



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

Project Brief – Is the shared resource service (SRS) collaboration delivering effectively now and how well placed is it for the future?

Audit year: 2019-20

Date issued: November 2019

Document reference:

Purpose of this document

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This document was developed by Gareth Jones, Charlotte Owen Gareth Lewis, Tracy Veale and Non Jenkins.

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Background

- 1 The Gwent based Shared Resource Service (SRS) is a collaborative technology provision between five partners: Torfaen County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Newport County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent (Gwent Police) to deliver shared Information Technology (IT) services.
- 2 The SRS collaboration is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding which defines how the collaboration operates and is currently being updated.
- 3 The governance arrangements for the SRS collaboration are made up of an SRS strategic board, which is supported by both an SRS Business and Collaboration Board and an SRS Governance and Finance Board. These are supported in each partner by a local, operational delivery group.
- 4 In 2015, The Wales Audit Office published a review of the establishment of the SRS. Since we undertook that review, the number of councils who are now partners of SRS has doubled. Also, information management and technology (IM&T) has evolved significantly in that time and has become the bedrock to enabling various public sector transformation programmes.
- 5 In October 2019, we held a helpful initial joint scoping workshop with representatives from each of the local government partners, followed by a conversation with Gwent Police. Both highlighted some key areas for consideration as part of our follow-up review of the collaboration.

Legislative basis for the review

- 6 This project will be undertaken in order to help fulfil the Auditor General's duty to assess whether the local government bodies have made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources in accordance with Section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, and whether the Councils have made arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of their functions under section 2 of the Local Government Wales Measure 2009. It may also inform a study for improving value for money under section 41 of the 2004 Act, and/or an examination undertaken by the Auditor General under section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

Purpose of the review

- 7 This review will seek to consider whether the SRS collaboration is sustainably delivering an effective, efficient and economic provision within this dynamic

environment, for now and for the future, for its partners both individually and collectively.

Focus of the review

- 8 This review will seek to answer the question: **Is the shared resource service (SRS) collaboration delivering effectively now and how well placed is it for the future?**

Method

- 9 We will undertake this review in multiple phases. We will review key documents provided by the partners and their technology partner. We will also facilitate a series of workshops with each of the partnership boards as well as each local delivery group.
- 10 We will also meet separately with key officers and members from each of the partners, and with SRS officers.
- 11 Prior to the workshops, we would value receiving views from each individual partner organisation to each of the questions below. We will then draw on this information to help inform our workshops and identify who to speak to.
- 12 Following the fieldwork, we will facilitate a joint feedback and action planning workshop with the key partners.

Main review questions

Exhibit 1: main review questions

The table below sets out the main questions we will seek to answer in undertaking this review.

Level 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the shared resource service (SRS) collaboration delivering effectively now and how well placed is it for the future?
Level 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a shared understanding of the collaboration’s vision and partners’ role and responsibilities amongst each of the partner organisations?• Does each partner organisation and the collaboration as a whole, have effective oversight of the collaboration’s plans, performance and outcomes, now and for the future?

Level 1

- Does each partner organisation effectively set out what they contribute to and gain from they want from the collaboration?
- Is the collaboration effectively governed?
- Are partners gaining the maximum benefit of the potential shared learning from the collaboration?

Output

- 13 We will feedback our findings from this review at a joint feedback and action planning workshop with each of the partners and summarise in a short joint report, including proposals for improvement or recommendations where relevant.

Timetable

Exhibit 2: timetable

The table below sets out a proposed timetable for the review;

Proposed timetable	
Project brief issued	November 2019
Partners' views received to each of the key questions (supported by any key documents)	December 2019
Document review Fieldwork : workshops, interviews and Meeting observations	December 2019 – March 2020
Joint Feedback and action planning workshop	April 2020
Draft Summary Report issued	April/May 2020

Fieldwork schedule

Interviews

In addition to the workshop we will meet with key officers and members at each of the key partners, and with SRS officers.

Workshops

Exhibit 4: Workshops

The table below sets out the list of workshops we would like to run with partners as part of this review. We anticipate that the workshops would last no more than 1 hour 30 minutes.

Workshops
Strategic Board
Finance and Governance Board
Business and Collaboration Board
Local delivery boards x 5

Document request

We would ask that in responding to the questions set out in Exhibit 1 each partner provides documents to support their response. Where documents are publicly available, we would be grateful if you could include the link to direct us to where we can find them. We may also request additional documents during the course of the review.

Wales Audit Office contacts

Exhibit 6: Wales Audit Office contacts

The table below sets out the Wales Audit Office team that will be working on this review. These are initial contacts; other people may also take part in the work as required.

Name	Contact details
Audit Director	Huw Rees
Audit Manager	Non Jenkins
Audit Manager	Tracy Veale
Audit Lead	Gareth Jones
Audit Lead	Charlotte Owen
Audit Lead	Helen Williams
Senior Auditor	Gareth Lewis

Appendix 1

Fair processing notice

This privacy notice tells you about the potential collection of your personal information by the Auditor General for Wales (and by the Wales Audit Office on his behalf).

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The Auditor General's work includes examining how public bodies manage and spend public money.

The relevant laws

We process your personal data (including special category personal data) in accordance with data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

This project is being undertaken to help discharge the Auditor General's examination duties under section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004. It may also inform work undertaken under section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 and/or a study for improving value for money under section 41 of the 2004 Act.

Under section 52 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, the Auditor General has a statutory right to information, assistance and explanation from any persons whom he thinks hold information that relates to a local government body. This right to information applies to information held by local government officers and we are obliged to set out that it is a criminal offence, punishable by a fine, for a person to fail to provide information required under section 52.

What we will do with your information

We are collecting information to undertake an examination to help inform the Auditor General's conclusions in relation to his statutory duties, as outlined above.

We are asking for information and opinions about the arrangements that the local government bodies have put secure effective delivery of the IMT collaboration. Some of this information may be information about identifiable individuals, which would make it personal information, even though the purpose of our work is not in itself to collect information about identifiable individuals.

The Auditor General and the study team from the Wales Audit Office will have access to the information you provide. We may share some information with senior staff of the Council and our report may include some information as outlined below.

The information that we share and publish will be anonymous and will be about the themes and trends that we identify. We will keep the information collected, including

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