



Memorandum of Understanding between WLGA and One Voice Wales

November 2013

Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding is a statement of the working relationship and partnership between One Voice Wales and the Welsh Local Government Association. It sets out how both organisations will work together and with their membership to promote and support local democracy and public services.



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Introduction

The Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding in order to promote partnership and co-operation between the two statutory sectors of local government in Wales.

The Welsh Local Government Association represents the interests of the unitary authorities in Wales, having the role to promote better local government and to support authorities in the development of policies and priorities which will improve public services and democracy.

The Welsh Local Government Association represents all 22 unitary councils in Wales and the three fire and rescue authorities and the three national park authorities are associate members. One Voice Wales represents the interests of the community and town councils in Wales, being the body recognised by the Welsh Government to promote local democracy and deliver services by these bodies at a community level.

One Voice Wales comprises a network of over 500 member councils and, in turn, over 6000 individual councillors. These member councils make up over three-quarters of the community and town councils in Wales, and the sector itself covers the vast majority of the country, with very few areas not covered by these local councils.

The Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales will work together to promote local democracy and public services in Wales and encourage partnership and mutual support amongst their member authorities.

They will:

- respect the mutual commitment to delivering the best outcomes for local communities
- understand the different frameworks, structures and constraints in which the respective tiers of local government have to operate

- recognise the changing political, legislative and financial context in which the agenda for local democracy and public services is driving forward
- identify areas of joint work, where capacity and resources can be effectively coordinated to deliver complementary activity (such as member development) or specific policy or project work
- identify areas for improvement across the sectors in order to maximise the use of resources and to avoid unnecessary duplication of functions in the delivery of quality services

Principles

The Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales will work in partnership based on the following key principles:

- to demonstrate mutual respect and understanding of each organisation and their membership's circumstances, perspectives and priorities
- to engage in meaningful communication and liaison between each other on behalf of the two respective sectors
- to manage expectations and to set realistic and proportionate responses to any emerging challenges, priorities or proposals for joint activity
- to agree manageable timescales for any necessary changes in the work or in the culture of relationships planned as a result of this partnership
- to share relevant information and good practice as a means of enhancing the effectiveness of each other's operations which will be to the overall benefit of communities and towns throughout Wales

Partnership

The membership of the Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales meets through the statutory Partnership Council.

The leadership of the Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales will also meet on a bilateral basis biannually to discuss areas of mutual interest, to consider strategic issues

regarding local government and to agree an ongoing programme of joint activity.

The Chief Executives and/or other officials will meet regularly and will be in ongoing dialogue regarding sharing intelligence and policy initiatives as well as managing any programme of joint activity.

Joint Work

A programme of joint work will be considered and agreed annually at the beginning of each financial year, to identify common policy interests and agree complementary or joint activities or project work. The programme of activity will be agreed at a bilateral meeting of the two organisations' leadership.

The specifics of any programme of joint work will be agreed annually, but may include the following exemplars:

- development of charters and communication and consultation between member councils,
- protocols and relationships between elected members,
- promoting collaboration and joint work within and between the tiers of local government
- seeking to avoid duplication of service delivery and explore delegation and devolution of services and associated funding or financial considerations for councils.

In addition to working in harmony and respecting and supporting each other's agendas, the Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales will also seek ways of working closer together and of developing potential joint projects or other partnership activities. An example might be working together to develop new training programmes for member councils.

Monitoring/Review

The Welsh Local Government Association and One Voice Wales shall review the Memorandum and joint work programme annually, and will publish any updates or amendments to this memorandum, by agreement, in their annual reports or other suitable documentation.