# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Final Report - Keeping regional partnership working under review with local partners** |
| **DATE**  | **25 January 2024** |
| **BY** | **Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government** |

The Welsh Government’s Programme for Government includes a commitment to *‘Keep regional partnership working under review with local partners’*. This commitment also forms part of the [Co-operation Agreement](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fco-operation-agreement-2021&data=05%7C01%7CKatharine.Cannan%40gov.wales%7C187ec09384a04388b76908da97b83662%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637989114676244073%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=XjISodLay7HvKWBNninnqTYLEHtfwwzwf1gjQENX1oo%3D&reserved=0) between Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru.

In fulfilling this commitment I, together with the Plaid Cymru Designated Member, conducted an extensive engagement exercise with the chairs of a range of strategic partnerships to gather reflections on progress since the [Review of Strategic Partnerships](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fpublications%2F2020-07%2Ffinal-report.pdf&data=05%7C01%7CKatharine.Cannan%40gov.wales%7C187ec09384a04388b76908da97b83662%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637989114676244073%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=X00mnj7fJiurg5FQFA0%2BzZTj%2BMqYoIBDqBruybbwFgs%3D&reserved=0) reported in June 2020. The aim of this engagement exercise was to take stock of whether the findings and recommendations of that review remain relevant, to learn about progress and what further action might be needed. The [final report](https://www.gov.wales/keeping-regional-partnership-working-under-review-local-partners-final-report) of this exercise has been published on the Welsh Government website.

The Designated Member and I have welcomed the constructive way in which partnership chairs responded to our questions about how regional partnerships are aligning, where opportunities exist to better align partnerships, and where there are barriers that need to be overcome.

The findings from this exercise showed clear progress in some areas since the original review reported in 2020. Partnerships are using their flexibility to organise themselves differently to improve collaboration, integrate their work and avoid duplication. There was, however, also recognition that there is more to do. Some areas may need support, but there is generally sufficient maturity within partnerships and regions to make the right decisions for their areas on the best footprint and alignment.

There was a strong message throughout the exercise that partnerships feel best placed to determine how to simplify regional working in their area. That said, there was also a call for consistent expectations in certain areas such as a consistent understanding of the purpose and objectives of partnerships and how appropriate information and updates might be shared. Moreover, as the Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) become more established, it is right that their role in the broader landscape is considered in these regional discussions. The report recommends that a working group – made up of nominees from the Partnership Council for Wales – develops clear principles to establish how partnerships should ensure alignment of their work with each other, including CJCs.

In the longer term, it will be the [Partnership Council for Wales](https://www.gov.wales/partnership-council-for-wales/membership) that takes ownership of keeping regional partnership arrangements under review. It is well placed to make the connection between local and national issues and provide national leadership for effective partnership working.