabinet Secretary agreed that it was important that funding was going into schools and discussed the case to hypothecate the education budget. Funding for the sixth form in particular was raised as an issue.
- 2.8 The Cabinet Secretary stated he was not willing to let the public purse pay for unsustainable services or for people working in local government to lose jobs to sustain a system that is not working.
- 2.9 Ann Lloyd sought reassurance that the emphasis on local government having an increased authority and mandate in their area did not mean local government telling other partners what to do. Instead she advocated an emphasis on 'proper partnership'. She also drew attention to the hard work done in Gwent to build partnerships to deliver and ensure fairness and consistency across the area,
- 2.10 The Cabinet Secretary was in agreement. He noted that, in his role as AM for Blaenau Gwent, he heard of difficulties in co-ordinating across five bodies with five sets of priorities and policies.
- 2.11 The Cabinet Secretary wished to make it clear that he saw the system as failing, not individuals. He was advocating a positive prospectus of local power. He noted that he had been called on, but refrained from, commenting on the decisions of local authorities or

seeking to intervene. He had no interest in challenging a local authorities mandate in their area.

- 2.12 The Cabinet Secretary noted that with resources comes power, and larger institutions would be more powerful bodies with a greater mandate and ability to decide, act and challenge. He wished to see local authorities with the power to work with local health boards and effect real change; and he didn't see them with this power today.
- 2.13 Cllr Mike Cuddy reported that community and town councils could work within any structure that arises. The Cabinet Secretary had referred to the 'tyranny of parochialism', in the sense of fear of losing out, and Cllr Cuddy pointed out that parochialism also had a positive aspect in the power to take very local decisions. He noted the role that community and town councils could play in reshaping services. Cllr Cuddy noted that the sector would need the mandate and capacity to engage.
- 2.14 The Cabinet Secretary was in agreement about the delivery of place shaping services and taking care of local people. He spoke of the importance of civic pride and power, noting that social advances had been rooted in local co-operation. The Cabinet Secretary reported that he had been to Belgium and Germany and it had been regional and local, rather than national, leaders that he had met.
- 2.15 Ruth Marks raised the importance of diversity in generating civic pride – bringing in young people who would be the workers, voters and elected members of the future. She stressed the importance of intergenerational links. The Cabinet Secretary agreed that it was vital to draw on the power of experience and the potential for intergenerational work to revolutionise the way issues are addressed in a community.
- 2.16 Martin Mansfield drew a link between civic pride and fair work. He raised concern that austerity and increased demands on services could lead to a focus on cost cutting and head count and not take account of the impact of lost 'fair jobs' in communities. The emphasis should be on having the scale and ability to provide fair work in the longer term rather than dealing with short term budget pressures. He reported he was happy to see the work undertaken on a social partnership approach at Workforce Partnership Council was not lost, and wanted to see the idea of a regulatory approach developed further.
- 2.17 The Cabinet Secretary was in agreement on the need for a sustainable structure for local government which maintained both employment and place of employment – using the public purse to sustain communities where there is market failure. Procurement, economic and public services policy all needed to be joined together.
- 2.18 Cllr Mike Cuddy noted, in relation to the earlier point about diversity, that the profile of councillors within community and town councils had not changed significantly but that there was a better age range within a number of town councils, and an enthusiasm that would deplete if it could not be acted on.

- 2.19 Owain Wyn said this was his first meeting as the National Parks Authority representative and he had been listening with interest to the discussion. He noted that the Green Paper had been issued at the same time as the statement by the Minister for Environment on the future of National Park Authorities. He agreed that whatever the future structure of local government they would continue to collaborate.
- 2.20 The Cabinet Secretary noted there were no proposals relating to the National Park Authorities in the Green Paper, but that he had spoken to other Ministers about how to move forward – including the potential for a different kind of national park in the Valleys. He would like to see National Park Authorities continuing to contribute to the broader sense of identity and the communities in their area.
- 2.21 Owain Wyn referred to the concept of a third purpose for National Park Authorities and indicated that while it was accepted this would not be formally adopted there was a desire to strengthen their social and economic role.
- 2.22 Alun Michael commented that local government was the most important partner for the police. He raised the issue of the Bridgend consultation and the potential linkage with Cwm Taf University Health Board and the need for a conclusion to that, noting the impact on the way the police organised its policy as there were decisions which would flow from the outcome. He also referred to the impact on the affected Public Services Boards – noting that the uncertainty hadn't stopped planning for the coming year but would impact on plans for 2019/20. He asked if there was anything which could be done to help with the decision.
- 2.23 The Cabinet Secretary responded that a decision would be coming in the next few weeks; he noted he had discussed this with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services and there was a clear sense of direction.
- 2.24 The Cabinet Secretary agreed there was lots of joint working, and joint communication, and structures needed to catch up with practice on the ground. He noted that the Public Services Boards had enabled joint working between local authorities and demonstrated the integrity of larger units. He agreed there was a need for certainty on the desired direction of travel, and therefore a need for a more mature understanding of and debate on where we are, and where we are going.
- 2.25 Cllr Ellen ap Gwynn reported that the Ceredigion local wellbeing plan had been launched, with the Future Generations Commissioner in attendance. She noted that the plan had come together particularly well.
- 2.26 The Cabinet Secretary agreed that the process had appeared to be straightforward in many areas. He indicated he was keen to see the plans and objectives; and hoped for holistic visions for areas.
- 2.27 Ann Lloyd underlined the ability to work across boundaries, noting that Local Health Boards were required to work together. She pointed out that supporting the Heads of the Valleys

required Aneurin Bevan, Cwm Taf and Powys health boards to work together; and that this was in the absence of a formal mechanism to do so.

2.28 The Cabinet Secretary suggested the alignment of plans for national infrastructure would be key – for example appropriate transport links and public transport provision to new hospitals.

2.29 The Cabinet Secretary closed the discussion on local government reform and moved on to the next item.

### **3. Policing Contribution to Partnership Work in Wales**

3.1 The Cabinet Secretary thanked Alun Michael for his support, commenting that it was refreshing to have his experience and knowledge in the role.

3.2 The Cabinet Secretary set out the importance of collectively addressing issues of community safety, and how public services play a role in tackling offending and supporting vulnerable people.

3.3 Alun Michael outlined a number of areas where the police could not do a lot on their own but would achieve a lot in partnership with other public services – for example keeping young people out of the criminal justice system and seeking to avoid custodial sentences for women by intervening at the start of offending. Particular reference was made to a compact South Wales Police have with the voluntary sector and engagement with community and town councils.

3.4 Alun Michael referred to the paper provided, which set out the extent to which partnership was core to everything the police did bar “blue light” services, noting that 70-80 per cent of calls were not about crime but rather vulnerability. He referred to the police’s historic role in preventing crime and being routed in communities and commented that the funding for PCSO’s helped the police in Wales continue to live those values and undertake community policing. It was pointed out this was in contrast to other police forces in the UK.

3.5 Alun Michael welcomed the Welsh Government’s ambition in attracting major events such as the NATO Summit and Champions League cup final but noted the pressure this placed on resources and need to prepare for them in partnership.

3.6 Alun Michael pointed out that the police had chosen to play an active role in Public Services Boards, not just in relation to crime but wider objectives, noting that everything is connected to everything else and the importance of working as one public service.

3.7 Alun Michael moved on to highlight some of the examples of where the police were contributing to partnership working, including:

- The establishment of the “HelpPoint” in Swansea centre to support vulnerable people who had drunk too much alcohol; staffed by St. Johns Ambulance and volunteers from Swansea University;

- The work on Violence against Women and Girls;
  - Tackling offending in the 18-25 age group. Initial reviews have highlighted the benefits of earlier intervention in 18-25 offending, identifying and dealing with the underlying wider set of problems earlier; and
  - Housing – anti-social Behaviour and Vulnerability - A ‘peer support’ pilot in social housing is being trialled in Trivallis (RCT Homes) and Cardiff Council Housing, and an independent evaluation will be submitted to Rebecca Evans AM, Minister for Housing and Regeneration by the end of May 2018.
- 3.8 It was noted that information sharing remained both critical and challenging, and that public services must find better ways of sharing. The impact of the lack of analytical capacity within organisations on the ability to make evidence based decisions was raised.
- 3.9 The Cabinet Secretary indicated that the Minister for Housing and Regeneration would be chairing the remainder of the meeting.
- 3.10 The Minister for Housing and Regeneration thanked Alun Michael for the paper and the update, in particular noting the exciting work on the ‘help point’ project and thanking Alun for his work on the housing issue. She was hopeful the pilot would be a success and to be in a position to roll it out.
- 3.11 The Minister for Housing and Regeneration indicated she was keen to get the views of members on the way that priority need for housing is determined. She was committed to looking at this and seeing if changes should be made.
- 3.12 The Cabinet Secretary added that he was keen for a more holistic “wrap around” approach to be taken to policy, noting that there was still a very silo based response to organisational objectives. There was a need to be more agile in responding to issues which are the responsibility of more than one agency, with public sector bodies acting as catalysts for change.
- 3.13 Alun Michael commented that public services were joining up on the Adverse Childhood Experience agenda, with training being provided across forces in conjunction with the ACE Hub and Public Health Wales. He also drew attention to the work in South Wales to make the work of the community safety partnerships part of the wider work on well-being, and feeding into Public Services Boards.
- 3.14 Alun Michael indicated it would be helpful if the Welsh Government helped alignment rather than coming down through silos – including providing the flexibility for public bodies to bring various requirements for partnership working together.
- 3.15 The Minister for Housing and Regeneration agreed, noting that Regional Partnership Boards and Public Services Boards had similar membership and agendas and querying whether there was a case for streamlining.

- 3.16 Ruth Marks raised the issue of resilience and community preparedness for critical incidents. She highlighted the importance of public service partnerships being linked in with what communities themselves are doing to prepare and respond. She drew attention to work underway in England, commissioned by the Charity Commission for England and Wales with the Home Office and Cabinet Office, on community preparedness. She noted that the Red Cross had been named as the key charity partner and felt this overlooked the role of grass roots community response in an incident. She felt that in Wales there were smarter ways of partnership working, rather than imposing one.
- 3.17 Reg Kilpatrick agreed this idea made sense and something could be done more quickly in Wales in this space, using the stable and widespread partnerships in place in the community safety area as well as across public services more widely.
- 3.18 Lyn Cadwallader returned to the subject of housing, noting that he had a background in this area and continuing family links to the field. He was in favour of priority need for offenders. He noted that initial information sharing when an offender left prison had improved but also called for better ongoing support and information sharing. The scope for a housing officer to attend a property without being fully aware of a potential risk was raised. The Minister for Housing and Regeneration agreed this provided food for thought regarding the safety of people working in the housing sector.
- 3.19 Alun Michael reported that the police had changed how they managed people with drug problems. He also highlighted the progress on establishing Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs.
- 3.20 Reg Kilpatrick reported that a system had been developed to map information about vulnerable addresses (rather than individuals) which provided a powerful source of information which could be built on and expanded.
- 3.21 Cllr Ellen ap Gwynn responded to a number of points that had been raised. She noted that in Ceredigion the community safety partnership sat as a sub committee of the Public Services Board and this was working well. In terms of priority housing she agreed that it can be helpful for people coming out of prison; she also referred to work in her area to keep young offenders local. On community preparedness for incidents she noted that they had started to ask communities to become self-resilient. Finally she commended the work on the ACEs agenda.
- 3.22 Cllr Mike Cuddy commended the sustained funding for CSPO's, and the valuable resource they provide for civic confidence.
- 3.23 Ann Lloyd raised the need to review how vulnerable ex offenders are managed in terms of provision of mental health services. In relation to ACEs she reported the CAMHS was being reformed so it could work better with partners, particularly social services. Finally she reported that the funding for a sexual assault referral centre for South Wales had been resolved, with the contract to develop it given to Cardiff.

3.24 Owain Wyn felt that rural policing had been missing from the paper – particularly in terms of visitors, and vehicles on, remote areas without communities; for example the Mountain Safe work in Snowdonia.

3.25 The Minister for Housing and Regeneration thanked members for the discussion.

#### **4. Any Other Business**

5.1 The Cabinet Secretary thanked all members for their contributions and asked if anyone had any other business that they wished to raise.

5.2 No other items of business were raised.

5.3 Finally, the Cabinet Secretary informed members that the next meeting of the Partnership Council for Wales was scheduled to take place on **Thursday 20 September 2018**. He confirmed that an item on community safety would be added to the agenda.