



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## Scrutiny Development Fund Bid 2012/15 Project Initiation Document

*Name of local authority:*  
*City and County of Swansea*  
*Civic Centre*  
*Oystermouth Road*  
*Swansea*  
*SA1 3SN*

*Name of contact in local authority: Dave Mckenna*  
*Telephone number of contact: 01792 636090*

*Name / Addresses of partner organisation/s*

*Bridgend County Borough Council, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB*  
*Neath Port Talbot CBC Civic Centre, Port Talbot SA13 1PJ*

### **1. Project Title:**

*Briefly, but specifically, identify the project*

#### **Joint Scrutiny Inquiry into Fostering Community Resilience**

The UK Government's Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduces significant changes to the welfare system which has implications for people and communities across Wales. Whilst benefit payments are not devolved to Wales, the impact and consequences of the UK Government's changes will be far-reaching.

Recent research from the Welsh Government has identified that the people most likely to be affected by the changes to the welfare system include women, disabled people and the carers of disabled people who are likely to see their incomes lowered<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the Department of Work and Pensions have also identified that the Universal Credit system will fail to be successful unless more people are able to access the internet<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government (2013) 'Analysing the impact of the UK Government's welfare reforms in Wales – Stage 3 analysis Part 1: Impacts on those with protected characteristics'.

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/report/130717wr-stage3-analysisv2-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/tenancies/digital-drive-could-take-down-universal-credit/6526068.article>

Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Cardiff Council's scrutiny functions have all individually considered their Council's response to the implications of welfare reform. However, the benefits of undertaking a collective response with a view to identifying innovative methods by which to mitigate the likely negative effects on vulnerable groups has been recognised.

As such, the bid to the Scrutiny Development Fund relates to the support of a regional scrutiny inquiry aimed at developing community resilience and increased digital inclusion amongst groups likely to be disproportionately affected by changes to the benefit system.

## **2. Project Background, Aims, Benefits, Deliverables and Success Criteria**

*Summarise the identified need, how the need will be addressed, the outcomes and how you will assess whether the project has achieved its aims. This section should clearly show how the project will meet specific SDF objectives.*

### **Background Information**

The project starts with the following assumptions:

- Communities, and in particular the most vulnerable, are facing the combined effects of economic recession, reductions in public funding and major changes to welfare eligibility and administration.
- Local Councils, who have an interest in protecting the economic, social and environmental well being of their communities, are ill equipped to respond to these changes outside of planning the 'business continuity' of essential services.
- The broad idea of community resilience is that communities can respond constructively to change by drawing on the assets and public services that they have available. It means that communities have the strength to protect themselves and maintain their wellbeing.
- Supporting community resilience implies a new role for local councils and new ways of delivering services; a new partnership between public, councillors and professionals.

Fostering community resilience will require local councils to work in innovative new ways. However, given the reducing resources that Councils have to work with, any process will need to generate proposals that Councils can have confidence in. The scrutiny inquiry model provides a method of doing this:

- Translating the need to support community resilience into practical measures requires a robust research process – such processes are a familiar part of scrutiny work;
- Any proposals to increase community resilience must be co-developed with the community - scrutiny processes lend themselves to community involvement;
- Proposals need to make sense to local government – scrutiny inquiries have local councillors at their heart.

While being increasingly used (Carnegie Trust, 2011; Bovaird and Quirk, 2013) the concept of

community resilience is under-developed and open to different interpretations. A key aspect of this project, therefore, will be to clarify and explore this term to ensure that councillors and officers are comfortable with its meaning and use.

The proposal to undertake this work as a joint scrutiny inquiry would be the first of its kind in Wales. Such an approach will ensure:

- Better use of research resources and expertise
- Increased likelihood of generating proposals that are able to be generalised
- Sharing of ideas and experiences between councils
- Wider opportunities for dissemination

Working with Governance International will also provide unique added value. Specifically:

- Expertise in the field of community resilience, including co-authorship of relevant academic conference papers and journal articles.
- Expertise and experience in the field of co-production including use of the Co-production Star toolkit, which is now widely used in Scotland by public agencies and which is being rolled out in Wales during 2014 in partnership with WCVA.
- Links to an extensive European network of experts in community resilience and co-production through the European Commission, OECD and Council of Europe.
- Expertise and experience of community co-research, offering the chance of joint publications in local government and public service journals and magazines

### **Project Aim**

To provide Welsh local government with a set of well researched, publicly tested and achievable proposals for fostering resilience in their local communities.

#### ***What is the identified need?***

The project allows two important gaps to be filled in terms of addressing this important issue.

First the project provides coordination and support for a multi-council scrutiny inquiry that would not otherwise be available.

Second, by providing funding for specialist research partners, the project allows expertise to be utilised that would be beyond the reach of the participating scrutiny functions.

#### ***What are the risks associated with not meeting the need for dedicated resources?***

Failure to provide dedicated resource is likely to result in the following:

Policy risks:

- Councils less likely to take a preventive approach in responding to the welfare reform agenda
- Welsh councils respond to the impact of welfare reforms in isolation
- Responses to welfare reform are 'council centric' rather than 'community centric'.
- General trends and patterns missed
- Capabilities in communities not exploited and community resources underused

Scrutiny risks:

- Duplication of effort for scrutiny work as it relates to welfare reform and community resilience
- Potential future joint inquiries not undertaken
- Capacity and capability for collaborative scrutiny remain underdeveloped

*How does the bid link to the wider aims of the scrutiny development fund?*

- **“Joint scrutiny arrangements that underpin effective collaborative working and improve the quality of public services”.**

The bid will directly support the development of sustainable joint scrutiny arrangements.

- **“Innovation and transfer of good scrutiny practice”.**

The bid will enable participating councils to achieve insight into each other's organisational and cultural policy development and accountability practices. Non participating councils will be able to access good practice findings throughout the project via social media. The links with Governance International, CfPS and Cardiff University will further extend the range of national and international good practice which is available to all councils in Wales.

- **“To encourage the development of innovative approaches to public engagement in scrutiny.”**

Co-production will be a key method used by the regional inquiry as a means to gain insight into service users experiences and ideas for service improvement. This goes beyond traditional forms of local authority engagement to identifying what community 'assets' exist that may help mitigate the negative impact of Welfare reform upon some vulnerable groups.

### **Deliverables – what are the outputs?**

The outputs from the bid would be as follows:

- The inquiry will conclude with the publication and dissemination of a final report including costed recommendations for local councils. Participating councils will commit at the outset to consider and respond to the recommendations of the inquiry, including providing a Cabinet response as would be the case with any other scrutiny inquiry.
- Other outputs during the course of the inquiry are expected to include interim research reports and briefings as appropriate, which will help to advise councils on potential steps they can take to mitigate some of the effects of current welfare reforms.
- The findings of the Inquiry will be discussed at a workshop, with invitations to all those who have contributed to the inquiry (elected members, council officers, staff in partner organisations, community groups, involved citizens, etc.)
- The inquiry will report and engage in real time using blogging and other social media as appropriate.
- Partners and others who give evidence during the course of the inquiry will be encouraged to write up their evidence and publish it in other formats, so that the work of the inquiry gains the widest possible profile.
- Similarly, partners and others who give evidence will be encouraged to circulate widely their responses to the final report of the inquiry, in order to gain public profile for the inquiry's work and recommendations..
- The joint inquiry model will be assessed and codified, with a clear set of learning points. This model, which will be the first of its kind in Wales, will therefore be available for similar projects in future.
- Additional learning points will be provided around scrutiny working with partner agencies, specifically as this relates to the 'scrutiny of designated persons' being introduced by the Welsh Government.
- Finally, the skill set of the scrutiny officers involved will be enhanced though developing an understanding of the "Return on Investment" methodology, though the support of experts from the Centre for Public Scrutiny and its associates. This will lead to wider dissemination of the knowledge within the participating councils.

### **Success Criteria – how will you assess whether the project is a success?**

The project will be deemed a success if the following outcomes are achieved:

- The final report is adopted as a resource to inform policy and practice in Wales.
- The recommendations are clearly evidence based, achievable and deliverable.
- The implementation of any agreed recommendations leads to visible benefits for communities (as ascertained in a short follow-up survey 12 months after the final workshop, which will be coordinated free of charge by Governance International, with the help of the participating councils).
- The joint inquiry model is adopted for other projects.

More details on the monitoring and evaluation of the project are contained in section 4 and in Annex 1.

### **3. Communication Plan:**

*How do you intend to disseminate the key learning points, internally and externally?*

The communication of key learning points is crucial in achieving the project's objectives. Progress on the regional scrutiny inquiry will be fed back via a variety of means which include:

- Presentations at relevant regional and national scrutiny and members network meetings,
- Uploading all agendas, reports and minutes on the 'Scrutiny Connect' website as well as ensuring links on all participating council websites,
- Dissemination of case study materials to all scrutiny practitioners, scrutiny chairs and other relevant stakeholders via a national email send-out at the end of the project's life
- Utilising WG's 'Councillor Connect' publication to showcase the work of the regional inquiry.
- Encouraging discussion from a wider group of interested stakeholders by blogging and submitting articles to the media such as Guardian Leaders Network, etc.

All public communications will be produced bilingually; English and Welsh.

### **4. Monitoring and Evaluation:**

*What steps are planned to monitor and evaluate the project? Include details of planned project controls and keeping the Welsh Government informed of progress.*

The process of developing joint scrutiny of Community Resilience will generate significant learning opportunities for all of the local authority partners. These partners are keen to ensure that the learning from the exercise can be cascaded to other local authorities in the interests of improved joint scrutiny across public services in Wales.

This proposal invites the Welsh Government to invest in the Community Resilience Joint Scrutiny model to establish it as an exemplar for the rest of Wales. There is an opportunity to use the project to test joint scrutiny, identify challenges and pitfalls, and identify lessons which can be readily applied in other areas.

For joint scrutiny to be successful, and for other Local Authorities to gain confidence in undertaking it, some solid examples are required which identify how the challenges and pitfalls may best be navigated. This bid addresses these issues head on, by involving representatives of local authorities in the Steering Group, providing a real-time example of joint scrutiny in practice and by developing joint scrutiny approaches.

In order to maximise the learning it is proposed that the following be undertaken:

- Evaluation of the "journey so far" as a resource to other local authorities - to illustrate the lessons learnt re building a case for "joined up" scrutiny, with Members and senior officers, and building awareness/confidence across partners;
- Mid-point self-evaluation of the project - by scrutiny members, witnesses, members of

the Steering Group and scrutiny officers - to enable refinement of model and practice. Cardiff Business School will also be invited to carry out a peer review of the emerging learning points mid-way through the project;

- Evaluation after the first full year of operation, with publication of results;
- The Centre for Public Scrutiny<sup>3</sup> will also provide an independent evaluation of the project as part of its Welsh programme;
- Sharing lessons from the Joint Scrutiny: potential areas for sharing practice include:
  - Providing opportunities for members, officers & partners to explore cultural issues relevant to scrutiny development
  - Raising awareness of the governance and stakeholder engagement derived from effective joint scrutiny
  - Cascading proven tools and techniques, avoiding duplication of effort in “inventing” techniques for effective joint scrutiny
  - Facilitating skills transfer and officer development to establish a cadre of professional scrutiny support;
  - Providing a context for targeted member/scrutiny practitioner development activity.

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that the evaluation will be undertaken by representatives who were not linked to the project

# Project Costs

## Amount of Funding sought

### **A total of (£48,000)**

Lead Inquiry Officer: £35,000

This includes 12 months full time April 2014 – March 2015

Associated costs: £5,000

Covering:

- Inquiry Panel meetings\* x 10
- Steering Group Meetings\* x 4
- Witness expenses / travel costs
- Promotional material (Including design of final report, translation costs, web / social media costs if required. Note: the final report will only be published digitally hence printing costs are not included)

(\*Where possible rooms will be provided by participating councils, provision is for papers, refreshments etc)

VAT @ 20%: 8,000

### **Year one (2013/14):**

Lead Inquiry Officer: 0

Associated costs: 0

### **Year two (2014/15):**

Lead Inquiry Officer: 35,000

Associated costs: 5,000

VAT @ 20%: 8,000

**Total amount of funding sought: £48,000**



**Staff Time**

*What staff time will be dedicated to the project*

Lead Officer – 12 days (April 2014 – March 2014)  
Lead Inquiry Officer - Full time x 12 months (April 2014-March 2015)  
Contact Officer for each Council – 12 days (April 2014 – March 2015)

**Detailed breakdown of overall budget costs**

*Include the dates when costs would be incurred and dates of when they would be claimed from the Welsh Government*

**Year 1 (2013/14) – to be claimed for Quarters three and four**

No claim for this period

**Year 2 (2014/15) – to be claimed from 1 April 2014**

Claims made at the end of each quarter

Costs are expected to be evenly spread i.e. £12,000 per quarter

# Annex 1 - Project Plan

## **Project Governance**

*What is the planned governance structure for this project?*

A project steering group will be established to undertake the following governance roles:

- To maintain oversight of the Joint Inquiry to ensure that it provides a set of well researched, publicly tested and achievable proposals for fostering community resilience;
- To assist in ensuring the project plan is achievable and that the intended outcomes and outputs are achieved within the available budget and timescale;
- To ensure the Inquiry's scope aligns with the expectations of stakeholder groups;
- To actively contribute to the identification of solutions to any issues that have potential to hinder the delivery of the project's objectives;
- To help ensure coordination between the work of the Inquiry and the work plans of the participating councils
- To report project progress back to Welsh Government.

### **Membership of the Steering Group will be as follows:**

- Chair and vice chair of Inquiry Panel
- Lead Officer for Scrutiny from participating councils.
- CfPS Wales representative.
- Representative of Governance International

### **Additional representation**

- Representation will also be sought from –WG, WLGA etc.

## **Project Methodology**

*What is the planned methodology for this project? How do you plan to achieve your project objectives e.g. delivered in-house or contracted out; research conducted by means of interview, or focus groups. These should be statements about the method of managing the project rather than process.*

The components to the project methodology are described below:

### **Inquiry Model**

- The inquiry will be undertaken by a panel of councillors including two from each of the partner councils.
- The panel will be supported by a research partner with expertise both in new approaches to public service delivery and in co-researching with the public.

Additional support will be coordinated by a scrutiny officer from one of the participating councils.

- The inquiry will proceed in 3 stages: scoping, evidence gathering and report writing.
- The scoping stage will explore the level of ambition which the Councils have during this period of budget cuts and in a climate of public sector reform. It is likely to issue a region-wide call for evidence at an early stage. #
- At the scoping stage, the focus of the inquiry will be determined – it is likely to include a number of different groups but not too many, so that it remains manageable. The focus might, for example, choose one or more of the following: people providing unpaid care; people with mental health problems; families of children with disabilities; Neets; people at risk of being digitally excluded.
- The precise evidence gathering methods will be determined by the inquiry panel but are expected to include a literature review of the relevant research (for discussion at an early workshop between the scrutiny panel and invited stakeholders), visits to examples of notable practice and input from key community members and professionals, both in normal inquiry panel sessions and in some workshops using appreciative inquiry. Councillors will act as co-researchers in the evidence gathering process, including a role in mobilising relevant people and organisations to give evidence (and, where appropriate, try out emerging ideas from the inquiry).
- It is likely that the inquiry will invite all councils to facilitate a ‘community assets’ mapping exercise at an early stage (or updating of any exercises which have already been undertaken) – this might be done through third sector organisations in each area.
- A case study will be identified in each of the Council areas, and worked up in conjunction with relevant members of the inquiry team, including the councillor from the area.
- The draft findings of the inquiry will be discussed at a final workshop, to which will be invited all those who have contributed to the inquiry. This workshop will co-design the conclusions and recommendations from the Inquiry.
- The final inquiry report will include a description and evaluation of the Joint Inquiry Model to inform future joint scrutiny arrangements.
- The inquiry is expected to take 12 months in total including 6 months evidence gathering.

Project Start Date	Project Completion Date
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014	31st March 2015
<p><b>Project Schedule</b>  <i>Details of each project activity, dependencies (if any) and key milestones. By dependencies we mean are there any events or work that are either dependent on the outcome of this project or that the project will depend on.</i></p>	

	Target dates/ Milestones	
<b>Pre Inquiry Preparation</b>	March 2014	Steering group meeting #1 (To confirm process / expectations)
	April 2014	Inquiry panel meeting #1 (Introductions, process, expectations, introduction to key concepts)
	May 2014	Publicity launch (social media etc)
<b>Stage 1: Scoping</b>  To establish focus and evidence gathering process.  To establish core question and associated lines of inquiry.	May 2014	Inquiry Panel meeting #2 (Scoping decisions)
	June 2014	Steering Group Meeting #2 (Draft scoping report – implications and practicalities)
	June 2014	Scoping report agreed by inquiry panel
	July 2014	Publication of ‘call for evidence’ (social media etc)
<b>Stage 3: Evidence Gathering</b>  To gather evidence relevant to the core question and lines of inquiry as determined by the scoping report.	July – December 2014	Inquiry Panel meetings #3-#8 (for evidence hearings, visits etc to be agreed by Inquiry Panel)  Updates from evidence gathering (via social media etc)
	October 2014	Steering Group meeting #3 (Managing progress, issues and risks)

		Findings Report (Providing full description of evidence collected methods etc)
<p><b>Stage 4: Report Writing</b></p> <p>To provide a concise summary of the Inquiry's findings.</p> <p>To develop conclusions and recommendations from the findings</p> <p>To produce a clear, concise and useable document as a summary of the Inquiry's work.</p>	<p>January 2015</p> <p>January / February 2015</p> <p>February 2015</p> <p>March 2015</p> <p>April 2015</p>	<p>Inquiry Panel meeting #9 (Workshop with stakeholders / contributors to co-design conclusions and recommendations)</p> <p>Draft report circulated to Inquiry Panel members for comment.</p> <p>Steering Group meeting #4 (Draft report for accuracy and viability)</p> <p>Inquiry Panel meeting #10 (Consideration of draft final report)</p> <p>Report publication and launch event (dissemination through social media etc)</p>
<p><b>Post Inquiry evaluation</b></p> <p>12 month follow up survey of participants / stakeholders</p>	<p>March 2016</p>	<p>Follow up report disseminated through steering group / Inquiry Panel, social media etc</p>
<p><b>Project Board/ Steering Group Members</b> <i>(If applicable)</i></p>	<p>Dave Mckenna, Scrutiny Manager, City and County of Swansea (Lead Officer)</p> <p>Tbc Lead Inquiry Officer</p> <p>Tbc Bridgend County Borough Council (Contact Officer)</p> <p>Tbc Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (Contact Officer)</p> <p>Tbc Governance International</p> <p>Rebecca David-Knight, Centre for Public Scrutiny Wales Programme</p>	

	Tbc Welsh Government
<b>Project Leader and Team Members</b> <i>Details of roles and responsibilities</i>	<p>City and County of Swansea as Lead Council provides the Lead Officer responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall leadership and coordination</li> <li>• Main point of contact for the project (along with the Lead Inquiry Officer)</li> <li>• Organising and chairing steering group meetings</li> <li>• Providing the Councillor Chair for the Inquiry</li> <li>• Acting as the responsible body for financial matters including monitoring and claims</li> <li>• Keep accurate records of all expenditure in conformity with the Award Letter</li> <li>• Complete the Grant Claim Forms in a timely manner consistent with the Payment Schedule 4 in the Award Letter</li> </ul> <p>Governance International, responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment, employment, supervision and support for the Lead Inquiry Officer</li> <li>• Advice as required</li> </ul> <p>Lead Inquiry Officer responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Steering Group Meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Agreeing dates and venues with the Lead Officer</li> <li>○ Preparation and circulation of agendas and action points</li> <li>○ Preparation of reports as required</li> <li>○ Recording of evidence presented to panel meetings as required</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Inquiry Panel Meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Agreeing dates and venues</li> <li>○ Preparation and circulation of agendas and action points</li> <li>○ Preparation of reports as required including the final report</li> <li>○ Recording of evidence presented to panel meetings as required</li> <li>○ Receiving and collating evidence presented to the Inquiry</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Research Activities</b></li> </ul>

- Literature review
- Surveys / focus group work as required
- Support and coordination as required for Council led asset mapping activities and case studies

Centre for Public Scrutiny, responsible for:

- Liaison with relevant national organisations including the Centre of Public Scrutiny
- Coordination with relevant national scrutiny activities / projects in Wales
- an independent evaluation of the project as part of its Welsh programme;
- Expert support for the “Return on Investment” methodology
- Advice as required

Participating councils would be responsible for:

- Identifying a scrutiny officer to act as the contact officer for the Inquiry (12 officer days per year will need to be provided). This officer to be responsible for:
  - Organising venues and refreshments for panel meetings and steering group meetings if required (costs to be supported by the project where necessary)
  - Directly supporting, in liaison with the Lead Inquiry Officer, any research activities that relate solely to their Council area (details to be determined but this is expected to include a case study and an asset mapping exercise)
  - Active participation in the Project Steering Group including quarterly half day meeting)
  - Ensuring Executive Members, Scrutiny Chairs and Non-Executive Members are kept informed of progress.

## Annex 2 – Risk Analysis

### **Assumptions**

*What assumptions have been made? These are things that you are assuming will be in place or will occur, that will contribute to the successful outcome of the project*

#### **Assumptions include:**

- All participating councils are unified in their approach to support the project achieve its objectives as detailed in the project plan
- Participating councils have an understanding of and a commitment to the project and will be open to engaging fully with the final report and its recommendations
- Councillors joining the panel will have an understanding of and a commitment to the project and will be able to participate as required over the life of the project
- The membership of the panel is provided with necessary support and guidance to allow them to carry out their role

### **Risk Management:**

*What might constrain the project? Examples can include: resource constraints; timely access to information; competing deadlines; project completion being dependent upon other activities.*



1. Failure of stakeholders to understand their respective roles resulting in miscommunication, fragmentation and duplication of effort.
2. Time and resource constraints affecting the participation of councillors on the panel
3. Time and resource constraints affecting the ability of participating councils to support additional research activities (i.e. asset mapping and case studies) associated with the project

### **Risk Mitigation:**

*What steps are planned to mitigate the risks to the project?*

1. Participating councils and CfPS will engage in regular communication and engagement with stakeholders regarding the outcomes sought to be achieved by the project
2. The steering group will monitor time and resource issues and respond as required – this may include rebalancing time and resource commitments and identifying additional sources of support and/or existing activities / research that can be used to support the objectives of the project



Signature of Leaders	 Cllr MET NOTT OBE	Date 30/4/14
Signature of Chief Executives	 D MEPHAM	Date 30.4.14
Signature of Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	See Below	Date 30/4/14

CSG — Cllr N Clarke N Clarke  
 CRI — Cllr M Reeves M Reeves  
 CYP — Cllr P FOLEY P Foley  
 CRE — Cllr J SPANWICK J Spanwick  
 HIW — Cllr LE REES LE Rees

