



Briefing note

Welsh government economic delivery and social partnership structures.

*Wales TUC input for CER executive meeting
4th October 2016*

Introduction

The Wales TUC paper for the July meeting of the CER sets out our rationale for seeking a redesign of the economic and social partnership structures used by Welsh government. The input below should be read in the context of that position paper.

We welcomed indications from both the First Minister and the Economy Secretary that Welsh government accepts the need for redesign and seeks views on what a new structure should look like.

Wales TUC believes that the government requires two distinct and separate types of social partner engagement structures on economy;

1. advisory / engagement orientated - gaining business feedback on impacts of general economic trends, general business confidence and views from specific industrial sectors.
2. strategic planning and delivery orientated – used by ministers to identify the priority outcomes of an Wales economic policy, with a single coherent regional delivery structure designed to deliver those outcomes.

1. Advisory

- a) The existing sector advisory functions and the broad range of business/trade bodies should be incorporated into a replacement CER (perhaps called an Economic Advisory Council). This would incorporate industrial sector groups, manufacturing fora etc.
- b) It could allow the First Minister to take the business temperature on a quarterly basis and also seek more detailed industry advice on specific sectors of the economy.
- c) Given the diversity of the employer/trade groups involved it would be necessary for WSPU could co-ordinate their engagement in advisory structure – perhaps through Commerce Cymru.
- d) The Wales TUC engagement would remain the same with one or two representatives attending all meetings to provide continuity and other representatives attending according to their expertise on specific agenda items.

2. Delivery

- a) The delivery side should have an all Wales Social Partners Strategy Group with a small group of the general employer representative bodies and the Wales TUC in direct real time discussion with ministers.
- b) Dealing with overarching all Wales economic/industrial strategy and testing/challenging the delivery of priorities.
- c) It should be co-ordinated by partners ourselves with discussion on a chatham house basis and sharply focussed on practical outcomes and measurable impacts.
- d) Feeding into this all Wales structure should be a single combined delivery structure incorporating all economic interventions (economy and skills etc).

- e) The regional geography should be clearly identified with no 'grey' areas and each regional body given a defined remit and tasked with specific outcomes according to the all Wales strategy and local conditions.
- f) There should be a transparent membership appointment and governance process at regional board level.
- g) Regions should have to operate on a 'comply or justify' basis regarding regional delivery of the all Wales plan.
- h) The relationship should be very clearly the Welsh government using the all Wales delivery structure to develop overarching regional remits and consider regional delivery reports.
- i) The functions of everything currently participating in delivery (city boards/deals, enterprise zones, skills boards etc) to be incorporated into the single structure with the various boards wound up. Anything not delivering to the priorities and not incorporated into the regional structure should also be wound up.