

CAERPHELLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP PROTOCOL AND ACTION PLAN FOR DELIVERY

INTRODUCTION

Local government faces increasingly demanding and complex community need and expectations, and with limited resources effective collaborations and partnerships are ways that councils can respond to these challenges. Partnership and collaborative working can bring real benefits in achieving more with better use of resources than organisations can deliver alone. The power of partnerships in achieving community benefits is recognised by both the Welsh Government, and the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery. The Local Government White Paper calls for a *greater pace and commitment in progressing collaborative initiatives* noting local authorities *critical role as the local democratic heart of collaboration across public services*.¹ The Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Bill also places emphasis on public bodies developing *collaborative solutions* through forming well-being plans for their localities.² However, it is also acknowledged by the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery that the current system of collaborative working is complex, burdensome and is in need of an overhaul to ensure purposeful and effective partnerships with clear remits for delivery.³

Caerphilly County Borough Council is proactively responding to the challenge to ensure its partnerships and collaborations are fit for purpose. This Protocol sets a partnerships and collaborations framework to ensure there is a clear structure for partnership work, and provides a twelve month action plan for ensuring a robust structure for partnership working (see Appendix 1). A separate toolkit is provided for building and maintaining effective partnership governance arrangements, and in achieving a high level of partnership performance.⁴

IDENTIFYING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

A comprehensive review has been undertaken of Caerphilly County Borough Council's (CCBC's) partnerships and collaborative working.⁵ The total number of significant partner organisations for CCBC is 146, with 35 formal partnerships, 25 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 footprint.

DEFINING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Despite the plethora of literature on effective partnership working there are limited definitions on what is meant by 'partnerships'. The literature, does however, tend to make a distinction between 'formal' partnerships, and 'informal' partnerships. An Audit Commission report⁶ in making this distinction also excludes networks of professional relationships and contractual relationships from its analysis of partnerships. This has been the approach used in defining partnerships by CCBC.

For collaborations the following Wales Audit Office⁷ definition has been adhered to:-

Collaborative working can be defined as seeking to maximise efficiency gains through the scale in economies of more effective co-operation and co-ordination between agencies

across the whole of the public sector, not excluding the independent, voluntary and private sectors. By using co-ordination rather than competition, users and producers of public services are enabled to be on the same side. As a consequence, the best outcomes are obtained when those who use and those who provide services work together in collaboration (p4).

While a universally agreed list of the types of model of collaborative working does not exist the Welsh Local Government Association⁸ has identified six main models of partnership working. The following models are used by CCBC in identifying collaborations:-

- **Delegation of functions** – a delegation of functions (based on statutory powers rather than contract) to another authority. It should not be categorised or documented in the same way as a contractual arrangement.
- **Joint committee** – this model usually involves one authority hosting the service with the other collaborating partners contributing to costs incurred.

The following are NOT covered by this work in the identification of collaborations:-

- **Informal arrangements**
- **Shared appointment/secondment**
- **Contractual arrangements** – with one authority providing goods or services under contract to another authority either on a cost recovery or for profit basis.
- **Corporate/Joint Venture** – where two or more authorities establish a corporate vehicle (usually a company) either as the vehicle for providing services back to themselves and/or to trade with a view to generating additional income.

FRAMEWORK FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

The following two factors are to be considered at Head of Service level in both agreeing and continuing to work in partnership, for ensuring a consistent approach across the CCBC, and that the anticipated collaborative benefits are being reaped:

1. **Clear reasons to be determined for why there is a need to work in partnership or collaboration, or continuation with the venture** - for example the Audit Commission⁹ gives five main reasons for working in partnership:-
 - to deliver co-ordinated packages of services to individuals;
 - to tackle so-called 'wicked issues';
 - to reduce the impact of organisational fragmentation and minimise the impact of any perverse incentives that result from it;
 - to bid for, or gain access to new resources; and
 - to meet a statutory requirement (p9)

It can be further added:-

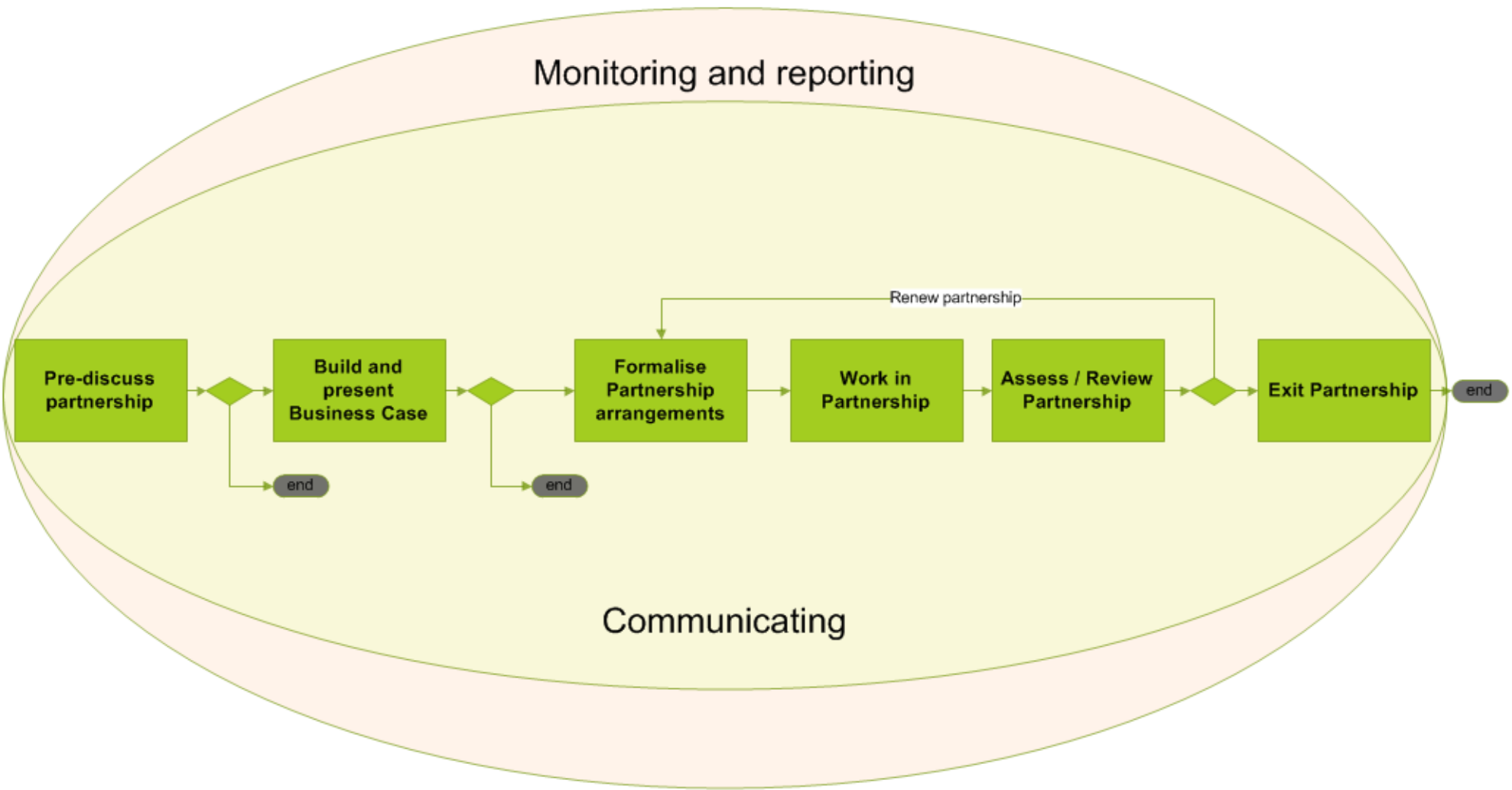
- to add value in improving range and quality of services for the public;
- for cost benefits and improving value for money;
- to minimise/eradicate duplication.

2. **Consideration of the essential components to build in to collaborative arrangements for ensuring effective partnership working**, such as:-
 - Defining clarity and purpose and benefits of collaboration;
 - Determining outcomes with a realistic plan and timetable for reaching those outcomes;

- Consideration of risk and positively managing risk;
- Assessment of value for money;
- Establishing clear and robust partnership arrangements with defined lines of accountability and scrutiny for accessing partnership performance;
- Establishing commitment and ownership and level of trust between partners, and mechanism for dispute resolution;
- Process for monitor, review, assessment and audit with defined ways of measuring the partnership's achievements;
- Process for disbanding collaborations and partnerships and agreeing exit strategy.

The partnership and governance life cycle is displayed in the following diagram:-

Partnerships and Collaborations Life-cycle



The Corporate Management Team (CMT) has endorsed this protocol, which will be implemented through the accompanying twelve month action plan (see Appendix 1). Regular review and monitoring of progress will be undertaken by the Corporate Governance Review Panel and the Improving Governance Programme Board, with reports made to the CMT. An annual summary report will be made on CCBC's partnership work to the Council's Audit Committee.

REFERENCES

1. Welsh Government (July 2014) **Devolution, Democracy and Delivery White Paper Reforming Local Government** Crown Copyright
2. Welsh Government (July 2014) **Well-being of future Generations (Wales) Bill Explanatory Memorandum Incorporating the Regulatory Impact Assessment and Explanatory Notes**
3. **Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery** (January 2014) Crown Copyright
4. Caerphilly County Borough Council (June 2014) **Partnership Governance Toolkit** Policy Unit
5. **Caerphilly County Borough Council Partnerships and Collaborations** (May 2014) Policy Unit
6. Audit Commission (1998) **A Fruitful Partnership**
7. Wales Audit Office (2013) **Collaboration Caerphilly County Borough Council**
8. Welsh Local Government Association (2012) **Legal Guidance for Collaboration** Trowers & Hamlins LLP
9. Audit Commission (1998) **A Fruitful Partnership**

APPENDIX 1 - COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP PROTOCOL ACTION PLAN FOR DELIVERY JULY 2014 - JUNE 2015

Activity	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Develop Partnership Governance Toolkit - with Collaboration and Partnership Protocol and Action Plan for Delivery (to be issued for consultation until 15 th August 2014). The finalised Protocol and Toolkit, with Partnerships and Collaborations List to be circulated to Management Network	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Consideration of how best to build in service users assessments into process/demonstrating how partnerships are making a difference to local people – for discussion with Corporate Governance Review Panel 18 th July 2014	✓											
Report to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee 30th September 2014			✓									
Report to Cabinet 15th October 2014				✓								
Review list of partnerships and collaborations through Heads of Service – with updated list reported to Corporate Governance Review Panel and Improving Governance Programme Board. Reviews to be undertaken on quarterly basis, with latest list to be place for continual staff reference on CCBC's intranet							✓	✓				
Corporate Governance Review Panel to select partnerships for governance arrangements check - to review robustness of governance arrangements, and ability for the partnership to be hold to account through scrutiny. Initial discussions held at 18 th July 2014 meeting	✓				✓							
Undertaking governance arrangements check – including report write up for Corporate Governance Review Panel and Improving Governance Programme Board and Corporate Management Team with progress report for 3 th December 2014 Audit Committee					✓	✓	✓	✓				
Review list of partnerships and collaborations through Heads of Service – with updated list reported to Corporate Governance Review Panel and Improving Governance Programme Board										✓	✓	
Review list of partnerships and collaborations through Heads of Service – with updated list reported to Corporate Governance Review Panel and Improving Governance Programme Board												✓
For the Council's Constitution to be reviewed to incorporate										✓	✓	

any necessary changes as a result of the collaborative and partnership arrangements in place												
Annual Governance Statement - for the partnership and collaboration work to inform the Annual Governance Review Panel in its preparation of the Statement in June 2015												✓
Annual summary report made on the Council's partnership work to the Council's Audit Committee												✓
Full report on 12 month action plan for delivery – to Corporate Governance Review Panel and Improving Governance Programme Board identifying whether further action plan needed, or if work to become business as usual												✓