

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:**           **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**DATE:**                   **WEDNESDAY, 12 JUNE 2013**

**REPORT BY:**           **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**SUBJECT:**               **COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS ARRANGEMENTS**

**1.00**   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01    At its previous meeting Members of the Audit Committee requested a report to consider the scrutiny of performance of collaborative projects.

**2.00**   **BACKGROUND**

2.01    In the first quarter of 2011, the Welsh Government published the *Local, Regional and National: What services are best delivered where?* report (The Simpson Review) along with national reports on the delivery of education (Thomas Review) and social services (Sustainable Social Services). A key recommendation of the Simpson report was that:

*“A Compact detailing the development of collaborative and national service delivery will be agreed by the Assembly Government and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). This Compact will set down a realistic but challenging timeline for dealing with our recommendations”.*

2.02    On 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011 the Welsh Government and the WLGA signed such a compact and requested that each local authority sign up to demonstrate their commitment to collaboration and national policy. Following reports to the then Executive and Council early in 2012. Flintshire signed up to the compact.

2.03    Within the compact, it is emphasised that :

“Transparent performance management and governance arrangements which allow councillors continued engagement in service scrutiny are prerequisites for effective collaboration. Increasingly councillors will also have to give due consideration to their role as community leaders and engage positively in the reform process, recognising that their role extends beyond their own borders.” and that:

“There may be occasions when the case for change may be less strong or broadly neutral for one partner in collaboration than another. Relative scale of benefits should not be a reason to avoid working together where the outcome for public services will meet the criteria outlined above” (relating to the greater good).

2.04 Flintshire is committed to working in collaboration on a number of projects and service areas not only with local authorities but across all public sector organisations. There are a number of significant collaboration projects underway in the region, for example:-

- residual waste
- food waste
- school improvement
- transport
- social services commissioning
- planning (minerals and waste)
- ICT infrastructure

2.05 Appended to this report is a copy of the Cabinet report dated 21<sup>st</sup> May which provides an overview of regional collaboration in North Wales to (1) assure the Committee that it is meeting its commitments under the National Compact and is acting as a positive regional partner and (2) enable the Committee to make suitable arrangements to govern, review and evaluate collaborative working. The report was welcomed by the Cabinet and it was also agreed to submit the report to both the Community Profile and Partnerships and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

A summary of all principal collaboration projects within the region where Flintshire is a partner is also included.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 At the time of becoming a signatory to the compact Flintshire's then Executive and Council put in place the following arrangements to directly address the governance of collaboration and performance monitoring arrangements:

1. For new collaborations – the appropriate Overview & Scrutiny Committee will have a full report at the three stages of inception, outline business case (OBC) and final business case (FBC) for major projects and that committee's full input will be presented to cabinet as part of the formal decision making process.
2. Post implementation of a new collaborations – the appropriate Overview & Scrutiny committee will receive regular post implementation performance reports (at intervals to be agreed, for example quarterly) for the first 12 months following

implementation thereafter mainstreamed reporting in our local performance reporting.

3. Members information on service changes – prior detailed notice to all members over operational changes (for example, contracts performance standards, service failure remedy routes, etc).
4. Regional scrutiny post implementation – arrangements will be considered over and above the local arrangements on key collaborations, for example, school improvement. This could have the shape, for example and using the same example, of the six local respective scrutiny chairs meeting to oversee implementation and to ensure thorough and timely reporting to their constituent authorities.

3.02 The above arrangements have led to the following collaborative projects being reported to Overview & Scrutiny Committees:-

- Social Services Regional Commissioning Hub
- The Regional Educational School Improvement Service
- North Wales Adoption Service
- North East Wales Emergency Duty Team
- North Wales Regional Waste Partnership.

#### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That the committee note the arrangements in place for the scrutiny of performance and collaborative projects.

#### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 None as a result of this report noting that collaborative projects have investment costs and financial risks as well as financial benefits.

#### **6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01 None directly.

#### **7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01 None directly.

#### **8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01 None directly.

#### **9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01 None directly from this report noting that the more significant

collaborative projects can have implications for the workforce both positive (e.g. career development) and negative (e.g. reductions in numbers).

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01 None directly.

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01 None directly.

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01 Appendix 1 – Cabinet Report dated 21<sup>st</sup> May – Regional Collaboration Review.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985  
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

No background papers.

**Contact Officer:** Peter Evans  
**Telephone:** 01352 702304  
**Email:** peter.j.evans@flintshire.gov.uk