



Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into Local Service Boards

December 2008

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Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee



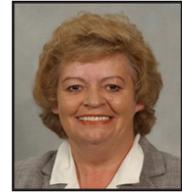
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Chair's Foreword

The Welsh Assembly Government's response to the Beecham Report on local service delivery included a commitment to establish Local Service Boards – LSBs – in each local authority area in Wales.

LSBs are meant to bring together the main public service players in each area with the aim of improving local service delivery, particularly in fields where joint working is needed to secure improvements. Six pilot LSBs were established and others have since been set up or are in the process of being set up. Senior officials represent the Welsh Assembly Government on each LSB.

It is fair to say that Local Service Boards (LSBs) are a work in progress and it is too early to come to any firm conclusion on whether they will be successful. The evidence we have heard, particularly from those most directly involved in the pilot schemes, speaks highly of their potential to help solve some of the most intractable problems of service delivery at a local level. However, once LSBs are rolled-out more widely there must be doubts that they will all have the capacity, commitment and enthusiasm of those areas that have volunteered for the initial pilots.

There are also a number of wider challenges that need to be considered in moving forward. Among these is the reorganisation of the National Health Service, the capacity of third sector partners to fully engage in LSBs and the need to ensure that there is effective public scrutiny of the very wide ranging-decisions in which Local Service Boards can potentially be involved.



Jonathan Morgan AM
Chair, Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee

December 2008

Section 1 - Introduction & Terms of Reference

Introduction

- 1.1 On 30 April 2008, we agreed to conduct a short inquiry into Local Service Boards (LSBs) which are being piloted in six local authority areas across Wales. LSBs were announced by the Welsh Assembly Government in *Delivering Beyond Boundaries*¹, its response to the Beecham Report², in 2006.
- 1.2 According to the Welsh Assembly Government the role of LSBs is to pursue joint action where it will mean better outcomes for citizens, based on ambitious joint planning and integrated delivery of services. Local Delivery Agreements (LDAs) are agreed between the LSBs and the Welsh Assembly Government. The intent is to frame a much closer relationship between the Assembly Government and local bodies themselves. Ministers sign off LDAs and senior Assembly Government officials serve on the Boards.

Terms of Reference

- 1.3 We agreed the following terms of reference for the inquiry:

To examine the early progress of the six Local Service Board (LSB) pilots in Wales and to make recommendations in respect of the future development of Local Service Boards, with reference to:

- *The process of putting together "local leadership teams" in the pilot areas and the effectiveness of collaboration between core bodies and stakeholders*
- *The monitoring and evaluation of progress in setting up Local Service Boards (LSBs) to date and the "action learning" process in their development.*
- *The agreement of Local Delivery Agreements (LDAs) in the pilot areas, including the extent to which local citizens have been involved.*
- *The relationship between LSBs and existing partnership structures, in particular the community strategy partnerships and sub-regional structures such as the WLGA Regional Boards.*
- *The scrutiny and accountability of LSBs.*
- *How partners that cover several unitary authorities engage with multiple LSBs.*
- *The role of Local Authorities in relation to LSBs.*
- *The role of the Assembly Government officials in respect of LSBs.*
- *The role of "Spatial Plan" Ministers to LSBs in their area.*

¹ Welsh Assembly Government, *Delivering Beyond Boundaries*, 2006.

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/improvingservices/strategy/deliveringbb/?lang=en>

² [Beyond Boundaries: Citizen-Centred Local Services for Wales](#)

- *The extent to which Local Public Service Boards and Local Area Agreements in England have informed the development of the Welsh model.*

The Inquiry

- 1.4 We took oral evidence from Welsh Assembly Government officials from the Making the Connections team; the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA); all six of the pilot Local Service Boards and the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery, Andrew Davies AM. Written evidence was also received from a range of bodies. Further details are set out in Annex C.

Section 2 - Understanding the Role of LSBs

- 2.1 The Welsh Assembly Government's Local Service Board homepage states:

Local Service Boards are not new organisations or institutions, they are the local leadership team. Membership will include key leaders from across public, third and private sectors working as equal partners, taking joint responsibility for connecting the whole network of public services within their area.

The work of the LSB will be based on the area's community and, from this the Boards will agree, and ensure delivery of, a set of priority joint actions to achieve this. These actions will be expressed as Local Delivery Agreements

- 2.2 When we embarked on our inquiry into Local Service Boards – despite the definitions provided by the Welsh Assembly Government – it is fair to say that to those not directly involved their role and function was opaque. This was supported in some of the evidence heard. For example, the WLGAsaid:

From our point of view, when the original concept of local service boards came out, I cannot forget the media response at the time, because we were quite shocked, because the media were portraying local service boards as 22 new bodies that, in essence, would pick up the bins and put people on operating tables. That was never the conception. The conception of local service boards was always to get public sector agencies to come to the table to tackle in particular some of those devil-in-the-detail issues

- 2.3 Evidence from Police Authorities Wales suggests that there has been drift in the definitions of the roles and functions of the LSBs:

One of the difficulties for partners is the many different approaches of LSBs. Originally the LSBs were intended to tie in with the local community plan and address the more difficult issues that required a partnership approach on a strategic level. However that approach has seemed to develop into a more project based approach tackling the 'wicked issues' that often seem to sit outside of any strategic plan. This lack of consistency has hindered PAs in identifying their role in the governance of LSBs, linked to policing issues.

- 2.4 The Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors even noted that “there is still a marked lack of knowledge by both members and officers of the role and remit of an LSB and how it fits in to the other public sector structures.”

- 2.5 However, in evidence heard from LSBs, the WLGA and the Welsh Assembly Government it is clear that a shared understanding is emerging that LSBs bring together key partners, including the Assembly Government officials, to tackle particular “hard to solve” issues in a local authority area. The evidence from the Minister, however, slightly confused this shared understanding when he suggested that the role of the LSBs was to deliver the objectives of the One Wales Government.

The Committee recommends that the Minister provides clarification of the role of LSBs as delivery mechanisms for the One Wales Government. [Recommendation 1]

- 2.6 It is clear that one of the strengths of LSBs is the mutual trust and confidence that is being developed between partners and that is helping LSBs to evolve distinctive local approaches.

The Committee recommends that the Minister and his officials develop a common definition of LSBs that can be easily understood by the wider public. [Recommendation 2]

Section 3 - Partnership Working

- 3.1 The Welsh Assembly Government anticipated that Local Service Boards would grow out of the existing community strategy partnerships. Local Authorities are required to have a community strategy under *the Local Government Act 2000* and bodies involved in the preparation or modification of a community strategy must have regard to Statutory Guidance³ from Welsh Ministers made under the 2000 Act. *The Proposed Local Government (Wales) Measure* currently before the Assembly proposes to place the community planning process on a statutory basis and names community planning partners who have a duty to collaborate with each other and with the Local Authority. As the proposed Measure stands these include Community Councils; Local Health Boards and Health Trusts; Fire and Rescue Services; National Park Authorities; Police Authorities and Chief Constables.
- 3.2 A number of the LSB witnesses spoke positively about being able to build upon the existing community strategy partnerships.⁴ However, several identified areas where the LSBs had “added value” to the community strategy partnerships for example through greater focus⁵, speeding up the progress of projects⁶ and “getting a better buy-in from partners”⁷, particularly getting health bodies engaged which had previously been hard to engage in the community planning process.⁸ One of the reasons for this greater engagement, a number of the witnesses felt, was the greater status of Local Service Boards in comparison with other partnership frameworks. Cardiff LSB told the Committee that the LSBs allowed partners to leave their “institutional baggage” outside. The seniority of the personnel sitting on the LSB was also a key factor.

The Committee recommends that LSB partners continue to use senior personnel, with the ability to make appropriate decisions on behalf of their organisations, to engage with the LSB.
[Recommendation 3]

- 3.3 We received a range of evidence about the activities that were being undertaken by LSBs. Witnesses also reflected on the ways in which the LSBs were working. In most cases the LSB has a membership made up of officials and politicians with the local authority leader chairing but the Cardiff LSB was chaired by the chief executive of the local authority and the LSB has only executive officers. The chief executive explained the rationale:

³ Welsh Assembly Government, *Local Vision: Statutory Guidance on Developing and Delivering Community Strategies*, 2007.

⁴ Carmarthenshire, Cardiff and Neath Port Talbot, Gwynedd LSBs.

⁵ Carmarthenshire LSB

⁶ Cardiff LSB

⁷ WAG Officials

⁸ Carmarthenshire LSB.

The political leadership felt that its role was in assessing what the community and the citizens wanted, looking at the community strategy for the next 10 or 15 years and engaging with the stakeholders on that direction, which is political policy apart and separate from the delivery of that policy. They felt that that was entirely something that the officers should get on with and tackle once they had defined the policy direction. I think that that is a good model, because it allows politicians to engage with citizens and communities—all the stakeholders—and develop a vision for where we want to take their community. I am an officer who is quite used to taking an agenda and having to deliver it. As long as there is confidence between the politicians and the officers, that can work and that is what has happened.

- 3.4 On the other hand Neath Port Talbot LSB told us that the rationale for the leader of the local authority chairing the LSB arose from the legitimacy conferred by their responsibility for community governance which is important if the LSB is dealing with “wicked issues”.
- 3.5 Gwynedd LSB told us that a distinct difference between the old partnership working and the new is that there is visibility and accountability at a county level across the public sector, which was not there before. They have been able to 'brand' projects with the LSB stamp to give them a credibility that means that public sector bodies across the patch will have to be committed to delivering those projects. This is underpinned by principle:

There is a principle here that we are trying to achieve something that we could not achieve as separate organisations. We need to remind ourselves of that main principle—we are pooling resources together to achieve something that could not be achieved as individual institutions

- 3.6 Witnesses argued that the “maturity”⁹ of partnerships were assisting the successful development of LSBs and this was reflected in the relationships of trust and confidence between partners. A possible downside of this, which we explored with witnesses, was that the robustness of LSBs was overly dependent on personalities and there was a risk of a loss of momentum if key personalities moved on. Most witnesses accepted that this was a risk but steps could be taken to ensure continuity such as putting briefing arrangements in place.¹⁰

The Committee recommends that structures and processes are put in place by LSBs to ensure continuity when key personalities on LSBs move on. [Recommendation 4]

⁹ Carmarthenshire LSB, Neath Port Talbot LSB.

¹⁰ Gwynedd LSB

Section 4 - NHS Restructuring

- 4.1 Following on from above, and the early success of the pilot LSBs in engaging partners, we explored with witnesses the potential impact of NHS restructuring on the nascent LSBs. Witnesses acknowledged that there could be potential problems. In West Wales a larger Local Health Board (LHB) area would cover more than one local authority area. Carmarthenshire LSB told the Committee:

Our main concern is that there will be problems with the setting up of the Hywel Dda trust, although there are always problems when you set up something new and when you involve a larger trust. We do not want to lose the best practice that already exists. There could be a problem, because the chief executive and chair will now have three areas. We have met, and it is important that they are at this table, because people understand the decisions that we make at that table. So, it is a bit concerning, because we do not want to lose that impetus.

- 4.2 A representative from the Neath Port Talbot LSB reflected on his own experience managing the merger of two trusts:

In developing the culture of the organisation, partnership is to be a key aspect of our work. I follow that through in practical terms by the way I organise my structures. I have two assistant chief executives: one for the east and one for the west. That is to develop what I call 'patch responsibility'. One will be working with two local authorities, the other will be working with one local authority, and they will both work with local health boards. That will ensure that I benefit from whole-trust working where appropriate, while also being able to discharge my planning and partnership responsibilities at the local level. The trust cannot have one-size-fits-all policies; it will have to modify the way in which it discharges its services to be sensitive to local needs.

- 4.3 Gwynedd LSB also expressed concerns:

However, in whatever configuration we end up, what we are looking for locally is to ensure that local accountability and visibility is retained. If the likely outcome is that we have a single NHS body for north Wales, which has been widely talked about, there must still be, at a county level, a senior officer who has responsibility for developing this partnership agenda, who is senior enough to be able to engage meaningfully with the other partners around the table. Otherwise, I do not think that the NHS will be able to play the part that it needs to play in LSBs in the future.

- 4.4 The WLGA suggested that NHS restructuring could affect the seniority of officers' engagement with LSBs:

At the moment, chief executives can relate to the chief executive or chair of the local health board. I am sorry to use elitist terms again, but once people from lower down the health food chain come in, will those people have to go back to the new chief executives of the new health bodies and say, 'I need to get a decision out of you'? It will slow down processes.

We recommend that the Assembly Government ensures that the 7 new NHS bodies fully understand the requirement to engage with LSBs, and other relevant partners, to ensure continuity following restructuring. [Recommendation 5]

We recommend that, in establishing the 7 new NHS bodies, Ministers should establish clearly which local authority areas they cover for LSB purposes. [Recommendation 6]

Section 5 - Involvement of Assembly Government Officials

5.1 Most LSBs were very positive about the input of Assembly Government officials with the Boards and their involvement clearly contributes to the “status” of the LSBs referred to above that brings partners to the table. The seniority of the officials in question was also acknowledged to be a key factor.¹¹

5.2 In terms of their role, a phrase widely used by witnesses was that the Assembly officials assisted in “clearing blockages”.¹² For example, the WLGA told us:

The civil servants have been able to broker some discussions that have been happening locally for a number of years. They have been able to put an external viewpoint in, but also, crucially, they have been able to report back to the Assembly Government, saying where the blockages are nationally between Assembly Government departments

5.3 Others had found the input of the officials helpful in getting the LSB up and running¹³ and having a relationship with a named individual as a contact in the Welsh Assembly Government is very useful on a practical level.¹⁴ Some LSBs also felt that it was a two way process and that the Assembly officials had “learned a lot” about “what delivery is all about” and it had provided “quite an incredible learning curve for them”.¹⁵ The Minister told us that he wanted to develop a distinct public service ethos in Wales and Assembly Government officials’ engagement with LSBs contributed to this.

5.4 However, questions were raised as to whether the involvement of senior officials was sustainable, particularly once the LSBs were rolled out across Wales.¹⁶ The Welsh Assembly Government responded to our questions about the time and resources involved:

The time of the senior officials is an important resource. It is a serious extra burden, but they have volunteered to do it knowing that. However, it is not always incredibly time consuming. They are committing to attending the board meetings regularly, and so on, but it is often about engaging other capacity, having some conversations with people, or helping to put someone in touch with the right person in the Assembly Government who can give them the expertise that they need. So, it is something on which they need to be selective, use their time effectively, and make connections in a number of the different fora in which they operate. So, it is a serious commitment, but it is not

¹¹ WLGA

¹² WLGA, Carmarthenshire LSB, Welsh Assembly Government Officials, Wrexham LSB

¹³ Caerphilly LSB

¹⁴ Gwynedd LSB

¹⁵ Neath Port Talbot LSB

¹⁶ WLGA

necessarily a case of x days per week or per month; it varies. There will be times when it is more intensive than others. It is a big commitment, and that should be recognised if we are going to do this properly.

- 5.5 The Minister told us that he saw no reason to change the input of senior Assembly Government officials to the LSBs. He also said that other officials could support LSBs on particular issues.

We recommend that senior Assembly Government officials remain directly engaged with LSBs and welcome the Minister's indication that this practice will continue. [Recommendation 7]

- 5.6 We do not doubt the value to the LSBs concerned of having close and regular access to Assembly Government officials. Neither do we doubt the benefit to Government officials of building their experience of a more delivery focused environment. However, despite these benefits, and the Minister's reassurance, we have considerable doubts whether the involvement of senior Assembly Government officials is sustainable in the current way once LSBs are rolled-out to all 22 local authority areas in Wales. We also have concerns that very senior officials may be distracted from their core functions.

We recommend that the Minister publishes a clear definition of the role and accountability of Assembly Government officials in relation to LSBs. [Recommendation 8]

We recommend that, once all 22 LSBs are fully established, the Minister reviews the involvement of Assembly Government officials to ensure that it is sustainable in terms of maintaining a senior presence while also ensuring that the efforts of these officials are not unnecessarily distracted from their core functions. [Recommendation 9]

Section 6 - Capacity

- 6.1 Most witnesses identified capacity as a potential problem, particularly in respect of the voluntary sector and stressed the value of the sector's involvement in the LSBs, not least because they are involved in delivery of some services.¹⁷ The voluntary sector representative from the Cardiff LSB told us:

it is stretching me and my organisation to be involved in the local service board; it is not ideal, but, at this initial stage, I tend to be involved at many of the different levels, and that is quite tiring although very interesting. I think that it is worth that investment, because what the local service board is trying to achieve corresponds closely with what my organisation—and many other voluntary sector organisations—is interested in, which includes joining up services that are not necessarily joined at present. Citizen engagement and starting with communities and citizens is very much at the heart of the LSB, and, as you are aware, that is also where voluntary organisations have started, often. They have started because a need or a gap in services has been identified in a community.

- 6.2 The WLGA suggested that the voluntary sector needed support in order to participate in LSBs:

There needs to be further support to ensure that not only can we support them [the voluntary sector] in terms of their attendance and involvement at LSB meetings, but that they engage with their wider memberships, to ensure that they are fully involved. Local authorities provide a lot of funding to the CVCs, and that is increasing every year, as evidence from the data unit suggests. The Assembly Government has mechanisms in terms of wider capacity development and support, led by Public Sector Management Wales and the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare and the WLGA also provides support, facilitation and development for our local authority members. There are a range of packages out there, but the key issue is for the third sector.

- 6.3 The Welsh Assembly Government told us that the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, is looking at some form of bid for European funding under the convergence area to find ways of strengthening its capacity to engage with the LSBs “because they are perceived as being pretty important to the way that it sees its role”.

The Committee recommends that the Welsh Assembly Government and LSB partners investigate any means by which support can be provided to the Third Sector to improve their capacity for engagement with LSBs. [Recommendation 10]

¹⁷ E.g. Gwynedd LSB, Flintshire LSB written evidence.

- 6.4 Other bodies faced with capacity issues are the Police¹⁸ and Fire Service bodies which cover multiple local authority areas. The Fire Service Representative on Cardiff LSB told the Committee:

Our problem is around capacity and I think that you mentioned this, Lorraine. I am the deputy chief fire officer and I am on the Cardiff LSB—so there is one of me and there is one LSB, but there are 10 unitary authorities. I do not have the capacity to be on every LSB. It is not a statutory body, so I do not have to be there, but I go by choice.

He concluded:

for us, it has been the transformation in getting us into those communities in a more focused way with partners, as opposed to what we tended to do in the past, which was to have a good idea and perhaps sell that to Newport, Blaenau Gwent or another area where we could see a particular problem. So, it is about giving us that chance to focus our resources more meaningfully across a range of services.

- 6.5 Written evidence from Police Authorities Wales (PAW) revealed “little consistency” in the involvement of police authorities in LSBs. All police authorities felt that there are capacity issues around involvement with LSBs. However it was strongly felt that it should be for them to manage their attendance and not negate the principle that police authorities should have a place on the LSBs, and should not preclude them from LSB membership. All Welsh police authorities agreed that there is no clear guidance from the Welsh Assembly on the role of Police Authorities on LSBs as a scrutinising body linked to policing. Therefore they have been overlooked by the other strategic bodies that make up LSBs.
- 6.6 In written evidence the Environment Agency told us that “our organisational size and shape means we would be constrained in our ability to engage as a formal member of each Local Strategic Partnership or LSB” but has been actively involved in one which is focused on climate change and sustainability. In other areas, where it is not directly involved with the formal LSB partnerships, it considers that existing relationships with key partners provide suitable communication routes to ensure that specific input from the Environment Agency can be accessed on an “as needs” basis. Recognising the challenges of engagement it has sought to strategically support LSB and Community Strategy development through national arrangements such as the National Stakeholder Group and the Community Strategy Working Group.

¹⁸ Written Evidence from WACPO

Section 7 - Scrutiny

- 7.1 One of Cardiff LSB's projects is developing a robust scrutiny and performance management mechanism through which the effectiveness of the LSB will be monitored and evaluated. Cardiff LSB's written evidence noted that current legislation precludes the establishment of a joint committee involving local authority and non local authority representatives. However, the Council's Scrutiny Committees are empowered to establish sub-groups to undertake specific strands of scrutiny activity and to agree their membership. The arrangement therefore agreed by all individual LSB partners is that the Council's Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee establishes a sub-group to scrutinise the LSB.

It further explained:

This arrangement enables all the panel members to engage on an equal footing, with full voting rights. It also affords the Panel an identifiable status and degree of formality. Recognising that this arrangement means that the Council's elected members will represent a larger proportion of the Panel membership than will the other nominees, the Scrutiny Chairs have agreed not to chair the Panel, but rather allow this role to be fulfilled by one of the partner nominees. The Council's Scrutiny Committees have a track record of establishing Task & Finish groups chaired by members other than the Committee Chair.

- 7.2 The membership of the agreed panel includes representatives of the main scrutiny and quasi-scrutiny bodies currently engaged with LSB partners, which maintains the Scrutiny/Executive separation.
- 7.3 Other LSBs told us that special scrutiny arrangements had not been adopted and scrutiny of the LSB work was being undertaken through the council's standard scrutiny process.¹⁹ In written evidence the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors was concerned that there may not be a common understanding of scrutiny between LSB partners and recommended that a consensus be developed in respect of arrangements.
- 7.4 The Welsh Assembly Government told us that "*the Cardiff project is very interesting, because it set out a quite well researched and developed scrutiny model*" and said:

That is a model for the local service board, but I think that it will also apply to the other statutory partnerships. They will bring in people from across the public service sector to be members of the scrutiny panel. It is not the traditional local-authority-members-only approach; there will be people from the health service and the voluntary sector and so on

¹⁹ Carmarthenshire LSB, Wrexham LSB

as part of the scrutiny panel. In a sense, it is a much more inclusive model than we have been used to seeing.

- 7.5 The Minister also singled Cardiff LSB's scrutiny model out when he gave evidence to us.
- 7.6 Evidence from Assembly Government officials to our parallel inquiry on Local Government Scrutiny said that since the launch of the six LSB pilots, scrutiny officers in the relevant councils have been meeting together in order to progress thinking as to how, within the existing legislative framework, scrutiny can be adapted to cope with partnerships and shared services.²⁰ We commend this as good practice.

We recommend that officers continue to meet and thinking about scrutiny of LSBs is developed further and disseminated to LSB partners. [Recommendation 11]

- 7.7 There was a lack of clarity about whether Assembly officials should be scrutinised as part of the LSB. The Minister clarified that this should be the case.
- 7.8 Overall, we were concerned that scrutiny arrangements do not appear to be a central feature of most Local Service Boards' arrangements. Local Service Boards clearly have the scope to be very influential local bodies contributing to or taking very significant decisions on a wide range of issues. If they are successful this is likely to grow. While we accept that there should be a degree of flexibility to deal with local circumstances, we also feel that more rigorous and uniform scrutiny arrangements need to be set out for LSBs.

We recommend that the Assembly Government should establish a clear and transparent model of scrutiny that can be applied to all LSB situations with sufficient flexibility to allow for local application. [Recommendation 12]

²⁰ HWLG, Local Government Scrutiny Enquiry, Evidence from Welsh Assembly Officials, HWLG(3) 22-08 p.2, 8 October 2008.

Section 8 - Placing LSBs on a Statutory Basis

- 8.1 In its written evidence Cardiff LSB noted that LSBs have no formal decision making powers and without proper accountability structures and delegated powers in place they will be unable to deliver the service transformations required. It has, therefore, been developing legal guidelines to provide the basis for delegated decision-making. These require formal agreement from all LSB members through individual organisation reporting arrangements. When asked whether the Assembly Government should take steps to give LSBs formal decision-making powers, the County Council representative on the Cardiff LSB replied that *“to replace the existing statutory arrangements or partnerships would be a very positive move”*.
- 8.2 The Welsh Assembly Government felt that making LSBs statutory would be complex and felt that the current flexibility was working well and the WLGA did not think that additional statutory powers were needed – particularly in the light of the duty to collaborate on community planning partners in the proposed Local Government Measure discussed above. Other LSBs supported the duty to collaborate but did not think that LSBs themselves should be made statutory.
- 8.3 In written evidence the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors, while recognising that LSBs should be flexible, stated that *“if statutory provisions are unlikely, then we wonder what guidance WAG may issue to ensure some degree of consistency in the basic arrangements under which LSBs would operate”*.

Section 9 - Conclusions and Summary of Recommendations

9.1 It is clear from evidence we heard that LSBs are still a work in progress and their establishment, identification of priorities and development of LDAs has been and is a dynamic process. Moreover, as other LSBs are emerging, further lessons will be learnt. As such, it may be more helpful for us to make recommendations at this stage where areas of risk can be identified and where the Welsh Assembly Government and LSB partners should take preventative steps.

9.2 Evidence from the Minister slightly confused an apparent shared understanding of the role and function of LSBs by witnesses when he suggested that the role of the LSBs was to deliver the objectives of the One Wales Government.

The Committee recommends that the Minister provides clarification of the role of LSBs as delivery mechanisms for the One Wales Government. [Recommendation 1]

9.3 It is clear that one of the strengths of LSBs is the mutual trust and confidence that is being developed between partners and that is helping LSBs to evolve distinctive local approaches.

The Committee recommends that the Minister and his officials develop a common definition of LSBs that can be easily understood by the wider public. [Recommendation 2]

9.4 The seniority of the personnel at the table of LSBs is a key factor in their success.

The Committee recommends that LSB partners continue to use senior personnel, with the ability to make appropriate decisions on behalf of their organisations, to engage with the LSB. [Recommendation 3]

9.5 Witnesses acknowledged that there could be a risk to the momentum of an LSB when key personalities move on.

The Committee recommends that structures and processes are put in place by LSBs to ensure continuity when key personalities on LSBs move on. [Recommendation 4]

9.6 NHS restructuring contains potential risks to continuity. One witness explained how embedding partnership working in the new structures was intended to deal with this risk and ensure continuity with current arrangements.

We recommend that the Assembly Government ensures that the 7 new NHS bodies fully understand the requirement to engage with

LSBs, and other relevant partners to ensure continuity following restructuring. [Recommendation 5]

We recommend that, in establishing the 7 new NHS bodies, Ministers should establish clearly which local authority areas they cover for LSB purposes. [Recommendation 6]

- 9.7 The role of Assembly Government officials on the LSBs was highly valued. However, questions were raised about whether their continued involvement was feasible and whether the seniority of the staff involved across the board could be maintained – the latter being seen as crucial to their effectiveness.

We recommend that senior Assembly Government officials continue to engage directly with LSBs and welcome the Minister's indication that this practice will continue. [Recommendation 7]

We recommend that the Minister publishes a clear definition of the role and accountability of Assembly Government officials in relation to LSBs. [Recommendation 8]

We recommend that, once all 22 LSBs are fully established, the Minister reviews the involvement of Assembly Government officials to ensure that it is sustainable in terms of maintaining a senior presence while also ensuring that the efforts of these officials are not unnecessarily distracted from their core functions. [Recommendation 9]

- 9.8 Capacity is clearly an issue for some partners – in particular the third sector. Several witnesses suggested that support be found to enable them to participate fully.

We recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government and LSB partners investigate any means by which support can be provided to the third sector to improve their capacity for engagement with LSBs. [Recommendation 10]

- 9.9 Governance and scrutiny arrangements in the Cardiff LSB are being developed to reflect the scrutiny/executive split across the partner bodies. The Minister is very positive about this model but other LSBs are using the internal council scrutiny process.

- 9.10 Evidence from Assembly Government officials to the parallel Committee inquiry on Local Government Scrutiny said that since the launch of the six LSB pilots, scrutiny officers in the relevant councils have been meeting together in order to progress thinking as to how, within the existing legislative framework, scrutiny can be adapted to cope with partnerships and shared services.

We recommend that officers continue to meet and thinking about scrutiny of LSBs is developed further and disseminated to LSB partners. [Recommendation 11]

9.11 However, we were concerned that scrutiny arrangements do not appear to be a central feature of most Local Service Boards' arrangements and that more rigorous and uniform scrutiny arrangements need to be set out for LSBs.

We recommend that the Assembly Government should establish a clear and transparent model of scrutiny that can be applied to all LSB situations with sufficient flexibility to allow for local application. [Recommendation 12]

Section 10- Monitoring

10.1 Where appropriate, we expect the Welsh Assembly Government to report on progress in implementing our recommendations within 12 months of their initial response to this report.

Annex A

Organisations and individuals who gave evidence in person to the Committee

Those giving evidence	Representing
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3 July 2008

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Meryl Gravell, Carmarthenshire County Council• Steve Brown, Environment Agency• Jane Jeffs, Carmarthenshire Health, Social Care and Well Being Partnership Forum• Lynne Berry, Carmarthenshire County Council	Carmarthenshire Local Service Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Byron Davies, Cardiff Council• Margaret McLaughlin, Voluntary Action Cardiff• Andrew Marles, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service• Jenny Theed, Cardiff Local Health Board	Cardiff Local Service Board

10 July 2008

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carys Evans• Michael Trickey	Welsh Assembly Government
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17 July 2008

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ken Sawyers, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council• Paul Williams, Abertawe, Bro Morgannwg University NHS Trust	Neath Port Talbot Local Service Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Steve Thomas• Daniel Hurford• Jo Farrar, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives	Welsh Local Government Association

24 September 2008

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Dyfed Edwards, Gwynedd County Council• Grace Lewis-Parry, Gwynedd Local Health Board• Arwel Ellis Jones, Gwynedd County Council	Gwynedd Local Service Board
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Lindsay Whittle, Caerphilly County Borough Council • Colin Palfrey, Caerphilly Local Health Board • Alun Thomas, Gwent Police 	Caerphilly Local Service Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isobel Garner, Wrexham County Borough Council • Geoff Lang, Wrexham Local Health Board • Dr Dafydd Williams, Wrexham County Borough Council 	Wrexham Local Service Board

19 November 2008

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Davies AM, Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery 	Welsh Assembly Government
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Annex B

Schedule of Committee Papers Provided to Inform Oral Evidence

Date	Name of Paper	Paper Reference Number
3 July 2008	Carmarthenshire Local Service Board	Paper HWLG(3)-18-08-paper 1
3 July 2008	Cardiff Executive Local Service Board	Paper HWLG(3)-18-08-paper 2
10 July 2008	Welsh Assembly Government	HWLG(3)-19-08-paper 1 HWLG(3)-19-08-paper 2
17 July 2008	Neath Port Talbot Local Service Board	HWLG(3)-20-08-paper 1
17 July 2008	Welsh Local Government Association	HWLG(3)-20-08-paper 2
24 September 2008	Gwynedd Local Service Board	HWLG(3)-21-08-paper 1
24 September 2008	Caerphilly Local Service Board	HWLG(3)-21-08-paper 2
24 September 2008	Wrexham Local Service Board	HWLG(3)-21-08-paper 3
19 November 2008	Welsh Assembly Government	HWLG(3)-19-08-paper 1

Transcripts

Copies of all papers and transcripts of meetings can be found at:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-hwlg-home.htm>

Annex C

List of Respondents to Call for Written Evidence

The following organisations responded to the call for written evidence

Organisation	Committee Reference
Police Authority Wales	Paper HWLG(3)-21-08-paper 5
Environment Agency Wales	Paper HWLG(3)-21-08-paper 6
Association of Chief Police Officers in Wales	Paper HWLG(3)-22-08-paper 4
Flintshire LSB	Paper HWLG(3)-22-08-paper 5
Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors	Paper HWLG(3)-22-08-paper 6
WCVA	Paper HWLG(3)-22-08-paper 7
Torfaen LSB	Paper HWLG(3)-22-08-paper 8
Denbighshire LSB	Paper HWLG(3)-24-08-paper 2

Please note that the above list does not include any organisation or individuals who indicated that they did not wish their details to be published.