

Charter Network Meeting
18th April 2011 Llandrindod Wells

Agenda

- 10:30 Coffee, tea and biscuits
- 11:00 Introduction from Daniel Hurford, WLGA
- 11:05 Anne Jenkins and Richard Jefferies, Newport City Council
Experience of establishing a charter
- 11:20 David Davies and Helen Burkhalter, Denbighshire County Council
Working with community and town councils to devolve services
- 11:35 Group Discussion: Established a charter – what next?
- 12:05 Lyn Cadwallader, One Voice Wales
Devolution of services from a community and town council perspective
Support One Voice Wales can provide to unitary authorities and community and town councils during the development of a charter
- 12:20 Group discussion: Service delegation
- 12:50 Question and Answer Session with the speakers
- 13.00 Closing summary by Daniel Hurford, WLGA

Networking Lunch

Attendees

Adam Forster	Cardiff Council
Alwyn Holland	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Anne Jenkins	Newport County Borough Council
Stephanie Aldridge	Flintshire County Council
Dan Shaw	Pembrokeshire County Council
David Davies	Denbighshire County Council
Helen Burkhalter	Denbighshire County Council
Phil Grafton	Carmathenshire County Council
Sion Huws	Gwynedd County Council
Gillian Hayes	Conwy County Borough Council
Lisa Saycell	Ceredigion County Council
Debbie McCarty	Monmouthshire County Council
Alan Browne	Monmouthshire County Council

Shane Thomas	Powys County Council
Beverly Noon	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Peter Mullen	Wrexham County Borough Council
Eurwyn Griffith	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Daniel Hurford	Welsh Local Government Association
Lyn Cadwallader	One Voice Wales
Ken Burton	One Voice Wales
Del Morgan	One Voice Wales
Llywela Haf Owain-Williams	One Voice Wales
Shyam Vining	Welsh Assembly Government
Lucy Dickens	Welsh Assembly Government

Group Discussion: Established a charter – what next?

During the development of a charter:

Good communication and understanding is essential.

Overcoming resistance from some community and town councils is important and needs to be done in a consistent manner.

Awareness of the role of the clerk, pro-active approach required by a unitary authority to ensure messages are communicated all members of community and town councils.

There must be agreement over appropriate interaction and behaviour.

Important to ensure that the charter outcomes are realistic, relevant and specific. Focus should be on the outcomes rather than the process.

It is important to operate a two way approach i.e both unitary authority and community and town councils being equally involved and committed to the development of the charter.

The model of “clusters” of community and town councils is supported as a good vehicle for partnership.

One Voice Wales can assist with this approach however, non member councils of One Voice Wales may be much less involved and have less influence.

Seeking “quick wins” can sometimes be a useful approach.

Benefits of a charter:

Assists in providing consistency and improves the working relationship between community and town councils and the unitary authority.

Increases the trust and confidence of the councils in one another and in the unitary authority.

Builds on the existing meetings and mechanism in place.

The charter document generated provides the basis from which an action plan can be produced.

Can be tailored to suit local needs.

Group Discussion: Service delegation

Typical types of services delegated:

- Grounds / footpath maintenance
- Public conveniences
- Recycling
- Allotments
- Cemetries / memorials
- Community centres

Things to consider / problem areas:

The use of accreditation systems could be considered.
Social enterprises may also prove useful for some situations.
Third sector approaches may occasionally work (if we include leisure trusts or organisations such as Barnardo's).
Important to consider Health and Safety and asset transfer.
Arrangements need to be reviewed as part of a consistent and structured approach.
Innovative approach already underway in Gwynedd – Penllyn Partnership.

[For more information about the Penllyn Partnership please click here](#)

Unitary authorities should be prepared to give community and town councils time to weigh up options and make a full consideration of the proposal, before delegation is finalised.
Public toilets are a major issue at present.
There is a timing conundrum to consider, the learning curve for devolved services is long whilst the underlying budget crisis is immediate.

Notes from Anne Jenkins, Newport City Council

Background

The authority took the decision to structure community and town council liaison meetings so that they concentrated only on strategic issues rather than localised issues. It was the movement away from discussing localised issues over the last few years that has enabled them to work with community and town councils to develop a charter.

Developing the charter

The authority worked closely with Ken Burton, One Voice Wales, as he was able to offer an additional communicative stream to the community and town councils and consequently, was able to facilitate further discussions between the authority and community and town councils.

Meetings were arranged between authority officials and the community and town councils to discuss and agree the content of the charter document. They used the model charter and found that they did not need to alter it significantly, other than to reflect local issues. Further meetings were arranged to ensure that there was collective agreement for the charter to be used, as a working document, and reviewed again in two years time.

Benefits which have been realised

By concentrating on strategic issues during liaison meetings they have been able to hold much more substantial and valuable discussions with community and town councils and the councils, who have, as a result, have become more involved in the decisions made by the authority. It was agreed that the community and town councils would contact the city contact centre directly regarding localised issues, so that these could be dealt with in an effective manner.

Cabinet Members and officers are able to attend meetings if they so wish, as well as bringing items to the meeting for discussion. Anne Jenkins sends out reminder letters to councils, to ensure that they have equal chance to contribute items, prior to the agenda being finalised. The charter is discussed at each meeting to retain it as a working document.

Notes from David Davies and Helen Burkhalter, Denbighshire County Council

Below is a brief summary of their presentation, the full powerpoint presentation and speaker notes are attached below.

There are thirty seven community and town councils in Denbighshire. Two liaison meetings are held each each year, of which half of each meeting dedicated to having a question and answer session. This arrangement is effective as it allows officers within the authority to consult and communicate with community and town councils collectively rather than on an individual basis.

They have established additional meetings for clerks at each of the larger town councils so that they can discuss any problems they have. Localised issues raised by a community and town council are now put directly to the contact centre, which allows the authority to more effectively track each action and ensure it is resolved.

Meeting the chair and clerk of each community council was a priority for the new Chief Executive and relatively new Leader. From these meetings they were able to ascertain what the main localised problems were facing each of the communities and take necessary action. By responding to these issues, the authority was able to demonstrate that it had listened not just to the community and town councils but to the communities it serves. It was during these meetings that service delegation was initially discussed.

Work undertaken to devolve services

They agreed to discuss service delegation with ten of the larger community and town councils (i.e. councils with a precept of more than £20,000), as they were seen to potentially have more capacity to take on additional services from the authority.

There was an expectation by the authority that all ten of the councils could be managed in the same way, however, this was not the case. Key lessons learnt:

- Important to be flexible
- Takes time
- Requires involvement and commitment
- Humour helps
- Transparency
- Good communication

They looked to North Dorset and Isle of Wight as recent good examples of other places who had delegated services in this manner.

A colour code system was used to identify which services the community and town councils wanted to take over, which they did not want to, and would not consider, and those that they may consider, if the terms / arrangements were altered. This was effective in providing a consistent approach.

They have developed a core basket of services that community and town councils can opt to take ownership of, providing that they have the sufficient capability and capacity (e.g. clerk has certain skill levels and organisation met conditions of health and safety etc). It is hoped that in working in this way they will be able to provide the necessary and targeted support to community and town councils to raise capacity and capability at this level of governance to further the ambition of subsidiarity.

Full presentation and accompanying notes:



presentation slides
18.04.11.ppt

Notes from Lyn Cadwallader, One Voice Wales

Lyn Cadwallader introduced himself as the new Chief Executive for One Voice Wales and informed everyone that he had previously worked for Torfaen County Borough Council.

He spoke about the delegation of services from a community and town council perspective and highlighted that at present, many councils did not have the

capacity or capability to take on additional services from unitary authorities. However, he recognised the benefit of service delegation and argued that working to strengthen the relationship between the two tiers of government through charters was imperative.

Furthermore he commented that community and town councils would require additional training to fully understand what skills and resources they would require, prior to taking on additional services. This would be particularly important for those community and town councils who have no experience of taking on services.

He commended Denbighshire County Borough Council on the work they had been doing with community and town councils and suggested that One Voice Wales and Welsh Local Government Association should produce a model to assist other authorities in delegating services.

Key Messages:

Development Officers from One Voice Wales are available to offer support to unitary authorities and community and town councils during the establishment of a charter.

Charters would strengthen the working relationship between unitary authorities and community and town councils and as a result, would make service delegation easier to negotiate.

Training of community and town councils is vital

A framework / model for service delegation is required to assist unitary authorities in the process.

Time – it is important that time is made over the next few months prepare community and town councils.

CYNGOR GWYNEDD / GWYNEDD COUNCIL	
Partneriaeth Penllyn	Penllyn Partnership
CEFNDIR.	BACKGROUND
<p>Cynllun peilot yw Partneriaeth Penllyn a sefydlwyd yn dilyn trafodaethau yn 2008 a 2009 rhwng Cyngor Gwynedd a'r pum cyngor sydd yn ardal Penllyn. Fe ddaeth yn weithredol ar 1 Ebrill, 2009 gyda chytundeb ar gyfer Dirprwyo Swyddogaethau gan Cyngor Gwynedd i Bartneriaeth Penllyn.</p>	<p>Penllyn Partnership is a pilot scheme that was established following discussions in 2008 and 2009 between Gwynedd Council and the five councils in the Penllyn area. It became operational on 1 April, 2009, with an agreement for Delegating Functions from Gwynedd Council to the Penllyn Partnership.</p>
<p>Mae'r pum cyngor sydd i'r Bartneriaeth, sef; Cynghorau Cymuned Llanuwchllyn, Llandderfel, Llanycil a Llangower gyda Chyngor Tref Y Bala yn cydweithio mewn ffordd newydd ac arloesol i ddarparu rhai o wasanaethau Cyngor Gwynedd a gweithredu ar ran yr ardal. Y nôd yw i :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) ddatblygu perthynas newydd rhwng pobl leol a'r gwasanaethau cyhoeddus a ddarperir i'w hardal a hwyluso gwelliannau ffisegol yn yr amgylchedd adeiledig, (ii) weithredu fel cyfrwng i ddylanwadu ar gyrff cyhoeddus, a (iii) geisio presenoldeb gyrff cyhoeddus o fewn ardal Penllyn 	<p>There are five councils in the Partnership, namely, the Community Councils of Llanuwchllyn, Llandderfel, Llanycil, Llangower, along with Bala Town Council. They collaborate in a new and innovative way in the delivery of some of Gwynedd Council's services and act on behalf of the area. The aim is:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) to develop a new relationship between local people and the public services provided for their area and facilitate physical improvements in the built environment, (ii) to act as an agent for influencing public bodies, and (iii) to seek the presence of public bodies in the Penllyn area.
<p>Mae'r Bartneriaeth yn ymwneud yn gynyddol raddol â dyletswyddau a berthyn i wasanaethau penodedig, sef; toiledau cyhoeddus, caeau chwarae i blant, hawliau tramwy, meinciau a thiroedd agored. Ni throsglwyddir unrhyw asedau Cyngor Gwynedd i'r Bartneriaeth fel rhan o'r cytundeb dirprwyo. Mae dewis gan y Bartneriaeth i geisio cymryd rheolaeth lwyr o'r meysydd cyfrifoldeb a gall hyn olygu trosglwyddiad o asedau Cyngor Gwynedd, pe fo'n digwydd.</p>	<p>The Partnership is becoming increasingly involved with duties relating to specific services, namely: public toilets, children's playing fields, rights of way, benches and open lands. No assets belonging to Gwynedd Council will be transferred to the Partnership as part of the delegation agreement. However, the Partnership has the choice of taking complete control of the fields of responsibility and should this happen, this could result in the transfer of Gwynedd Council's assets.</p>
<p>Mae tair graddfa o ddyletswyddau rhoddir i'r Bartneriaeth o'r cytundeb ar gyfer Dirprwyo Swyddogaethau, sef; Sylfaenol, Canolig ac Uchel. Mae Partneriaeth Penllyn wedi cyflawni graddfa Sylfaenol yn 2009/10 ac wedi dewis ymwneud â'r raddfa Ganolig yn 2010/11. I bob blwyddyn mae dyraniad ariannol a berthyn i'r raddfa o gyfrifoldeb ac sydd i'w weinyddu'n llwyr gan y Bartneriaeth.</p>	<p>Three grades of responsibilities are given to the Partnership by the Functions Delegation agreement, namely: Basic, Medium and High. The Penllyn Partnership has completed the Basic grade in 2009/10 and has chosen to undertake the Medium grade in 2010/11. There is a financial allocation for every year relating to the responsibility grade and this is administered entirely by the Partnership.</p>
<p>Mae'r Bartneriaeth wedi sefydlu a mabwysiadu cyfansoddiad a chrëwyd swydd Cydlynnydd sydd yn ymddrin â'r gwasanaethau ac yn gyfrifol am weinyddiaeth a rheolaeth gyllidol. Cynhelir cyfarfodydd o'r Bartneriaeth yn rheolaidd mewn gwahanol ganolfannau ar draws ardal Penllyn.</p>	<p>The Partnership has established and adopted a constitution and the post of a co-ordinator has been created for dealing with services and is responsible for administration and financial management. Regular meetings of the Partnership are held in different centres across the Penllyn area.</p>

MANTEISION	ADVANTAGES
<p>(i) Cael pum cyngor yn cydweithio i ddatgan syniadaeth, dymuniad a barn ar y cyd a gosod cyfeiriad arweiniol cadarn i'r Bartneriaeth.</p> <p>(ii) Cael pum cyngor yn cydweithio i ddatgan syniadaeth, dymuniad a barn ar y cyd a all hysbysu a chyfarwyddo Cyngor Gwynedd ynghylch materion lleol; yn rhai cyfredol a thua'r dyfodol.</p> <p>(iii) Mae'r Bartneriaeth yn cynnig fforwm i'r ardal leol ac yn gyfrwng i leisio dyheadau, syniadau ac anghenion ei phoblogaeth.</p> <p>(iv) Mae'r Bartneriaeth yn gallu cyfleu gwybodaeth am flaenoriaethau'r ardal leol.</p>	<p>(i) Having five councils collaborating on expressing their joint ideas, aspirations and opinions and setting a firm direction for the Partnership.</p> <p>(ii) Having five councils collaborating on expressing their joint ideas, aspirations and opinions that could inform and direct Gwynedd Council regarding local issues that are both current and for the future.</p> <p>(iii) The Partnership offers a forum for the local area and is a means of voicing the aspirations, ideas and needs of its population.</p> <p>(iv) The Partnership is able to communicate information on the priorities of the local area.</p>
GWERSI.	LESSONS
<p>(i) Rhaid sicrhau strwythur a chyfansoddiad ymarferol i'r bartneriaeth ar y cychwyn.</p> <p>(ii) Mae defnydd o fodel sydd yn trosglwyddo cyfrifoldebau yn raddol gynyddol yn rhoi cyfle i'r bartneriaeth sefydlu ei weithdrefnau wrth dderbyn profiad a datblygu sgiliau. Mae'r model yn rhoi gallu i'r cyngor trosglwyddo i gyflawni asesiad risg o'r fenter.</p> <p>(iii) Dylai bartneriaeth dderbyn arweiniad, cymorth a chefnogaeth fel y bo'r angen oddi wrth y cyngor trosglwyddo, yn enwedig yn ystod y flwyddyn gyntaf.</p> <p>(iv) Gall y Bartneriaeth datblygu ei ddylanwad ar ystod eang o wasanaethau a ddarperir i'r ardal, gan Gyngor Gwynedd ac eraill.</p> <p>(v) Rhaid sicrhau fod unrhyw bartneriaeth debyg i Bartneriaeth Penllyn yn seiliedig ar gasgliad cywir o gynghorau parthed nifer ac agweddau. Mae'r gallu a'r parodrwydd i gydweithio ac ysgwyddo dyheadau cyffelyb yn allweddol bwysig i sicrhau canlyniad llwyddiannus i'r fenter.</p>	<p>(i) A practical structure and constitution must be ensured for the partnership initially.</p> <p>(ii) The use of a model that transfers responsibilities increasingly gradually provides an opportunity for the partnership to establish its procedures as it gains experience and develops skills. The model provides the transferring council with the ability to undertake a risk assessment of the initiative.</p> <p>(iii) The partnership should receive guidance, assistance and support as required from the transferring council, especially during the first year.</p> <p>(iv) The partnership could develop its influence on a broad range of services provided in the area by Gwynedd Council and others.</p> <p>(v) It must be ensured that any partnership that is similar to the Penllyn Partnership is based on the correct collection of councils in terms of numbers and attitudes. The ability and willingness to collaborate and share similar aspirations is crucially important to ensure a successful outcome for the initiative.</p>