

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY 21 MAY**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

SUBJECT: **REGIONAL COLLABORATION REVIEW**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide an overview of regional collaboration in North Wales to (1) assure the Council that it is meeting its commitments under the National Compact and is acting as a positive regional partner and (2) enable the Council to make suitable arrangements to govern, review and evaluate collaborative working.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The North Wales region has a developing portfolio of collaborative projects. The majority of collaboration projects are more recent developments with their origin being regional choice or national policy direction; a minority of collaborations are legacies of local government re-organisation (1995-96).

2.02 The national policy expectations for collaboration were 'codified' by the National Compact which was co-signed by Welsh Government and Local Government in 2011. There are three implementation contracts or work programmes under the Compact: Education, Social Services and Other Services. Given that all three work programmes are well advanced it is timely to review the progress made, at both national and regional levels and to consider options for further collaborative working.

2.03 Attached to this report is a summary of all principal collaboration projects within the region where Flintshire is a partner. The summary, in tabular form, shows for each collaboration - the service or function, the lead authority, the partners, the progress status of the project, the target date for implementation, the purpose and benefits of the collaboration and the governance model.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Collaboration projects range in type and scale. Some are restricted to collaboration within local government, some are cross public service and some operate at a national scale. To provide an overview of the

developing and increasingly complex 'map' of collaborative activity it is useful to understand for each collaboration:-

- its type
- its purpose and benefits
- the progress made
- the performance of the collaboration in meeting its purpose
- the governance arrangements

3.02 **Types of Collaboration:** collaboration can range in type from:-

- strategic working e.g. developing the regional economy
- cross sector whole systems reform e.g. health and social care integration, community safety, vulnerable families
- cross sector 'like for like' sharing e.g. shared building assets such as Flintshire Connects
- local government 'like for like' service integration e.g. transport, school improvement, adoption

3.03 Collaboration can range in scale and coverage from:-

- national e.g. National Procurement Service
- regional e.g. school improvement
- sub-regional e.g. Emergency Duty Team for Social Care
- local e.g. training and development with Deeside College

3.04 The origin of a collaboration can be:-

- development of an existing collaboration e.g. transport
- emerging opportunity e.g. Emergency Duty Team for Social Care
- external market management e.g. ICT procurement
- external market requirements e.g. residual waste
- strategic alignment e.g. economic development
- national direction e.g. supporting people

3.05 **Purpose and Benefits:** the purpose and benefits of each collaboration can range from:-

- improving service resilience e.g. making better use of specialist resources (an example: emergency planning)
- improving service quality e.g. higher overall performance (an example: school improvement)
- cost avoidance by working together (example: residual waste)
- achieving cost efficiencies (examples: ICT procurement, social services commissioning)

- 3.06 **Progress:** the progress status of collaborations can be tracked as:-
- Stage 1: concept and pre-outline business case stage
 - Stage 2: post outline business case and pre business case stage
 - Stage 3: in transition post final business case stage
 - Stage 4: implemented and operational

- 3.07 **Performance:** performance of collaboration can be gauged against:-
- progress status against timescale
 - management against a risk profile
 - performance in achieving service standards
 - performance in achieving business benefits
 - quality of governance
 - feedback, confidence and reputation

- 3.08 **Governance:** the governance model for each collaboration can vary from:-
- a statutory joint committee
 - a lead authority
 - a commissioning partnership
 - a strategic partnership
 - an informal arrangement.

- 3.09 Generally, the more significant and the higher risk the collaboration the more formal the governance model required. Under a governance model there can be no ambiguity around roles and responsibilities and the discharge of statutory duties.

- 3.10 Members will recall that at the meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19th January 2012 it was resolved:

“That having considered the contents and the implications of the Compact, both for Flintshire and the wider local government family and its relationship with the Welsh Government, the Committee recommends that Flintshire should be a signatory, with the following caveat:-

“That this Council’s commitment to collaborations with other local Authorities and public bodies be reaffirmed, wherein this can either provide existing services more efficiently and/or provide better services at no additional cost, as long as a business case is provided and local sovereignty is protected through appropriate levels of democratic input and scrutiny.”

- 3.11 Following this resolution the Council has introduced a protocol where:-
- for any newly proposed principal collaboration the outline business case is reported to both Cabinet and the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration
 - for any principal collaboration already under development the final business case is reported to both Cabinet and the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review
 - for any adopted and implemented principal collaboration a way of reporting and evaluating performance is set as part of the regional and local governance arrangements (e.g. an annual report or reporting within the quarterly performance reports). Prior to any major service changes detailed information will be given to local members on the service changes, contact personnel and the arrangements for enquiry, complaint and performance review
- 3.12 The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee will be invited to review governance and performance reporting arrangements for principal collaborations.
- 3.13 For statutory partnerships which have a certain annual turnover separate annual accounts are required. This already applies to TAIH and Residual Waste and will apply to the School Improvement Service.
- 3.14 More recent developments to improve the development of business cases for new collaborations to assist evidenced based, informed and reliable decision-making by Flintshire have been (1) a decision-making test at the stage of final business case that the case made is in the best interests of Flintshire (as advised by the Auditor General for Wales) and (2) the lead authority for each collaboration completing an advisory audit of a business case at key stages of project adoption.
- 3.15 The progress and achievement of the Compact is being reviewed at a national level. The North Wales region is making a full contribution to the review. As can be seen from the attached summary Flintshire is the lead for a number of collaborations and is an active partner in all principal collaboration projects. North Wales has a strong reputation for being a cohesive and progressive region; Flintshire has a strong reputation as a leading authority in collaboration both in attitude and in delivery.
- 3.16 The next phase of collaboration is likely, by collective agreement, to concentrate on major systems reform in key services to improve quality and control cost such as joint effective working between primary and acute health and adult social care. Following the national review of the Compact there will be further national, regional and local debate on options for future collaboration alongside Welsh Government policy and budget choices for the medium term under the

Programme for Government.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Cabinet is invited to:-

1. note the progress made by North Wales as a progressive region and by Flintshire as a progressive Council;
2. review the summary of collaboration to be assured that the Council is meeting its commitments under the National Compact;
3. invite the Corporate Resources and Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee to review governance and reporting arrangements for collaborations, both adopted and in transition, to meet the needs of the Council; and
4. position Flintshire as an active contributor in the review of the National Compact and in debating options for future collaboration.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 None directly from 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: Summary of principal regional collaborative activity

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