



AUDIT COMMITTEE - 11TH JUNE 2014

SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES & S151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with a final report on the partnership and collaborative working of the Council with the intention of:
- Noting the progress made with regard to this issue
 - to seek the views of the Audit Committee on whether they are satisfied that work undertaken indicates that sufficient progress has been made in relation to this issue such that collaboration and partnerships may be considered as 'business as usual' and taken off the Annual Governance Statement.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A comprehensive review has been undertaken of Caerphilly County Borough Council's (CCBC's) partnerships and collaborative working. The total number of significant partner organisations for CCBC is 146, with 35 formal partnerships, 24 collaborations, and CCBC the lead in 8 of the collaborative arrangements. It is to be noted that 25 of the partnerships/collaborations are either statutory/deemed as good practice/in receipt of Welsh Government collaboration funding. There is a strong base of working in partnership in a Gwent wide/South Wales/South East Wales foot print.
- 2.2 Next steps for the partnership work include:
- Drafting a 'CCBC Collaboration and Partnership Strategy' and 12 month action plan
 - For the partnership data to be subject to quarterly review by Heads of Service
 - For the partnership work to be reflected within the Council's Constitution, with review of the information to be incorporated annually and reported to Council at the AGM
 - Assessment tool to be devised in aiding improving the performance and accountability of partnerships through utilising best practice from existing assessment tools.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 Compliance with recommendations of the Wales Audit Office under the Council's Improvement Plan, and requirements of the Annual Governance Review Panel on partnerships and collaborative working of the Council.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Since October 2013 a comprehensive review has been undertaken of Caerphilly County Borough Council's (CCBC's) partnerships and collaborative working under the direction of the Council's Corporate Governance Review Panel and Improving Governance Programme Board. Updates on this work have been presented to the Audit Committee on 11/12/13 and 5/03/14. This report presents a definitive overview of CCBC's partnerships and collaborations and their governance arrangements, and presents next steps in ensuring good governance and performance management in partnership arrangements through regular review and monitoring, and quarterly updating the database of partnership working.
- 4.2 The total number of significant partner organisations for CCBC is 146, with 35 formal partnerships, 24 collaborations, and CCBC the lead in 8 of the collaborative arrangements. It is to be noted that 25 of the partnerships/collaborations are either statutory/deemed as good practice/in receipt of Welsh Government collaboration funding. There is a strong base of working in partnership in a Gwent wide/South Wales/South East Wales foot print. Appendix 1 provides an at a glance overview of CCBC formalised partnerships and collaborative working, and the key data concerning the arrangements for the partnership work.
- 4.3 Through the data gained on partnership working the Corporate Governance Review Panel is currently selecting partnerships/collaborations to review the robustness of governance arrangements, and ability for the partnerships to be held to account through scrutiny. The following two factors will be considered in identifying CCBC partnerships and collaborations with risk element or in need of special attention:
1. Lack of/poor governance and scrutiny arrangements including insufficient accountability.
 2. Whether there is a robust performance management framework in place, including value for money considerations.

Random spot checks will also be undertaken on partnerships and collaborations.

- 4.4 Next steps for the partnership work include:
- Drafting a 'CCBC Collaboration and Partnership Strategy' and 12 month action plan the proposed content of which was approved by CCBC's Corporate Management Team (CMT) on 1st May 2014
 - For the partnership data to be subject to quarterly review by Heads of Service
 - To date the partnership work has been reflected within the Council's Constitution, with review of the information to be incorporated annually and reported to Council at the AGM held in May
 - Devise assessment tool to aid improving the performance and accountability of partnerships through utilising best practice from existing assessment tools.
- 4.5 All Welsh Councils have been contacted for a copy of any partnership and collaboration strategy. It transpires that Torfaen County Borough Council is in the process of developing a collaboration framework, and Denbighshire has developed a Partnership Governance Toolkit. However, it appears that no Council has yet been able to compile a single register of partnerships due to the difficulties of the high level of subjectivity in clearly defining partnerships and collaborative work. Developing a single register of partnerships is one of the recommendations of the Williams Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery. The CCBC approach has used an Audit Commission definition of 'formal' partnerships contained in their 1998 report **A Fruitful Partnership** and the Wales Audit Office 2013 definition of collaborative working. A number of the local authorities contacted indicated they would like to have a copy of any subsequent partnership and collaboration strategy developed by CCBC, and the details of the approach followed in generating a list of partnerships/collaborations.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council's partnerships and collaborative working take into consideration the Equalities Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The table under Appendix 1 notes whether financial information is provided for the Council's partnerships and collaborations. Further details on financial information provided is available in the full report of CCBC's partnerships and collaborations, copies of which can be obtained through the report's author.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Significant staff time is invested in partnership and collaborative working by the Council.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The report reflects the views of the consultees.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 For the Audit Committee to note progress made with regard to this issue.
- 9.2 To seek the views of the Audit Committee on whether they are satisfied that work undertaken indicates that sufficient progress has been made in relation to this issue such that collaboration and partnerships may be considered as 'business as usual' and taken off the Annual Governance Statement.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 For the Audit Committee to be satisfied that sufficient progress has been made in meeting the requirements of the Wales Audit Office, and of the Annual Governance Review Panel on the Council and its partnership working.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 2000, and the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (Part 2) Community Strategies.

Author: Jackie Dix – Policy & Research Manager (dixj1@caerphilly.gov.uk)
Consultees: Nicole Scammell - Acting Director of Corporate Services & S151
Colin Jones - Head of Performance and Property Services
Gail Williams – Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Richard M Harris - Internal Audit Manager
Alessandra Veronese – Programme Manager
Joanne Jones - Corporate Information Governance Manager