LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Purpose

1. To seek members’ views on proposals and recommendations from the Local Government Reform Working Group meeting on 21st May 2019.

Background

2. The final meeting of the Local Government Working Group chaired by Derek Vaughan met on 21st May. It was attended by the Minister and Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government, Cllrs Debbie Wilcox, Rob Stewart, Andrew Morgan, Peter Fox and Ray Quant, with CBI and Unison representatives and Welsh Government and WLGA officials.

3. The meeting was constructive and it was agreed that significant progress had been made through the group. It was also agreed that a new sub-group of Partnership Council be established to oversee reform work in future.

Future Recommendations

4. Several recommendations for further work were proposed, which were endorsed by WLGA representatives, subject to further discussion and agreement with leaders at Executive Board.

5. The report of recommendations is included in Annex A and includes two key recommendations which demonstrate the progress achieved:

Recommendation 4

- That the WLGA and Local Government maintains the ‘Collaboration Compendium’ and:
  - Update it annually;
  - Expand it to include wider public service collaborations;
  - Report it to council cabinets, regional partnership boards, WLGA Council and the Joint Council for Wales annually to review existing and consider new potential new collaborations.

This recommendation would enable local government to continue to highlight its extensive track-record on collaboration, share information and practice and
provide reassurance that local authorities regularly review and consider new collaborative arrangements.

Recommendation 18

- That Welsh Government and Local Government through the WLGA refresh and consolidate existing understandings into a single document agreed via the Finance Sub Group covering the architecture and principles of engagement and matters such as mutual understanding of the financial and service pressures, opportunities and context, including new responsibilities and the ongoing review and, where appropriate, transfer of specific grants into the Revenue Support Grant.

The WLGA have long-called for a renewed commitment and joint understanding between Welsh Government and local government around local government finance. The Minister's support for this recommendation is therefore welcome.

**Framework for Regional Collaboration**

6. The Welsh Government tabled a paper entitled ‘Framework for Regional Collaboration’ which provided some detail around the Minister's recent proposals for new Statutory Joint Committees (Annex B). The Minister has articulated proposals for new Joint Committees in meetings with leaders, who have been supportive in principle, but this is paper is the first to set out what the proposals look like.

7. The proposed Statutory Joint Committees would be similar to the model available to London authorities, and would be more powerful than current joint committee arrangements, enabling joint committees to be corporate bodies, to employ staff and potentially levy, where appropriate.

8. The Minister provided assurances to members of the Reform Working Group that the proposals sought to empower and strengthen local democracy, give greater control to local government and sought to provide greater clarity and consistency to local government and the public around service delivery and governance.

9. In providing greater clarity and consistency for local government, the Minister is beginning discussions with her cabinet colleagues with a view to ensuring that any regional governance arrangements introduced by Welsh Government would be consistent with this model; this might therefore mean changes to existing Welsh Government specified regional arrangements. The paper lists the following areas where Welsh Government may specify Statutory Joint Committees as the governance model: transport, economic development, land use planning and strategic housing and education improvement.

10. The Minister summarised the proposals as follows:
- The establishment of Statutory Joint Committees, which would be made up of leaders.

- The Committees could establish sub-committees, which might include leaders or relevant cabinet members, to oversee specific collaborative services.

- The joint committees’ powers, financial and voting arrangements would be set out in regulations and covered by a ‘Code’ to ensure clear and good governance, including detailing processes for how councils ‘enter and exit’ collaborative arrangements to minimise disruption and impact on others. The Minister suggested a more flexible Code could apply to discretionary services delivered through these joint arrangements.

- There would be 2 two routes to establish such committees:
  - Locally requested – where authorities identify that new more powerful governance is needed for an area or service, they could ‘request’ Welsh Government to establish a joint committee via regulations and the work with Welsh Government in ‘collaborative design of the governance, membership, voting and other constitutional arrangements’.
  - Nationally prescribed – joint committees for a limited and specified service areas specified in the forthcoming Local Government Bill, which might include transport, economic development, land use planning and strategic housing and education improvement.

11. The Minister confirmed that authorities could co-opt partners where appropriate. The Minister clarified that the Statutory Joint Committee model was clearer and more straightforward than Combined Authorities, as it sought to build on and strengthen the arrangements already in place, retain local accountability and avoided some of the complexities of Combined Authorities governance arrangements.

12. The Minister is keen to seek views and work with leaders and her preference is that consensus could be achieved around this model and that it could be jointly developed with local government for inclusion in the forthcoming Local Government Bill to be introduced in the autumn; if consensus was not possible, the proposals would be introduced as a Welsh Government amendment to the Bill at a later stage.

13. The Minister has requested that the model be jointly designed by officials from Welsh Government and local government during early summer, in order for it to be included in the forthcoming Local Government Bill. The tight legislative timetable would mean that any joint work would have to begin in June and would be overseen by the new Partnership Council sub-committee.

14. WLGA members of the Working Group were supportive of the Minister's proposals in principle, agreeing to seek the views of leaders at the Executive
Board. It was recognised that much of the detail is yet to be developed and considered, but the proposed approach could provide greater consistency in terms of regional governance models introduced by Welsh Government and would strengthen local democratic leadership and oversight over regional services. Any local government input into the development of this model would seek to ensure the primacy of local democratic leadership and local accountability.

15. Any Statutory Joint Committee proposals will require fuller consultation and further engagement with local government as they develop. WLGA members’ views would be sought throughout the process, via the Partnership Council sub-group and WLGA Executive Board in July.

Recommendations

16. **It is recommended that members:**
   
   16.1 Consider and endorse the Recommendations from the Local Government Reform Working Group (Annex A)
   
   16.2 Consider the Minister’s Statutory Joint Committee proposals (Annex B) and the request for local government to jointly develop the model with Welsh Government

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**Reminder of Working Group’s Core task**
The Working Group’s 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 – all within the framework of democratic accountability and empowered by additional functions, powers and flexibilities, the appropriate financial framework and other tools or support necessary for change.

Shaded areas are recommended for inclusion in the remit of the new Partnership Council sub group

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<tr>
<th>Joint working and structures</th>
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<td><strong>Area</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Area 1: Regional arrangements</strong></td>
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| To look across existing **regional arrangements** and identify where there is scope to simplify and integrate activity (of authorities and partners), scope for future development, and scope to redesign services, and to establish the principles which should underpin further regional working. | 1. Completed a rapid review of existing partnerships and the development of a Collaboration Compendium  
  2. Early agreement on the need for more consistent mechanisms which provide simplified democratic control mechanisms for regional working.  
  3. Agreement on a framework of principles to underpin collaboration.  
  4. Commissioning of a more comprehensive joint review of strategic partnerships *(Ongoing - WLGA/WG)*  
  5. Agreed that the WLGA would coordinate development of a Code of Collaborative Practice to provide consistency of approach regarding good governance in collaboration. | 2. That the WLGA coordinate the development of a Code of Collaborative Practice for agreement with the new sub group of Partnership Council and adoption by all local authorities by a date to be agreed. (WLGA/WG) |
<p>|                               |     | 3. That Welsh Ministers should include provisions within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill for a consistent mechanism for regional working. (WG) |
|                               |     | 4. That the WLGA and Local Government maintains the Collaborations Compendium (WLGA/LG) and: |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Area 2: Shared services</th>
<th>6. LG continue to consider shared services where a business case supports <strong>WLGA/LG</strong></th>
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<tr>
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<td>7. Collaboration Compendium records current situation (see above)</td>
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<td>8. Local Government Digital Programme has commenced</td>
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<td>Area 3: Voluntary mergers</td>
<td>9. Working group agreed a framework for principles for voluntary mergers</td>
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<td>10. Agreed to include provisions for voluntary mergers in the Local Government and</td>
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<td>8. That the working group agree the draft prospectus for voluntary mergers which provides the mechanism and process for voluntary mergers going forward (<strong>Working Group</strong>).</td>
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5. That local authority cabinets and regional boards receive and review the Compendium on an annual basis in order to inform considerations for any new collaborations (as above) (**WLGA/LG**)

7. That the Local Government Digital Programme progress with its shared contact centre pilot (**LG/WLGA/WG**)
| the case for change in their context (voluntary mergers). | Elections (Wales) Bill | 9. That local authorities considering voluntary mergers use the prospectus as a framework to inform proposals and initiate discussions with the local government sector and the Welsh Government. (LG)  
10. That the new Partnership Council sub group should keep the prospectus under review and update when appropriate. (WLGA/WG) |
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<tr>
<td>11. Prepared a draft prospectus for voluntary mergers</td>
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<td>Area 4: Powers and flexibilities</td>
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<td>To identify specific powers, including funded powers, and flexibilities that would support local government in achieving its ambitions for communities and enable communities to achieve theirs</td>
<td>12. Discussed at September meeting and a paper to note in November. WLGA highlighted priorities for consideration for legislative change, and WG responded on each of the priorities, with clarity on which suggestions would be suitable for inclusion in the Local Government and Elections Bill; which suggestions could form the subject of further dialogue; and which were not considered suitable for inclusion in the Bill.</td>
<td>11. That the working group note the work that has been undertaken at official level to discuss suggestions for additional powers and flexibilities, that the General Power of Competence will be progressed through the Local Government and Elections Bill, and constructive discussion continues on some other point which were highlighted as priorities. (WLGA/WG)</td>
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<th>Area 5: Policy change processes</th>
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<td>To explore the current arrangements by which policy change is formulated, consulted on and implemented to ensure local government’s voice and interests are heard and properly reflected in decisions</td>
<td>13. Discussed in September as part of Mutual Respect item but further consideration required.</td>
<td>13. See Mutual Respect and Shared Responsibility below.</td>
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<td>Area</td>
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<td>Area 6: Diversity in local government</td>
<td>14. Briefly discussed as part of discussion on the Local Government and Elections Bill content. No substantive discussion held due to cancelled meetings. 15. Although not part of Working Group discussions, the WLGA and Welsh Government separately provided evidence to the ‘Diversity in Local Government’ Inquiry conducted by the Assembly's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee and the matter has been discussed between the Minister and leaders.</td>
<td>14. It is recommended that this work now be taken forward as part of the next phase of the Diversity In Democracy programme. (WLGA/WG)</td>
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<td>Area 7: Remuneration of elected members</td>
<td>15. Discussed in September meeting and report from the IRP circulated to members</td>
<td>15. It is recommended that this now be considered as a strand of taking forward the Diversity in Democracy Programme. (WLGA/WG)</td>
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### Service change and the financial position

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| **Area 8: Case for investment, and engagement on finance issues** | 16. WLGA delivered an item at the November meeting but there was no opportunity to revisit due to cancelled meetings. There was an action to map groups which discuss finance matters and to report back to working group.  
17. The Minister wrote to the WLGA Leader reinforcing the role of the FSG as the key forum for discussion of strategic financial matters including her intention to engage Ministerial colleagues through this route.  
18. The Minister has also agreed that earlier and more meetings of the FSG should be held in order to allow adequate deliberation and engagement over £4bn of public service funding. | 16. That the following be noted as the Groups where WG and LG engage on strategic finance matters:  
**Political membership:**  
- Ministerial Bilaterals with WLGA  
- Partnership Council  
- Finance Sub Group (Partnership Council)  
- Tax Advisory group  
**Officer level:**  
- Distribution Sub Group (DGS) (distribution matters)  
- Capital Finance Investment Group (capital funding matters)  
- Society of Welsh Treasurers (SWT) (and SWT Exec)  
- Welsh Revenues and Benefits Group (and the 4 spin off groups on vulnerability)  
- LGF Reform Working Group  
- Analysis of Future Health & Social Care Spending - Steering Group  
17. That the Finance Sub Group be used as the forum for discussions on strategic financial matters.  
18. That Welsh Government and Local Government through the WLGA refresh and consolidate existing understandings |
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<td>into a single document agreed via the FSG covering the architecture and principles of engagement and matters such as mutual understanding of the financial and service pressures, opportunities and context, including new responsibilities and the ongoing review and, where appropriate, transfer of specific grants into the Revenue Support Grant. (WG/WLGA)</td>
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### Area 9: Improvement and support

To determine what resources are required to establish new sector-led improvement and support arrangements in local government, including digital transformation, peer and self-assessment and corporate and service support

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<td>19.</td>
<td>That WLGA leads on the joint development of new sector-led improvement and support arrangements. <em>(WLGA)</em></td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>That the new improvement and support arrangements be reported to the new sub group of Partnership Council. <em>(WLGA)</em></td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>The Working Group discussed this item at its meeting in January.</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>The Minister has committed to support the creation of a new improvement function. Progress towards this aim was discussed at a termly meeting between the Minister for Housing and Local Government and the Leader of the WLGA on 7 May where it was agreed that the WLGA will lead development of costed proposals for the improvement arrangements and grant.</td>
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# Area 10: Mutual respect and shared responsibilities

To consider how mutual respect between elected representatives at a local and national level can be developed and embedded, ensuring greater consistency and better understanding of respective roles and responsibilities

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<td>22. Discussed at September meeting and action to update approach outlined in paper.</td>
<td>21. That a new sub group of the Partnership Council for Wales be created to continue this engagement following the conclusion of the Working Group, and that this way of working underpins the ethos and culture of that group (WG/WLGA).</td>
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<td>23. The Minister for Housing and Local Government has been clear that positive working relationships and ongoing engagement with local government are essential to the success of local government reform.</td>
<td>22. That Welsh Government and local government build on existing structures and relationships, embedding these common values throughout our working together, improving the engagement with the First Minister, Cabinet and individual portfolio Ministers. (WG/WLGA).</td>
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<td>24. Mutual respect and shared responsibilities has been an underpinning theme of discussions on all Working Group agenda items and several of the areas identified have been progressed:</td>
<td>23. That an annual meeting be held between the First Minister and WLGA and an annual Cabinet meeting with WLGA leaders (WG/WLGA).</td>
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<td>- The Partnership Council has received renewed focus by the new First Minister and Minister for Housing and Local Government and has already met twice since the turn of the year;</td>
<td>24. That there is a commitment to a formal meeting at least once a year to discuss strategic matters with individual Ministers (WG/WLGA).</td>
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<td>- The Minister for Housing and Local Government and/or Deputy Minister has agreed to attend each of the WLGA’s Executive Board or Council meetings (where diaries permit);</td>
<td>25. That the Partnership Agreement be expanded to deal with these matters at its next review. (WG/WLGA).</td>
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<td>- The forthcoming Local Government (Wales) Bill will introduce a more flexible governance and performance regime based on self-improvement, underpinned by sector-led improvement support, which the Minister has agreed to provide funding to through the WLGA.</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>The Welsh Government's Local Government Partnership Scheme is reviewed and reported on annually.</td>
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Paper 1 - A Framework for Regional Collaboration

Purpose

1. To propose for agreement a framework and consistent mechanism for regional collaboration to support the delivery of sustainable and effective public services.

Background

2. The Working Group’s core task is 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.

3. At the January meeting, the Working Group discussed the need for more consistent mechanisms and structures to support regional working and collaboration. Members agreed that a single structure for statutory and voluntary arrangements would help deliver consistency and simplification to collaborative arrangements.

4. Further discussion was had with local government leaders on 29 March on the Statutory Joint Committee Model as a consistent mechanism for regional working and the development of a framework for collaborative working.

5. The Framework for Regional Collaboration at Annex A responds to the needs identified by the Working Group and subsequent ministerial discussions with local government, and sets out an approach for agreement for a framework and consistent mechanism for regional collaboration.

Action

6. The Working Group is invited to:

   - Agree the framework and consistent mechanism for regional collaboration as outlined in Annex A.
Annex A

A Framework for Regional Collaboration

Background

The Welsh Government and local authorities agree that strong local government is essential to the effective delivery of good quality, integrated public services to communities across Wales. They recognise that the strength of the Welsh Government and local government is the democratic accountability which reflects the needs, aspirations and cultures of Wales. They also agree we need to see effective, successful organisations which are fit-for-purpose and representative of the communities they serve.

Following the consultation on the Green Paper ‘Strengthening Local Government: Delivering for People’ in 2018, the Welsh Government and local government established the Working Group on Local Government. Its purpose is to work through partnership and mutual respect to develop a shared agenda for reform which ensures the sustainability of local government and local service provision. As part of this role, the Working Group has been reviewing existing regional working arrangements in local government and the appetite and priorities for increased future collaboration.

Local authorities have expressed a commitment to regional working and have previously provided a paper to the Working Group demonstrating the good progress in areas such as the city deals and in a number of areas of shared service delivery. However discussions within the working group have also identified the need to develop consistent frameworks and governance arrangements which would underpin local government approaches to collaboration.

The main principles for such arrangements are:
- To provide a more consistent mechanism and governance model for collaboration
- To provide a clear framework to underpin regional working approaches
- To provide a model which would help simplify regional arrangements
- To ensure retention of democratic control.

There was also a perception of a crowded partnership landscape and that there were opportunities for simplification and rationalisation.

The Welsh Government will bring forward the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill (the Bill) later in 2019 which will deliver a number of new freedoms and powers, including a General Power of Competence, to local government supporting endeavours for reform and transformation. The Working Group has recognised an opportunity to include provision within the Bill which will provide a framework for a consistent approach to regional working and collaboration and which reflects the shared ambitions of the Working Group.
Providing a clear and consistent framework:

- To enable planning and service delivery on a scale which maximises benefits for service users;
- To realise the potential of collective effort in tackling common challenges and deliver innovative solutions;
- To collaborate to build the specialist skills needed in key service areas;
- To rationalise current arrangements, reduce duplication and focus on a consistent way of democratically governing collaborative arrangements.

**Overview of proposed approach**

The Welsh Government through the Working Group is proposing an approach which would both support and encourage regional working and collaboration through more coherent, consistent, simplified, democratically controlled mechanisms. The approach can be broadly framed around two key areas:

- Providing a **mechanism for consistent regional working** and collaboration with a clear framework for governing collaborative arrangements and providing clarity of expectations on where regional working is important and what local authorities can expect of each other.

- Enhancing the proposed **performance and governance regime** to support regional working by local authorities.

The Welsh Government also recognises the need to bring consistency and discipline to the Welsh Government’s approach to regional working arrangements across different policy areas. There are clear opportunities to align regional working arrangements as part of a single mechanism for regional working.

Following discussions in the Working Group, the Welsh Government and the WLGA are also jointly undertaking a review of current strategic partnerships to consider whether there is any unnecessary complexity or duplication and, where necessary, identify opportunities for simplification and rationalisation. The review will report to the Partnership Council for Wales on 2 October.

**Mechanism for Consistent Regional Working**

Local authority members within the Working Group have highlighted a number of areas where they are currently collaborating on a regional and sub-regional basis. Members have also expressed a commitment to further collaborative action and intend to propose a number of priority areas for future collaboration. It was also clear from the discussions that more could be done to support and strengthen ongoing and future collaborative working particularly when considering the frameworks and structures for governance.

Discussions have indicated that, given the right frameworks or incentives, local government would be willing to work together to increase the pace and extent of collaborative arrangements – and would welcome a statutory framework for the governance of such arrangements. It would be important for any such framework to
provide a coherent approach to regional working which will reduce the duplication of leadership and management time in serving multiple regional arrangements while supporting the alignment of strategic planning at a regional level.

Putting effective collaboration arrangements in place takes time and resource, and there are also challenges in developing arrangements that are clear about respective roles, responsibilities and governance of collaborative approaches. Working Group members discussed the model which underpins the North London Waste Authority as an example of the type of model which could offer the greater certainty that local authorities need in developing regional arrangements.

**Consistent Structures**

It is proposed to provide through legislation as part of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill a consistent structure for local government collaboration; a mechanism which has a legal personality and is therefore able to employ staff directly, and can have functions vested in it through legislation and or delegation – a **Statutory Joint Committee**.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill will provide the power to create a Statutory Joint Committee via regulations. Such regulations would set out the service areas and specific functions of a Statutory Joint Committee and the detailed arrangements for governance, finance etc.

In this way it should be possible for a Statutory Joint Committee to have responsibility for a single service area or as many service areas as was relevant in the specific circumstance.

Where a Statutory Joint Committee has functions for a number of service areas it should also be possible for functions to be exercisable by a ‘subcommittee’, if appropriate or if desired by the membership of the Statutory Joint Committee.

To provide flexibility in the arrangements it will be possible to establish a Statutory Joint Committee in a number of ways.

The first route will be on request from local government, where local authorities wish to work together on the basis of shared interests and mutual benefit. In this case, local authorities will identify, as part of the request to create a Statutory Joint Committee, those service areas they wish to be included.

It is proposed that this approach will be a shared endeavour with the Welsh Government, with collaborative design of the governance, membership, voting and other constitutional arrangements within any regulation establishing a Statutory Joint Committee.

Welsh Ministers will also be able to initiate the creation of Statutory Joint Committees in a number of limited and specified service areas where evidence suggests collaborative or regional working would deliver greater benefits for people and be a more efficient and effective way of delivering those services.
This might include as part of a consolidation exercise of existing regional working legislation, e.g. planning, or for service areas which already have established separate regional arrangements or emerging ones. Proposals for Statutory Joint Committees emerging from this route would be subject to consultation with local government.

The specified service areas for which Welsh Ministers would be able to create Statutory Joint Committees would be limited to service areas such as transport, economic development, land use planning and strategic housing and education improvement. Confirmation of these service areas and their inclusion within the Bill will be subject to further discussion.

While a Statutory Joint Committee provides a vehicle for a consistent governance model for regional working it does not, in itself, deliver a coherent approach to regional working, reduce duplication or simplify the proliferation of regional arrangements. That would depend on how the mechanism was used by the Welsh Government and local government.

Clearly, the expectation is that the mechanism would be used to simplify and streamline existing collaborative arrangements, removing unnecessary duplication. Part of this could include providing for a role in setting an agreed vision for the collective area and joining up service delivery across policy areas.

A Consistent Framework

The Working Group has discussed and agreed the need for greater certainty for those participating in regional arrangements and the development of a framework for decision making around joint working.

It is proposed that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill will include relevant provision to implement the view of the Working Group and ensure such a framework is developed.

However in advance of legislation, local government has agreed to develop a voluntary framework or code which would structure discussions and decision making on leaving, and possibly entering, joint arrangements. This could include a means for members to address failures in performance of joint arrangements and decisions to withdraw from a voluntary joint arrangement. (This would not apply to arrangements which have been specified in legislation such as Regional Partnership Boards.)
Proposed Performance and Governance Regime

The new performance and governance framework in the Bill replaces the current Improvement mechanism within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and aims to support cultural and organisational change within local government. The aim is to build on existing strengths and create a more innovative, open, honest, transparent and ambitious sector, challenging itself and collectively driving up service delivery outcomes and standards across Wales.

The provisions within the Bill will place a duty on a principal council to keep its performance under review – that is, to review the extent to which is it meeting its Performance Requirements. The Performance Requirements are the extent to which a principal council is:

1. exercising its functions correctly
2. using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively, and
3. governed effectively in delivering 1 and 2 above.

The formal process of review will be through self-assessment with the conclusions of the self-assessment process published annually through a self-assessment report, which will include actions to help a local authority meet its performance requirements.

There will also be a requirement for each local authority to undertake a peer review at least once an electoral cycle. What form the peer review takes will be at the discretion of the local authority.

The Minister for Housing and Local Government has indicated that support would also be available for a sector-led improvement function or approach which would sit alongside and support the delivery of the Performance and Governance regime within the Bill. Such an improvement approach would support local authorities to develop self-assessment and improvement, building on the minimum expectations established as part of the Bill.

The proposed performance and governance regime would also see Welsh Ministers retain similar support and intervention powers as currently exist in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. This would ensure that Ministers continue to be able to provide the backstop support for local government when required.

Regional working

The proposal for the Performance and Governance regime would be to recognise regional working in the Performance Requirements proposed above and so into the wider Performance and Governance provisions within the Bill, including the associated support and intervention powers.

The aim is to encourage a local authority to consider the benefits of regional working in terms of both what it can bring to its own constituents and to those of the wider regional area. This will also act as a clear signal of the collective expectations on all local authorities to maximise the opportunities regional working and collaboration can bring to the reform and transformation of local government. These expectations will also underpin the consistent mechanism for regional working outlined above.