



WLGA • CLILC

Issues for Wales

**Steve Thomas, Chief Executive,
WLGA**

**CIEH – Cymru Wales Region
5th May 2006**



Well done CIEH

- **E.coli O157.**

Huge media interest on food hygiene services in Wales.

Brilliant work by Julie Barrett in national media

WLGA to be represented on the Assembly Steering Group, and called to give evidence to Professor Pennington in the Assembly Inquiry.

- Collaborative working - CIEH, Directors of Public Protection and WLGA to introduce **Best Practice Standards for EH services in Wales** – and these are to be underpinned by the Wales Performance Framework.
- The **£75k WLGA made available** from the Improvement Team's Capacity Building Fund to provide support for **Student Placements** –WLGA
- Member support for the **Health and Safety Strategy for Wales** (launched in April)



Is Welsh local Government in rude health? Positives

- Financially 2006-07 settlement much better than England and Scotland.
- Real and mature leadership within the WLGA
- Local Government was the architect of the Beecham Review.
- Developing Regional agenda and local government way in front on collaboration
- Relationship with the Assembly is generally good and positive.
- Chief Executives in Wales exerting a real voice.
- New frameworks around planning and performance



Is Welsh local Government in rude health? Negatives

- Ever tightening finance – below 5% next year
- Big hits on the horizon – Equal pay claims will cost big bucks- Pensions crisis
- Too much money on staff not enough on services!
- Struggling authorities and more in the pipeline?
- Assembly can frustrate and delay. Politics at all levels.
- Some problems are too hard – waste? housing? closing schools?
- Project management skills are not at a premium
- Is reorganisation on the horizon?



Local government “bingo” calling!

- Prof Kevin Morgan 12, 13 or 14, Dr Dai Lloyd AM 6, Ex councillor Jeff Jones 10, LGC 12 plus map!
- Different views in the Assembly and Local government but the First Minister has ruled it out (5 year window)
- Police Reorganisation is becoming a rolling debacle!
- The Assembly is not empowered to do it (yet).
- In any case what about incremental Voluntary Mergers over time?
- And most importantly what do the public think?



Western Mail Poll on 'are there too many councils'?

Truly one of the biggest issues of the day...a grand total of 42 people voted in the December (including me 3 times!) –

64% voted yes.

However, to put it into perspective,

- *More people voted in the survey on 'Are Christmas lights on your house naff?'*
- *Nearly 300 voted in a survey on whether they believe in aliens*
- *And more than 400 voted in a survey on infidelity (84% said they'd be unfaithful...)*

We could quite legitimately claim that more people believe in aliens (53) than agree with local government reorganisation (27).

Is Wales "Sicily without the sun"?





Public Services Reform and the Welsh Way are not working? Discuss

- WPI versus the CPA
- Are we in inverting?
- The Making the Connections – “cop out” on competitive choice models.
- Comparative performance does exist in Wales except in the Western Mail
- We have encouraged rolling mediocrity as the norm
- Jonathan Freeland “no noisy public conversation”
- Some programme such as Neighbourhood renewal are E government are surging ahead.
- Conspiracy of pretend partnerships talking management gibberish.



But there are real advantages

- Central local relations are characterised by dialogue and respect.
- J Barry Jones “Intimate networks can lead to good government”
- The hotbed of the Westminster village is absent
- Things get done, some of them very interesting and some very quickly
- The curates egg model of public services.
- Authorities have turned around RCT, Vale of Glam and Blaenau Gwent
- Excellence Wales, Social Services Improvement Agency, Childrens Commissioning Resource.



Sir Jeremy Beecham Review

- Fundamental review of local service delivery tasked with accelerating collaboration not reorganisation. But.....
- He is perplexed by the potential and the complexity!!!
- But he may have views on the effectiveness of structures – lots of discussion about LHBs!
- Beecham recently said that local government should have more functions rather than less.
- What are these – Primary Care commissioning? Post 16 education? Wider range of consumer protection powers?
- Beecham will insist that Councils do not use existing opportunities to pool budgets and work together.
- Beecham will also point to local area agreements
- Local Public service boards.



Making the Connections

- Assembly key policy – always doing things 22 ways is daft
- All talk no action?
- who does what and who gives up what.
- Some want to play others are play acting!
- Issues about loss of control, pooled sovereignty, professional status and local pride
- The danger of inventing new projects when obvious solutions are in place.
- THE BIG QUESTION – HOW DO WE MAKE THE CONNECTIONS WORK?



But will collaboration work?

- Legalities
- Governance and accountabilities
- Lack of strategic thinking across local government and health
- Partnership working for joint workings sake
- Lack of skills
- ICT incompatibility
- Lack of role models
- No real incentives
- Lack of stakeholder involvement
- Making the connections versus the Home Office



WLGA and SOLACE regions

**Matrix Wales
WAG/WLGA Regional
Partnership Boards**

Appendix xx





Is Regionalism the answer or are we trying “to herd cats”?

- Creation of 4 forums based on Making the connections and accelerating joint working
- Regional, sub regional, inter authority partnerships, cross boundary working
- Introduces formal structures to drive collaboration in terms of senior political and officer leadership
- Allows for high level discussion to occur and for decisions to be made – albeit with authority signoff.
- Will be resourced with the creation of 4 new posts and Assembly support.
- Will also support matrix themes – Central Wales plus
- Build on legacy arrangements.



Making the connections – Improvement fund

- Regional projects
 - Waste Management = investment required to allow councils to meet the landfill directive targets in 2010 and 2013 is £1.4bn
 - Out of county placements = cost £106m, one child currently costing £9,000 per week
 - Surplus School Places = costs range from £2,600 per child to £13,500 per child
 - Energy Efficiency = Rising costs
 - Back of office – public private partnerships?
 - Single no emergency number (SNEN)



The “Day job” issues

- Housing quality standard – Heads of the Valley stock transfer?
- Social Services joint reviews – a curate’s egg
- Schools reorganisation – on hold in some authorities
- Clean, green and safe
- Assembly forcing collaboration – Education Advisory services and Emergency planning
- The future of the Police in Wales – will one force actually happen?
- Inspection and Regulation – too much and too many
- Future of scrutiny and the member role



Conclusions

- Real change on the horizon
- Get collaboration right and the maps might not come out.
- Get it wrong and they will
- Generational change occurring members and officers
- More powers for the Assembly
- More powers for local government but less resources?
- Greater citizen expectations
- Community planning plus



**Thank you for listening – Have a good
course**

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