



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Title: Local, Regional or National? Working for better service delivery across local government

Date: 3 November 2010

By: Carl Sargeant, Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

This statement informs Members of the membership of the Review and Reference Groups that I have established to examine the structure of local authority service provision.

On September 28, I made a statement to the Assembly setting out the next stage in my vision for public services. I made clear my desire to see local authorities build on the collaborative working that is already underway but to take that a step further and to examine the fundamental question of what services are delivered best and where.

As the public service grapples with increasingly challenging financial circumstances and the demand for services grows, local authorities need to look for more innovative solutions to balancing these competing pressures. The Efficiency and Innovation Programme is strategically pursuing and supporting the delivery of some of those solutions, however there are many areas where local government is able to push ahead of that work. A key part of that is looking at the scale at which services are provided and the governance arrangements that would support different models of delivery. Clearly, this review will make firm and necessary links with the Structure of Education Services Task and Finish Group which has been announced by the Children, Education and Lifelong Learning Minister.

I have established two groups to take the review forward.

The Review Group will be led by Joe Simpson of the Local Government Leadership centre. It will conduct a wide range of research across local authorities and develop some decision criteria to test whether services might be more effective if delivered through different governance arrangements that reflect a more appropriate scale of delivery and to make proposals on that basis.

The Review Group consists of arrange of senior leaders from across local government who bring a great deal of practical and political expertise to the task. Its members are as follows:

Joe Simpson	Director of Politics and Partnerships, Local Government Leadership
Virlina Choquette	Programme development adviser, Local Government Leadership
Russell Roberts	WLGA, Leader, Rhonda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Paul Griffiths	WLGA, South East Regional Co-ordinator
Jo Farrar, Chair	SOLACE, Chief Executive, Bridgend County Borough Council
Tracey Lee	SOLACE, Chief Executive, Newport City Council
Paul O'Shea	TUC representative
Trefor Jones	Private Sector representative
Reg Kilpatrick	Deputy Director, Local Government Policy, Welsh Assembly Government
Jane Holownia	Wales Audit Office, Partner (Observer)

I have also established a Reference Group that will assist the Review Group by bringing forward evidence, ideas and proposals, informed by their professional skills, experience and knowledge.

Membership is as follows:

Colin Everett	Vice Chair, SOLACE, Chief Executive, Flintshire County Council
Geoff Petty	Society of Welsh Treasurers, Director of Resources, Powys County Council
Bruce Mclernan	Association of Directors of Social Services Director of Social Care and Housing, Carmarthenshire County Council
Giovanni Isingrini	Corporate Director, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Alan Sotheby	Chair, Planning Officers Society for Wales. Development Control Officer, Powys County Council
Robin Staines	Joint Chair, All Wales Chief Housing Officers Panel. Head of Housing Services, Carmarthenshire County Council
Nicola Southall	Assembly Government, Procurement Wales (observer)

The Review Group met for the first time last week to agree its terms of reference and how it will approach the task. Arrangements are now underway to bring the Reference Group together.

I believe that we have a unique and timely opportunity to shape the future development of services and I expect the Review to bring forward proposals which are fresh, innovative, and challenging, moving beyond the accepted orthodoxy of past practice and what has been considered acceptable, towards solutions that will improve services for the citizen, make the most effective use of our financial and human resources and save money.