

**ANGUS COUNCIL**  
**COMMUNITES COMMITTEE – 15 JANUARY 2017**  
**COLLABORATION**

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this report is to update elected members of the current position regarding collaboration in Angus.

**1. BACKGROUND**

The National Roads Maintenance Review (NRMR) in 2012 (Reported to Infrastructure Services Committee in Report 46/12) which explored a number of issues around roads maintenance. One option (Option 30) was to increase collaboration across local authorities.

Following on from the NRMR there has been some work undertaken, facilitated by the Improvement Service, which has looked at the challenges facing local roads authorities, which include not just the financial challenge but also issues such as recruitment shortages and aging workforce.

Audit Scotland have recently revisited their work on 'Maintaining Scotland's Roads' which instigated the NRMR and their report is critical over the lack of progress on collaboration.

At the same time the financial pressures on all Scottish local authorities indicate ongoing austerity measures for the medium term and the challenge of making ongoing savings will have an impact on services and potentially staff delivering roads/engineering services. There are other external pressures on organisations such as the difficulty of recruiting suitable staff when vacancies arise. There is an ambition to protect frontline services to the public by reducing operating costs, and this is already illustrated through the move to agile working and channel shift. Existing collaborative working has already delivered savings that have reduced the impact of the budget cuts on services and the challenge is of further savings by redesign of services to be the most efficient and effective that the council can be.

Angus Council is currently involved in two collaboration projects, the Northern Group and The Tayside Group.

**2. CURRENT POSITION**

**a) The Tayside Group**

Report 170/16 to P&R Committee set out proposals for collaborative working across the three former Tayside councils on 10 subject areas including roads, and a working group of senior managers has been established to examine options of shared working. The aim is that they will explore options which:

- Delivers the best possible service for the public
- Ensures local accountability for elected members
- Provides a fit for purpose roads infrastructure
- Maximises benefits from collaboration
- Has sufficient resilience to deal with unplanned major incidents
- Delivers best value and strong governance underpinned by robust performance management information
- Keeps roads activities under Council control

It is anticipated that the working group will produce an Outline Business Case by December 2016. The Group has met several times and is considering options from the improved status quo to a standalone consultancy.

**b) The Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee**

Report No 329/16 to full council to establish a Joint Committee with Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council, Argyll and Bute Council, The Highland Council, The Moray Council, The Orkney Islands Council and The Western Isles Council to be known as The Northern Roads Collaboration Joint Committee was approved on 8 September 2016. The Joint Committee will provide direction and leadership to allow suitable projects for collaborative working to be identified, and will make recommendations to the councils on the proposals brought forward. A decision will be taken by each council on whether to take part in each project. In order to participate in a project, each Council will be required to allocate resources towards that project (this may be in the form of provision of workforce/equipment/property, instead of, or as well as, a budget. The projects are hoped to either save money or provide resilience. To date the projects being developed are as follows:

**Activity 1: Ports/Harbours and Marine Opportunities**

This proposal presents five broad areas within the ports/harbours and marine sector where collaboration has the opportunity to bring cashable savings and also to share expertise and resource. Typically, responsibility for these lies within a Council's Road Service, often utilising existing bridges/structures teams within each local authority. Argyll and Bute are leading on this and have held a meeting sharing practice throughout the collaboration area.

**Activity 2: Workforce**

This business case is to support the sharing of workforce where one roads authority has a capacity or skills shortfall which can be offset by the provision of in house resources from another roads authority. Such arrangements as agreed by a joint committee (the Northern Roads Collaboration Committee) would have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which would apply to each sharing arrangement. Such an arrangement would save the need for formal procurement. The memorandum of understanding would be subject to annual review by the joint Committee. This activity concerns potential sharing of front line workforce but it could equally apply to specialist technical staff functions such as design of structures, site supervision or traffic engineering. This still requires a lead authority.

**Activity 3: Road Signage**

This activity outlines the case for extending the current collaborative arrangements between councils around the design and fabrication of road signs for planned and emergency use, to enhance the viability of the current facilities and provide improved service to participating authorities. Aberdeenshire are leading and likely to share with Moray and Highland looking to grow their signs business and invest in training of staff for the future. Given that Angus utilises Tayside Contracts signs shop Angus is unlikely to collaborate here but can learn from the experience for other fields.

**Activity 4: Training**

The purpose of this activity is to outline the case for sharing of training requirements and resources. In particular it is looking at the opportunities available in the procurement and delivery of joint training opportunities, potentially as a centre of excellence for training and cross border health and safety collaboration ensuring that a uniform and high level of skill is provided and maintained. Aberdeen City is leading and a working group is to be formed also looking at career path development encouraging a "grow your own" template especially important in times of skill shortage.

**Activity 5: Decriminalised Parking Enforcement**

Aberdeenshire have proposed setting up a group to share best practice in this field, especially useful to Angus while we pursue such.

Various meetings have taken place to date and the lead Councillors are Councillor JE Gaul and Cllr R Proctor.

**3. PROPOSALS**

This briefing report is for information only

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this information report

**5. CONSULTATION (IF APPLICABLE)**

No formal consultation has been undertaken regarding the contents of this report.

**NOTE:** Background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

Infrastructure Services Committee Report 46/12  
Policy and Resources Committee Report 170/16  
Angus Council Committee Report No 329/16

**Report Author: Ian Cochrane, Head of Technical and Property Services**

**EMAIL: [CommunitiesBusinessSupport@angus.gov.uk](mailto:CommunitiesBusinessSupport@angus.gov.uk)**