



1. Background to Consortium Working

The South West and Mid Wales Consortium (swamwac) is a successful, efficient and collaborative organisation made up of the local Education authorities of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys and the City and County of Swansea.

Within the South West and Mid Wales Consortium there are 635 schools and teaching services which is 32% of the schools in Wales and 28% of the pupil population. 48% of the schools are Welsh medium or bilingual and 52% of the schools are English medium with Welsh as a second language. A strength of the Consortium is this balance between urban and rural schools, smaller and larger schools, schools in affluent and socially deprived areas and Welsh and English language schools.

The six authorities have worked together as a Consortium since 2000. It began small in that its remit was limited to a few areas but as the positive outcomes of Consortium working have been realised the remit has been extended. Positive outcomes from Consortium working were achieved in areas such as Threshold Assessment of teachers, Performance Management of teachers and headteachers, Workforce Remodelling and Continuing Professional Development. The benefits of Consortium working are recognised by all authorities within the Consortium and all are committed to the continued further development and refinement of Consortium working.

In 2006 the South West and Mid Wales Consortium successfully bid for funding from the Welsh Assembly Government Making the Connections Improvement Fund to explore the potential for the further development of Consortium working. The grant received together with contributions from each of the six authorities funded the Making Connections Project which sought to further develop a sustainable, fit for purpose model for collaborative working.

There is a clear context in which the Consortium working is operating. Consortium working needs to be responsive to both current and new developments which include the objectives set out in The Learning Country:- Vision into Action; the requirement for A Single Plan for Children and Young People; Raising Standards and School Improvement; Beyond Boundaries (The Beecham Report); Making the Connections; Delivering Better services for Wales; and the School Effectiveness Framework including the Tri-level Reform Agenda.

The South West and Mid Wales Consortium has developed a new, transferable model and governance structure for consortium working. This model is based upon the principle of close collaboration (rather than commercial outsourcing) to address key issues, sponsor innovation and improve efficiency. The Consortium's achievements to date suggest that it provides a model for regional collaboration and partnership working which accords with the distinctive character of Welsh Education Policy, and could be applied across the country. Most importantly the model has as its focus the improved standards and well being for all children and young people.

2. Consortium Working

We recognise that no one way of working together fits every situation and the continuum provides the flexibility to ensure effective and efficient working that adds value to work of each authority. We define consortium working as the coming together in a range of ways of some or all services where each authority in the consortium retains the responsibility for statutory delivery and standards of the service. The work of the consortium is determined and supported by the six authorities.

Principles of Consortium Working

- Work of the Consortium is **determined by the six Authorities**
- Consortium working is a **joint working arrangement**. Joint working can take **different forms** – from networking to full integration of services
- Consortium Working seeks to **add value** to the work of each individual authority
- There are **clear lines of responsibility and accountability**, a strength of the Consortium working model
- Each Authority **retains its responsibilities** for Statutory delivery and standards of service

Continuum of consortium working

Consortium working is guided by a model comprised of different forms of working together, from networking to full integration which accommodates

Positive Outcomes for Children and Young People	←	full Integration	This is where Consortium working delivers a common service across the participating authorities. The authorities pool budgets and resources to provide the service
	←	collaboration	This is where the authorities work together on specific initiatives, sharing resources and sharing responsibilities, risks and rewards.
	←	cooperation	This is where the authorities work together to solve problems, remove barriers and broker solutions
	←	coordination	This is where the authorities align policies and procedures, and develop consistent approaches
	←	networking	This is where the authorities share information, discuss approaches and identify best practice. They also build trust and positive professional relationships

3. Summary Consortium Strategic Plan 2008 – 2009

This summary consortium strategic plan sets out the work which will be achieved through consortium working during 2008-2009 as a means of achieving the overarching outcome of improved pupil standards. The areas outlined in the summary plan will be achieved through consortium working.

Each authority is committed to the development of consortium working which will enable innovation and efficiencies through the empowerment of staff and authorities to collaborate and do things differently. The work embraces the principles of tri level reform where all concerned have the common goal of improving outcomes for young people.

Key Outcomes

Strand 1

To develop the workforce across the Consortium; school based personnel, local authority based personnel and personnel engaged in Consortium working through professional development opportunities and performance management focused on the outcome of raising standards of attainment and achievement of all children and young people

Strand 2

To provide advice, support and challenge to schools and Local Authorities in agreed areas to raise standards, sponsor innovation and secure organisational change

Strand 3

To establish robust and effective governance, management and quality assurance arrangements and to deliver a range of key developments in order to improve pupil standards, build capacity across the Consortium Authorities, and achieve efficiencies, through the development of consortium working that is innovative, flexible and responsive.

Areas of Consortium Working Include

Strand 1: Workforce Development	Strand 2: Advice, Support and Challenge	Strand 3: Governance and Organisation Development
1.1 Better Schools Fund	2.1 Advisory Services	3.1 Governance Structure
1.2 Joint Short Course Programme	2.2 RAISE	3.2 Brokerage
1.3 Professional Development	2.3 Transition	3.3 Continuous Quality Improvement
1.3.1 - Headteachers	2.4 14 -19	3.4 Tri Level
1.3.2 - Middle Leaders	2.5 Foundation Phase	3.5 Performance
1.3.3 - Teachers	2.6 Inclusion	3.6 Finance
1.3.4 - Support Staff	2.7 Governor Support	3.7 Data & ICT
1.4 Performance Management	2.8 School Effectiveness Framework Pilot	3.8 Planning School Places
1.4.1 - Headteachers		3.9 Planning for Children & Young People
1.4.2 - Teachers		3.10 Infrastructure Development
1.4.3 - Support Staff		3.11 Shared Operational Working
1.5 Remodelling		3.11.1 - Music
1.5.1 - Transformational		3.11.2 - Outdoor Education
1.5.2 - Transactional		3.11.3 - ICT Curriculum
		3.11.4 - Community Focused Schools
		3.11.5 Out of School Hour Learning