

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP SCHEME  
REPORT 2009-2010**

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# Local Government Partnership Scheme

## Foreword

This report reviews the operation of the Local Government Partnership Scheme (“the Partnership Scheme”) during the financial year 2009-10 and describes some of the most significant developments achieved over the past year. The report covers the broad framework of the Partnership Scheme and how these principles have been carried out in practice.

The Scheme forms the basis of the shared commitment between the Assembly Government and local government to work in partnership within an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. During the course of the last year that partnership has entered an important new phase with the launch of “A New Understanding between the Assembly Government and Local Government in Wales.” The document explains how we will work together to deliver excellent services to our citizens. The new understanding is based on our mutual interest in serving the citizen excellently; respect for the political aims and respective organisations; the practical aspects of policy development and service delivery that face us both.

The context within which all public services in Wales operate has changed significantly. The economic downturn continues to bite and we anticipate that there will be a need to be continuing constraints on public sector spending over the next few years. At the same time, the expectations of citizens continue to rise and local government in Wales needs to be able to respond appropriately. To support local government and other public service providers through these exceptionally challenging times, a new Efficiency and Innovation Board launched at the Public Services Summit on 26 February 2010 will drive a number of programmes of work designed to improve the efficiency of public services and stimulate innovation in service design and delivery.

Other significant developments in the past 12 months include the Local Government Wales Measure 2009, the introduction of Outcome Agreements with local authorities; Councillor Commission Expert Panel for Wales and the continuing progress made by Local Service Boards through the introduction of Local Service Delivery Agreements.

Finally, the report addresses some key priorities for the future and considers the financial framework within which all of this work takes place. 2009-10 has been a tough year, full of challenges but also noteworthy progress and achievements. This report recognises those achievements and stands as testament to the enduring strength of the relationship between the Assembly Government and local government in Wales.

**Carl Sargeant**  
**Minister for Social Justice and Local Government**

## **1. Introduction**

**1.1** The Government of Wales Act 2006 (“the 2006 Act”) requires the Welsh Ministers to establish and maintain statutory partnership arrangements including those with local government.

**1.2** In 2008, the Welsh Ministers published a new *‘Local Government Partnership Scheme’* under section 73 of the 2006 Act. Section 73 also requires the Welsh Ministers to publish a report of how the scheme has been implemented in each financial year. This report does so for the financial year 2009-10. The following chapters mirror those within the scheme.

## **2. Partnership**

**2.1** The Partnership Scheme restated the shared commitment of the Assembly Government and local government to work in partnership within an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

**2.2** The partnership approach underpins the Assembly Government's vision for public services in Wales. Since publication of the Assembly Government's response to the Beecham Report - " Making the Connections - Delivering Beyond Boundaries" - a great deal has and continues to be accomplished with the support of local government in improving public services and making them more citizen - centred.

## **Pressures and Challenges**

**2.3** The challenge for government and public services has become sterner: the global recession has created increasing demand for services while also reducing the resources to provide them. Other social changes such as an ageing population continue to exacerbate this.

**2.4** To meet this challenge, the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners will need to achieve better with the same or less for the citizens and communities of Wales. The status quo is not viable: the scale of the challenge is such that we need radical transformation in the way we plan and deliver public services.

**2.5** All of us have a part to play. Local authorities (including community councils), local health boards, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, learning and skills providers, national and regional agencies, the third sector, the private sector as well as other social partners. We have shown in Wales, most recently through the Economic Summits, the difference we can make when we come together around a common priority.

**2.6** This will not be business as usual. Building on the significant progress we have made in improving public services, we have to take urgent and sustained action to: concentrate our resources and action on better and sustainable outcomes for citizens and communities, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged; deliver consistent high standards of service; transform our efficiency and productivity; provide better, more accessible information to the public about performance; and innovate, identify and implement good practice, empowering citizens and releasing the energy on front line staff.

**2.7** No single public service provider can do this alone. We must continue to drive improvement in public services and support them in transforming the way we deliver. The Public Services Summit on 26 February 2010 kick-started the next phase of actions by partners and organisations in Wales.

## **The Partnership Scheme - Partnership in Practice**

**2.8** The Partnership Scheme provides a broad framework for how the Assembly Government works with and supports the local government "family" in Wales. However there is a need to underpin the scheme by redefining relationships between the Assembly Government and local government in Wales.

**2.9** Last year's Partnership Scheme report drew attention to the then newly signed protocol between the Assembly Government and One Voice Wales. In November 2009, the then Minister for Social Justice and Local Government and the leader of the Welsh Local Government Association, signed a "New Understanding between the Welsh Assembly Government and Local Government in Wales." This agreement is vital to creating a Wales fit for the future. We must continue to work together to provide excellent citizen centred public services. Over the first ten years of devolved government, we have shown that we are able to reform the public sector in Wales to improve the range and quality of our services. The partnership between the two key partners in providing services to our citizens, local authorities and the National Health Service is being further cemented through a similar and complementary understanding to this one.

### **Community Councils**

**2.10** The protocol between the Assembly Government and One Voice Wales provides for twice-yearly bilateral meetings between the Social Justice and Local Government Minister and One Voice Wales. These meetings focus on the progress made by One Voice Wales in delivering its strategic objectives, as well as the implementation of policy relating to the sector. The latter has contributed towards community and town councils collaborating more widely and being represented on bodies such as Local Service Boards, Community Strategy Partnerships and charter steering groups.

### **National Park Authorities**

**2.11** The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing continues to meet regularly with the Park Authorities to discuss strategic issues affecting the Parks. This includes ongoing progress with the medium term strategic policy agenda set out in the Policy Statement which the Assembly Government published in March 2007.

**2.12** One specific issue which has received considerable attention during 2009-10 has been efforts to secure sustainable improvements in the planning services delivered by the three Park Authorities. A review by the Wales Audit Office in May 2009 identified a number of issues which required attention/improvement. The Minister discussed the required improvements with all three Park Authorities and all quickly put action plans in place to address the issues identified. Good progress was made during the year in taking this work forward.

## **Fire and Rescue Authorities**

**2.13** In autumn 2009 the Assembly Government consulted on guidance to support the implementation of new arrangements for improvement planning for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) under Part 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The draft guidance, which was issued in April 2010, mirrors the guidance developed for local authorities but has developed some FRA specific approaches.

**2.14** The Assembly Government recognises that reducing risk to communities (in terms of reducing fires and other incidents, and reducing the impact where such events do occur) is the cornerstone of the FRAs improvement agenda. Accordingly, we will bring risk reduction planning under the FRS National Framework and improvement planning under the Measure together. This means that Citizens and communities will have access to one plan which clearly identifies the priorities of their FRA each year. This will reduce any overlap and confusion that may be caused by consulting on and publishing the same or similar priorities in two separate documents;

**2.15** Further work is being undertaken in 2010 to review the current FRA performance indicators. These indicators focus, where possible, on outcomes to measure the impact of service delivery on citizens. The review will maintain this focus on outcomes, and will take into account the Assembly Government's strategic priorities as described in One Wales.

**2.16** In 2009-10 the Fire and Rescue Advisor undertook a review of arrangements introduced in 2006 to assess FRA's operational performance. This innovative programme has been delivered through a peer assessment approach and has become an integral part of the FRAs improvement journey. The review recommendations will enhance the current process for 2010-11.

## **Police Authorities in Wales**

**2.17** The participation and co-operation of the police and the Assembly Government is essential in building a strong and prosperous Wales. The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government holds regular meetings with the chairs of the police authorities in Wales. These meetings provide a forum for discussion of issues of mutual interest, including initiatives to promote greater collaboration between Welsh forces, funding issues, community safety partnership reform and Home Office issues relating to policing. The Minister also has regular meetings with the four Welsh Chief Constables, and the Chief Constables attend Cabinet annually. These meetings provide a further opportunity for the Chief Constables to engage with Welsh Ministers on wider issues of mutual interest. In July 2009, the then Minister also held a round table meeting with the police authorities, the chief constables, and the Home Office Policing Minister, David Hanson MP.

## **3. Partnership Council for Wales**

**3.1** The Local Government Partnership Council, as it is more commonly known, is the main forum for discussion and collaboration between the Assembly Government Ministers and local government at the strategic level.

**3.2** The Partnership Council was reconstituted in 2008 following the local elections. The Partnership Council normally meets three times in each financial year but during 2009-10 it met on 4 occasions because the Spring meeting was held in April and not March as is usually the case.

**3.3** In 2009-10, we refreshed the approach to Partnership Council meetings to facilitate positive discussions and timely consideration of shared issues of concern and areas for collaboration. This included a two-tier approach to meeting agendas, with each meeting focussing on a topical strategic issue. These were:

- Post budget Outlook for Public Services in Wales: This provided the challenge of delivering improved, measurable outcomes in a tough financial environment.
- After the Wales Programme for Improvement: The improvement regime in Wales and the emerging ideas for revising and updating, national policy on local government improvement.
- Outcome Agreements: These set out respective responsibilities on the new relationship between the Assembly Government and local government to deliver better public services in Wales.
- Future Financial Outlook Prior to the Autumn Review: A debate around the future financial outlook prior to the Autumn Spending Review 2010.

**3.4** In the coming year, we will be asking local government partners to be more proactive in bringing forward issues for consideration by the Partnership Council.



## **4. Improving Local Government Organisation and Accountability**

**4.1** The report of the Councillor Commission Expert Panel Wales, “Are we being served?” was published in August 2009. It contained 35 recommendations aimed at improving diversity in local government and ensuring that the role of a councillor was a rewarding one. The then Minister for Social Justice and Local Government consulted on the report, which resulted in broad support for most – though not all – recommendations. A summary of the responses can be found here:

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/localgovernment/beingserved/?lang=en&status=closed>

The Assembly Government’s response can be found here:

[Insert hyperlink to Written Cabinet Statement].

**4.2** The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales conducted a wide-ranging review of councillors’ allowances with local government and other stakeholders during 2009. Their Annual Report, dated December 2009, sets new maximums on the allowances structure and, in the case of special responsibility allowances, varies the posts which may attract them. In May 2010 the Panel published their “Moving Forward: Proposals Beyond 2010” report, which sets out their longer term intentions; these are dependent upon the Panel acquiring additional powers under the proposed Local Government Assembly Measure.

**4.3** The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, which gained Royal Assent in November 2009, included transference of legislative competence to the Assembly in respect of local authority governance and scrutiny arrangements. In April 2010, the National Assembly also acquired legislative competence in relation to communities, allowances, recruitment and retention of councillors. The Assembly Government intends to introduce a proposed Assembly Measure in 2010 introducing reform in those areas.

## **5. Working in Partnership**

**5.1** The Partnership Scheme recognises that public services should be joined up and citizen focussed. Local authorities have a long tradition of working collaboratively and are building on this further as they work increasingly with each other across boundaries through the WLGA Regional Boards as well as with partners in their area and other areas through Local Service Boards (LSBs).

### **Local Service Boards**

**5.2** During 2009-10 local authorities across Wales have taken an active lead in convening and supporting local service boards. Together with their partners, they have developed and consolidated the role of LSBs as the hub of the local partnership system. LSBs have been essential in focusing the partnership system on delivering better outcomes for the citizens of the area and identifying key issues to be tackled through the implementation of innovative local solutions. LSBs have also led on work to improve critical partnership support systems such as information sharing and performance management which enable effective collaborative working.

**5.3** LSBs have also been keen to share and learn from each other through events such as the national conference and a variety of LSB innovation networks. They have also used the Wales Spatial Plan Ministerial meetings to discuss common issues and share learning and experience. This has also provided LSBs with the opportunity to raise issues directly with Welsh Ministers.

**5.4** In addition to galvanising the partnership system and providing local strategic leadership, LSBs are taking forward over 90 local delivery agreement change projects. Many of these projects aim to realign and improve public services across organisations to ensure that they are both citizen-centred and efficient. For example, Carmarthenshire's health and social care integration project has resulted in a reduction of 10,000 lost bed days and no cases of disputed care with cases now being reviewed weekly. This has meant fewer people entering long term care. Swansea LSB's project to integrate services and create collective ownership has resulted in a reduction in the number of young people not in education, employment or training. Rhondda Cynon Taf's innovative 'Kafka Brigade' project on services for victims of domestic violence has yielded immediate service improvements and a long-term programme of work which will also involve Merthyr LSB.

**5.5** Other projects focus on the preventative agenda, tackling key strategic challenges such as climate change and generating efficiencies across the public services. For example, Cardiff's neighbourhood transformation project established a series of initiatives and activities which reduced anti-social behaviour by 31 per cent. Gwynedd, Powys and Flintshire LSBs are working jointly to reduce the carbon footprint of the public services in their areas. The

Vale of Glamorgan is implementing an integrated public sector estates strategy to obtain maximum efficiency from the public estate.

**5.6** Several LSBs are also developing joint projects, recognising that citizens do not always respect administrative boundaries and that by pooling expertise and resources it is possible to increase the scale and pace of improvement. For example, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr are implementing a joint project to tackle alcohol misuse and Conwy and Denbighshire are tackling workforce development jointly.

## **Improving Local Authority Services**

### **Improvement Agreements**

**5.7** In 2009-10, the Assembly Government concluded the assessment of the Improvement Agreements (IAs) 2008-2009 progress reports with each local authority. These agreements allowed local authorities to target their own improvement priorities, within a framework contributing to broad 'One Wales' outcomes.

**5.8** During 2009-2010, each authority submitted an IA report evidencing the improvements they had achieved in 2008-2009. IAs were linked to a pro rata grant which was awarded to local authorities according to the level of improvement they achieved and outcomes they delivered under the Agreement. Based on this method of assessment all authorities demonstrated significant progress in 2008-2009, to entitle them to their full grant allocation. This has resulted in a broad range of service improvements for citizens across Wales. For instance:

- Bridgend targeted improvements to its schools, with particular emphasis on pupils at risk of exclusion or under-attainment. The proportion of children leaving school without a qualification fell by more than 50 per cent.
- Cardiff implemented a package of services to support people at risk of becoming homeless, and exceeded its target for new affordable homes by 97 per cent.
- Ceredigion developed and delivered an innovative programme for providing integrated services to isolated rural communities using its mobile libraries.
- Conwy focused on the quality and range of services it provides to support older people to live at home. This included a 37 per cent reduction in the time taken to complete Disabled Facilities Grant projects. It also meant that no-one in the county borough was forced to remain in hospital while awaiting suitable care.
- Monmouthshire developed a comprehensive range of services to support local businesses. These were heavily over-subscribed; unemployment and tourism spend significantly outperformed the national average, and the number of new businesses increased, despite the recession.

**5.9** The Improvement Agreement model was the first step towards developing a methodology to secure better outcomes for citizens, through the means of a framework identifying the Assembly Government's national priorities, while allowing authorities the flexibility to respond to local priorities. Lessons have been learnt throughout this process and these can now be applied to help inform and develop the 'Outcome Agreement' policy, which will replace Improvement Agreements from 2010-2011.

### **Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009**

**5.10** The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 made rapid progress through the National Assembly, reflecting the high degree of consensus about its principles between parties and external stakeholders. It fundamentally reforms and integrates the statutory regimes for service improvement and community planning, conferring much greater flexibility on local authorities and their partners to identify and address local needs. The Measure was passed by the National Assembly for Wales on 28 April 2009 and received Royal Approval on 10 June 2009.

**5.11** The Assembly Government, working with other stakeholders in local government, has developed associated statutory guidance on part one and part two of the measure. The Welsh Assembly Government consulted on the guidance between October and January 2010; we will publish the guidance imminently.

### **Improving Performance**

#### **Ffynnon**

**5.12** Ffynnon is an all-Wales performance management, knowledge management and business change programme which comprises a software package together with implementation and consultancy support from its provider, SunGard Public Sector. Ffynnon is widely used across local government and other stakeholders who have found that the programme brings significant benefits in terms of efficiency and greater clarity to the identification, presentation, publication and sharing of performance information. The collaborative use of the software has been especially beneficial to organisations delivering projects together, for example the work done by the Anglesey Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Partnership on its Chronic Conditions Management Improvement Plan and the assessment of local authorities' Improvement Agreement evidence by both ourselves and the Wales Audit Office which facilitated prompt payment of Improvement Agreement grants.

**5.13** The Assembly Government works closely with SunGard and recent additions to the programme include the development of e-forms, a data observatory research study and the piloting of *Ffynnon* with South Wales Police and their partners.

## **Development of Outcome Agreements with Local Authorities**

**5.14** In July 2009, as part of developing a new relationship between the Assembly Government and local government, the Assembly Government agreed to develop Outcome Agreements with local authorities as the replacement for Improvement Agreements which ended in March 2010. In developing them we have tried to build on the strengths of the existing agreements, as well as the lessons learnt from their implementation and evaluation.

**5.15** Outcome Agreements will provide an outcome-focused approach to local and national performance management, that:

- § Is clearly aligned to the Assembly Government's strategic priorities, but retains a local focus;
- § Sets a more effective accountability framework by incentivising improvement and the delivery of quality local outcomes;
- § Streamlines and strengthens relationships between the Assembly Government and local government, reducing the administrative overhead and facilitating the delivery of efficiency savings.

**5.16** In compiling agreements, local authorities will be expected to select outcomes that reflect the areas of greatest local priority and should focus on aspects of service delivery where there is identifiable and significant unmet citizen or community need. In this way, agreements will be locally differentiated across Wales, recognising the pressure and priorities of particular areas.

**5.17** Each Outcome Agreement will also focus strongly on collaborative action between local authorities, emphasising the central role of regional delivery, along with partnership working, in the effective attainment of most outcomes.

**5.18** The Agreements will be developed and agreed in discussion between the Assembly Government and individual local authorities. Their content will be underpinned by evidence drawn from a range of sources which will be subject to challenge on an ongoing basis

**5.19** By delivering their Outcome Agreements local authorities will be able to earn financial flexibility. An Outcome Agreement Grant will be paid pro rata to each local authority according to the level it achieves its outcomes and more specific flexibilities will be tied to achieving particular outcomes, such as aggregation of a number of grants, consolidation of grants with other funding streams or the Revenue Support Grant, or a loosening in the conditions currently attached to grants.

**5.20** This approach will enable individual authorities to earn flexibilities on an authority wide/corporate basis as well as on more specific service basis. In this way, improvement and quality services will be rewarded.

## **6. Local, Regional and National Parks**

### **Wales Spatial Plan**

**6.1** The role of the Spatial Plan area partnerships is to work together to agree a shared vision for the development of the area. In concrete terms, this means better outcomes for our citizens through more integrated planning and continuous improvement of services.

**6.2** In this context, during 2009 we produced an 'area report' for each of the Spatial Plan areas for discussion at the Cabinet Committee on Public Service Delivery. These reports take an overview of priorities in all policy areas in each region, and identify areas of current collaboration and the potential for more joined up working in the future (see <http://wales.gov.uk/location/?lang=en>).

**6.3** The Spatial Plan area partnerships should now take on a new challenge: to be collaborative regional partnerships that engage and challenge the whole gamut of public services in the area, seeking opportunities for further joining up in the planning and delivery of services, in promoting efficiency through joint commissioning and procurement of goods and services, and in the sharing of best practice.

**6.4** We have furthered this agenda during the past year by bringing Spatial Plan area partnerships and local service boards closer together under the oversight of the lead Ministers for each area. The joint meetings make the connection between local and regional priorities. Strengthened community planning also provides a means for much stronger alignment between local and regional priorities.

### **Regional Collaboration on Climate Change**

**6.5** The Wales Spatial Plan Update 2008 made a commitment that each Spatial Plan Area will develop practical plans to move towards becoming a low carbon region. The first stage of work was carried out by the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) and is summarised in *Low Carbon Wales – Regional Priorities for Action* and its associated resource bank. The SDC Vice Chair for Wales, and the Minister for Business and Budgets jointly launched this report at the Wales Low Carbon Summit in November 2009.

**6.6** The challenge is now for each of the Spatial Plan areas to identify and deliver actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create the conditions for increased renewable energy generation. This work will need to build on and complement the substantial number of emission reduction activities and strategies already under way and planned. Doing this jointly and at a regional level offers scope for greater and faster improvement.

## **7. Community Focus**

**7.1** Community and town councils are the most local unit of government. They have many direct ways of identifying and, with public service partners, enabling the delivery of services in response to citizen and community needs.

**7.2** The Assembly Government's pledge to seek legislative opportunities to implement commitments made in its response in 2004 to the Aberystwyth Study came a step closer to realisation this year with the approval of the National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Local Government) Order 2010. The order includes a variety of provisions which correspond to recommendations in the Aberystwyth report which were accepted by the Assembly Government. This will provide competence to extend the power of well-being to community and town councils; competence over the constitution, structure and procedures of community councils and for community meetings (establishment and dissolution of community and town councils); competence to put in place a benchmarking or accreditation framework; and competence to make grants to community councils. One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks have welcomed the Order.

**7.3** The representational role of community councils has recently been strengthened through the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 which places a duty on community and town councils to participate and assist in community planning in their areas.

**7.4** The most important external relationship for most community and town councils is that with their local county or county borough council. In 2009-10, the Assembly Government, One Voice Wales and Welsh Local Government Association have continued to promote the development and agreement of charters to govern these relationships. A successful seminar for representatives from both tiers was held in January 2010 to encourage networking and sharing of good practice. The seminar built on the momentum provided by the conference organised by Torfaen County Borough Council in September 2009. Torfaen's event not only saw the formal signing of the charter with the six community and town councils in the borough, but also brought together delegates from around Wales to share good practice and experiences.

**7.5** Training and development for both councillors and clerks within the sector continued during the year through the National Training Advisory Group with financial and other support from the Assembly Government. The Assembly Government funded bursary schemes for councillor training and for clerk training to encourage smaller councils to participate. The bursary scheme was run as a pilot for six months during 2009-10 and ninety three community and town councillors and eighteen clerks applied. It is hoped to extend the scheme during 2010-11. Many councillors in smaller councils who would have normally not participated in training have used the bursary scheme to take advantage of the modular training programme for community and town councillors which was launched in July 2008. These sessions are becoming increasingly popular and have been designed to appeal to councillors who are busy people fitting in the training in their own time.

## **8. Financial Framework**

**8.1** In line with previous years, the Assembly Government and local government officials considered the key funding pressures and opportunities facing local government in the next financial year, through the Expenditure Sub Group. The 2009 Expenditure Sub Group Report informed the consideration of local government funding issues relative to the other funding pressures within the Assembly Government's budget planning exercise for 2010-11. The Consultative Forum on Finance considered the Expenditure Sub Group Report at its meeting in June.

**8.2** The resulting 2010-11 provisional local government settlement was announced on 13 October, the earliest date it has ever been published. The early announcement provided local authorities more time to set their budgets for the next financial year.

**8.3** Prior to the preparation of the local government settlement, the Distribution Sub-Group completed the two-year work programme on the formula for distributing the settlement. This included considering changes to the schools element of the formula to reflect educational outcomes and a weighting for sparsity within the personal social services formula. The more constrained financial outlook placed greater emphasis on stability within the distribution formula. Consequently, the final Distribution Sub Group report recommended limited formula changes. The Distribution Sub Group also advised on the distributional issues associated with funding transferring in and out of the settlement. The Consultative Forum on Finance considered the Sub Group's report at its meeting in June 2009.

**8.4** In line with the three year settlement arrangements, there were no major transfers for the 2009–10 settlement. However, under the "Grants Protocol" we have continued to consider which grants might transfer into the revenue settlement and how and when such transfers should take place. As a result, a number of grants are being prepared for transfer into the revenue settlement in 2010-11.

**8.5** The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government was able to report to the National Assembly that no local authority increased its council tax above 5 per cent and that the average council tax increase for 2010-11 continued the recent trend of the lowest increases since the tax was introduced in 1993-94.

**8.6** To assist local authorities in paying their suppliers more promptly, we brought forward the payments of revenue settlement funding by one week with effect from 2009.



## 9. Liaison and Consultation with Local Government

**9.1** The Partnership Scheme sets out the Assembly Government's commitment to frequent and open consultation and collaboration with local government representative bodies, including consultation with individual authorities (including community and town councils) on major policy issues.

**9.2** There are numerous examples of such consultation and collaboration in 2009-10. While there are too many to cover them all in this report, key examples include:

- Consultation with local authorities on the provisional local government settlement for 2010-11 in October 2009. Authorities had five weeks to respond to the consultation and we received responses from most of them.
- Consultation on the police authorities' provisional local government settlement for 2010-11 in December 2009. Authorities had six weeks to respond to the consultation, but we did not receive any responses.
- We continued collaboratively to develop and maintain the Performance Measurement Framework with local authorities, the WLGA and SOLACE;
- Draft guidance on the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 was developed jointly by a working group which included representatives from the WLGA and SOLACE, as well as local authority improvement and community planning practitioners, prior to full consultation;
- We developed and implemented a new *Ffynnon* programme plan jointly with the WLGA;
- We regularly attended WLGA-supported networks to share and discuss emerging policy, in particular around the Local Government (Wales) Measure and its implementation;
- The Expert Panel on recruitment and retention of councillors involved representatives of the WLGA and One Voice Wales as well as a number of prominent councillors;
- We also consulted the WLGA and local government generally before issuing directions to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales on their electoral review programme. We also involved the WLGA in approving projects for the Scrutiny Development Fund.

## **10. Reviewing the Local Government Partnership Scheme**

**10.1** This report fulfils the Assembly Government's statutory obligation to publish a report on implementation of the Partnership Scheme in the 2009-10 financial year.