

GETTING AHEAD TOGETHER

Connecting Cardiff & The Valleys

An IWA Conference
City Hall, Cardiff
4 November 2011

A note on the conference prepared by
CARDIFF CIVIC SOCIETY

1 Welcome and Introduction

Councillor Rodney Berman, Leader of Cardiff City Council

- a. City-region approach has been on the agenda for a long time.
- b. We must plan for the next 20 years; the region must be cohesive and connected. There is a mutual dependency.
- c. A city-region exists now, both geographically and socially. 1/3 of city workers commute in, Local Authority co-operation in service delivery is in place in some fields but not in planning.
- d. Local development plans (LDPs) are developed in isolation; the process is not fit for purpose.
- e. Overall supply of land exceeds demand, reducing land value and encouraging competition for development.
- f. The Task and Finish Group on the city regions concept, announced by the Welsh Government, is welcome and a sign that WG is listening.
- g. Strategic planning at the regional level is needed. This has been absent from WG policy.
- h. We have no structures for governance of regions, Scotland is a good model.

Geraint Talfan Davies, Chairman, Institute of Welsh Affairs

- a. Conference is a recognition that we are short of transformative ideas for the region.
- b. Old tribalism and lack of determination has prevented us from imagining something better, and constrained change.
- c. The paradox of a successful city and deprived areas in close proximity encouraged the IWA to form the Cardiff and Valleys branch 2 years ago.
- d. The proposal by Mark Barry for the Cardiff METRO, published jointly by Cardiff Business Partnership and the IWA, is transformative. We need to move it forward. We must learn from other cities.

2 Keynote address

Prof. Kevin Morgan, Department of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University

- a. Urbanisation is a global phenomenon; cities must stay connected to their hinterland.
- b. Economics is the driver, but social issues need to be resolved to be the 'glue' to prevent isolation.
- c. We need to build on ecological, cultural and economic interdependency, a connectivity that binds cities to their regions.
- d. Challenges are large, the SE Wales region comprises 10 local authorities (LAs), 1.5 million people, 2 main cities, 3 zones i.e, rural, river mouths and valley communities.
- e. Cardiff supports 30% of all jobs, but 42% of top jobs. Two thirds work within the LA in which they live. The more skilled you are the more likely you are to need to commute.
- f. Cities are correlated with productivity, knowledge industries and universities; Valley communities with small scale industry and low value added jobs. Productivity and innovation are connected to economic growth. Development can be achieved if connectivity is good.
- g. A council/university partnership is vital to develop policy to foster the city-region not frustrate the spread of opportunity. The Heads of the Valleys for example do not look towards Cardiff for support/jobs, and feel remote.
- h. Housing needs forecasts are confusing and contested, but we have a choice as to where this growth will go. Planners favour sharing, developers favour Cardiff.
- i. Connectivity must be improved - to the Valleys, within the Valleys, to Cardiff, to England, to Europe. Wales must avoid being marginalised (the HS rail debate is an example). There is no direct link to Brussels.
- j. The Roger TYM report confirms the need for a regional approach. The Scotland model with its statutory approach needs study. This is not addressed in the Welsh planning guidelines.
- k. The vision must be clear, all participants must see benefits to overcome tribalism. We must resource the process and ensure a single evidence base that can be used to resolve issues.
- l. The WG supports the move to a city-region approach. It is not a zero-sum game. All can benefit. A statutory strategic planning tier is needed.
- m. The example of waste management showed how essential sustainability is to obtain popular support for collaborative efforts.
- n. **DISCUSSION.**
Elizabeth Haywood, Chair of the WG Task and Finish Group outlined the role of the Group. Membership will be finalised very soon. It will examine the relevance of city-regional planning to all parts of Wales. The study must examine what policies and institutional changes need to be made and develop a vision of where we want to go. The group plans to issue an interim report by Christmas, with recommendations to be made by March 2012. Sustainability will be a key working principle.

3 Learning from other cities

STUTTGART - Thomas Kiwitt, Head of City Planning, Stuttgart

- a. Stuttgart - 2.6 million inhabitants, historically strong municipal leadership through local mayors.
- b. Subsidiarity drives planning to municipal level; the region is recognised as providing a strategic role. For example, in the planning of open spaces, environmental management, transport network and needs of global industries.
- c. 75% work away from town of residence. People choose where they live, and seek quality of life, often associated with green space for recreation. 60% of people live within 600 metres of public transport.
- d. Regional assembly has 90 representatives, €295m budget, of which €262m is for transport, and 50 employees. This covers 179 municipalities, providing a strategic plan for local implementation, and co-ordination of e.g. trade shows, deployment of wind turbines, landscape. This is funded by a levy from municipal funds.
- e. The region is responsible for strategic planning, infrastructure and economic development. The regional plan is a major and comprehensive document.
- f. The regional assembly meets 4 times per year, committees every 4 to 8 weeks.

MANCHESTER - Prof. Alan Harding

- a. Manchester created the Greater Manchester region in response to local demand for a clear role for Manchester in the UK and especially faced with the power of London and SE England. Leadership came from all over the region.
- b. It is not a debate about institutions. If you start a debate on institutions you put people's back up. The success was due in part to 1) luck, 2) natural advantage 3) leadership (critically), and a shared and mature understanding of the nature of the region's economy.
- c. The issue is not what institutions are needed, but rather to realise what are the unique qualities and contribution potential of the region to compete in a global market. Evidence and agreement are key. There is no one model to seek out, all city-regions are different, the world is 'spikey' not homogeneous. The regional governance is as a shell authority; it does function but will evolve.
- d. The Manchester equivalent of the Valleys - to the North of the city - had to recognise that their success did depend on Manchester, and their contribution to the region needed to be listened to, understood and recognised to create a unity of purpose. Every component must see benefit, inclusion is a voluntary decision with no pre-conditions.
- e. The important drivers of economic growth were not correlated with LA boundaries (eg Trafford Park stretches across several) and growth patterns are determined by transportation more than any other factor.
- f. The regional focus did present challenges to traditional town centres, and has forced radical reassessment of what is needed locally compared to elsewhere.
- g. The formation of the region came after clarifying relationships internally and externally, capability to deliver, review of public/private networks, a clear strategy with a clear narrative and determined leadership. A political independence within the UK has been defined, Manchester is itself.
- h. Recognition of the linkages within and to the rest of the UK was important to understand the role of the region and its dependencies.
- i. In summary, best practice shows:

- Supportive national context? Hardly
- Strong technical capacity to deliver at appropriate scale? Yes
- Significant influence at regional & national level? Yes
- Strong horizontal networks with key public & private institutions? Yes
- A compelling and broadly shared ‘narrative’? Yes(ish)
- Strong leadership and co-ordination capacity? Emphatically
- Ability to recognise and deal with environmental and social implications of realising its strategic ambitions? Getting there

VANCOUVER – Gordon Campbell, Canadian High Commissioner to the UK, and former Mayor of Vancouver

- a. Vancouver region represents 18 municipalities, and is governed by a ‘Council of Councils’ with 120 members.
- b. Vancouver city could not do it all, and sought to form a grouping of local authorities to decide what to be and which way to go. The views of outsiders were important to value what you are.
- c. We live with constraints, we can do anything but not everything. Imagine the future and be bold.
- d. Agreement was first to a vision of what the region could do or become, structures would come later.
- e. **Focus your resources on areas of agreement, because you will run out of resources before you run out of agreement.**
- f. The example of the development of the airport in Vancouver was given. The surrounding authorities did recognise that all benefited from it and it was not just a Vancouver thing.

4 Planning dilemmas in south east Wales

A Cardiff perspective

Professor John Punter, Cardiff University

- a. Cardiff has ample capacity to grow on land to the NE and especially in the NW (Waterhall). The delay to the LDP is unnecessary.
- b. The 2009 LDP failure was due to an unbalanced provision of housing, with an oversupply of apartments and a lack of family and affordable housing.
- c. Neighbouring authorities have for years absorbed the overspill from Cardiff, characterised by urban sprawl, edge-city, ribbon development. Dispersal will continue for another 10 years as people seek affordable accommodation.
- d. Transport arrangements into Cardiff are poor. SEWTA is under-resourced. We must rethink old-style car dependence.
- e. Cardiff should not export its housing. It is not the way to regenerate the Valleys. The jobs are in Cardiff, we should shift the focus to exemplary and quality development in the city with preservation of green wedges and linear parks, and adequate transportation. Sustainable urban extensions are vital to achieve a critical mass.

A Valleys perspective

Roger Tanner, Caerphilly Council

- a. Cardiff is the employment centre, the surrounding areas are great places to live. A regional strategy would focus on affordable good quality development outside Cardiff, with a good transport network.
- b. Cardiff is unusual in that the poorest areas are outside the city; the cost of travel is an issue. Only 4% of workers travel from Blaenau Gwent, 11% from Merthyr, both areas of high unemployment.
- c. The country has probably got 5 city-regions: North Wales with Chester / Swansea / Cardiff and the Valleys / Newport and Cwmbran / Bristol(!).
- d. Cardiff cannot grow for ever; a dispersed development model must start now. Llantrisant was put forward as a planned growth area for Cardiff, but never implemented; it is now an unplanned growth area for Cardiff.
- e. Local retail centres have re-established themselves in response to Cardiff, quality of life and leisure opportunities are excellent.
- f. The priority has to be the transport network. The Metro proposal is a good basis. The priorities are enhanced N-S corridors and a new E-W corridor.

5 City-region policy opportunities

Transport and connectivity

Mark Barry, transport consultant, author of Cardiff Metro report

- a. Wales economic performance overall is poor. Cardiff is 108% of UK GVA, Valleys performance is 54% and the difference is growing, this is shocking.
- b. Why do big employers come to Cardiff? Journey to work times are increasing, roads are full, and the rail system is antiquated and relative journey times are increasing. Admiral plc would not relocate to Cardiff today.
- c. Statutory Passenger Transport Authorities (PTA) are needed, which would present a unified face to London DofT for funding and renovation of the network.
- d. Valley Lines Electrification (VLE) is the first step, supporting 10% annual growth. The main franchise for ARRIVA is due for renewal in 2018.
- e. The Metro proposal is for a 'turn up and go' network to deliver a service into/out of Cardiff, within the city and to Bristol and surrounding towns in Wales. This can be with any means of transport (bus, rail etc) but must be integrated to ensure minimal wait, fastest transit. Towns such as Pontypridd would be regenerated and revalued with such a network.

A green city region

Lee Waters, Director, Sustrans Wales

- a. Sustainability is at the heart of development policy yet is poorly defined and poorly understood.
- b. Small changes (the Nudge principle) can make worthwhile and inexpensive improvements to travel patterns. The Sustainable Travel Towns initiative.
- c. Green transport is a local and personal decision, and characterised by low cost easy to do, good payback programs.

Housing the region

Nick Bennett, Chief Executive, Community Housing Cymru

- a. As well as an age of austerity we face a supply side crisis, a demographic time bomb, and increasing poverty and financial exclusion.
- b. Solutions include evaluation of private as well as public sector risk / Welsh Housing Bond to raise private capital / rent benchmarking / better use of empty property/housing benefit reforms

Economic Opportunity

Richard Thomas, Managing Director, Cardiff & Co

- a. A city-region should be defined as the economic footprint of a city. It is not necessarily related to the LA boundaries. Economic efficiency is associated with density.
- b. 4 models of relationships within a city-region were offered without definition i.e. Independent, Interdependent, Dependent, Isolated. These are worth expansion. The private sector adopts a regional approach, people have a regional approach, it's the administrative structures that do not.
- c. Note that the attempts in England to develop regional identities based on geography only has failed, yet city-region groupings are working as they can identify common interests. Cardiff has a strong established brand, by virtue of major events and global TV coverage, build on it.

6 City-region politics

Steve Thomas, Chief Executive, Welsh Local Government Association

- a. The Welsh Spatial Plan is dead, a new strategic focus is needed.
- b. The test of a city-region is involvement, and listening. Political buy-in is vital.
- c. We can build on the examples of Stuttgart, Manchester and Vancouver but we do not have the luxury of the decade it took them to develop the concept.
- d. We must look to the future, and be attractive to inward investment.
- e. Quality of life for inhabitants is important to attract business.

Jon House, Chief Executive, Cardiff County Council

- a. The tensions between Cardiff and the Valleys exist in all regions – Bristol-Bath, and Sheffield. The examples discussed have similar tensions.
- b. The Cardiff city-region is at last on the agenda. It needs time to listen to all players, and ensure a win-win outcome.
- c. First priority is the transport network, both road and rail, to/from and within Cardiff (including the Eastern Bay Link). The council has borrowing powers that should be applied.
- d. The LDP has been delayed by a year to ensure the lessons from the Roger TYM report are learnt, and new growth figures validated.
- e. We are on the cusp of change, all 10 LAs in the region recognise the moment. The SEWTA, SEWEF, SEWSPG groups are not adequate to manage this future.

Dr. Calvin Jones, Cardiff Business School

- a. Cardiff growth areas are in consumption sector and public sector, all declining areas.
- b. The economy is over-dependent on hotels and restaurants, and we need to diversify away from the financial sector, which represents 25% of jobs.
- c. The city-region can choose to improve on business as usual or to improve welfare, which will the new CBD support?
- d. Beware the changing demographics, with the number of retired people set to increase dramatically, and the real effects of climate change on a coastal city.

Councillor Neil McEvoy, Deputy Leader, Cardiff County Council

- a. Cardiff needs WG to develop joined up policies between the economic and environment ministers.
- b. WG is a block to progress, the LDP process is inept.
- c. The Cardiff city-region is real now and needs help to encourage the region to support the city.
- d. There are many examples of business development ,including sport and culture.

Closing remarks

Prof. Kevin Morgan, Cardiff University

- a. We observe a poverty of ambition in SE Wales – a lack of political leadership ready to move to a different way of running our affairs.
- b. The examples of Stuttgart, Manchester and Vancouver and the city-region model in Scotland demonstrate the possible, we need leadership to use this advice.
- c. The new Task Group is a good idea, illustrating that we are on the cusp of change; but it is action that counts.
- d. Wales is a laggard in terms of planning. The city-region must be a discussion topic for all the cabinet.
- e. A single evidence base for the region is essential to avoid and resolve conflicts, and the principle of a shared destiny must be articulated

David and Jeanne-Hélène Eggleton
Cardiff Civic Society
7th November 2011