

Collaboration Principles

Agreed by WLGA Council (30th November 2018)

Local authorities are committed to working collaboratively with each other and other public services to deliver improved outcomes. Such a commitment is however underpinned by the fundamental principle that collaboration is a ‘means to an end not an end to itself’.

The WLGA has therefore set out a framework of guiding principles to ensure that any collaborative reforms are rooted in clear and viable business cases and subject to local democratic decision-making.

Several collaborative reform programmes have articulated various frameworks of principles, including the Simpson Report in 2011 and the Welsh Government’s ‘Resilient and Renewed’ White Paper in 2017; these principles were broadly endorsed by local government as they have largely been developed from the extensive experiences of local government.

WLGA Council, following discussions in the Local Government Reform Working Group, have endorsed the following principles.

Collaboration Principles

Collaboration, shared services or voluntary mergers should:

- Be locally-driven and subject to local democratic direction.
- Be underpinned by a locally agreed business case that:
 - Outlines mutual benefit and a clear understanding of shared costs
 - focuses on outcomes and whether, on balance, it is likely to lead to better public service outcomes - a service collaboration or shared services is not an outcome, but a means to an end.be centred on the delivery of clear outcomes / benefits for the citizens and communities. and ensuring accessible and seamless delivery of services to stakeholders and customers.
- Where appropriate, take account of existing collaborative arrangements e.g. City deals, Growth Deals and or shared services.
- Be shaped by appropriate engagement with service users and stakeholders
- Seek to strengthen strategic and operational collaboration and improve the integration of front line services across public service providers.
- Maintain transparent and flexible governance with clear local democratic accountability and appropriate scrutiny arrangements established from the start
- Be developed with due consideration of “Prosperity for All” and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and, in particular, the ‘5 ways of working’.

In addition, collaborative arrangements or shared services:

- Will be treated like all services and will be subject to scrutiny and will be reviewed periodically; if an established collaborative arrangement or shared service is underperforming or is not providing value for money for one or more local authorities, it may be appropriate to review, reform or even withdraw from such arrangements. Such decisions will not be made lightly and withdrawal from an established collaborative arrangement should not be viewed as a rejection of the concept of collaboration or a lack of

a commitment to reform, but a business decision based on performance, delivery of outcomes or value for money.