Item 9.2

Public Service Leadership Group – 03 October 2013 – Personal Summary

This note provides a brief summary of the tenth meeting of the Public Service Leadership Group (PSLG) which took place last Thursday.

The main items of business included:

Huw Jakeway (CFO, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service) provided an update on progress on encouraging better sharing of information to protect individuals. Huw outlined plans for turning our collective leadership commitment into action, including making it easier to share in key areas. Huw reported ‘off the shelf’ protocols are already available to support DPA compliant sharing for a wide range of purposes (such as delivery of integrated services) through the WASPI “Do Once and Share” approach and more will be developed. LSBs were highlighted as key leadership groups to drive progress locally.

Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Local Government and Government Business drew attention to the Prospectus of Best Practice case studies, published on 24 September on the Welsh Government website, which reports on her summer visits to all 22 Local Authorities. The Group agreed there was an imperative and onus on all organisations to consider if they were already using similar best practices. The importance of looking across Wales and outside Wales was also highlighted.

The Minister sought reassurance that all local authorities would be engaging and seizing the opportunities provided by the work on fleet and passenger management, pioneered in Neath Port Talbot, which has an estimated savings potential of £80m across Wales. The Assets work programme led by Helen Paterson (CE, Wrexham CBC), had approached all local authorities but responses so far had been poor. The Minister emphasised that opportunities like this have to be taken given budget pressures.

The main discussion item focussed on future finances, and the impact of funding and performance systems in shaping how easily organisations can respond to the twin challenges of reducing budgets and increasing demands. The discussion ranged widely, with comment highlighting opportunities from outcomes-focussed approaches, de-hypothecation, prioritisation, flexibility and alternative delivery models, as well as workforce implications. The Regional Leads will be able to feed back in more detail. The Welsh Government’s Draft Budget was tabled in the National Assembly for Wales on 8 October.

Michael Hearty (Director General, Finance and Corporate Services, Welsh Government) presented the refreshed Measurement Framework, which reports progress made on the national programmes. The difficulties of capturing savings and improvements resulting from some types of projects, and likely benefits relative to the effort required of broadening evidence in the framework, were discussed with a
general view emerging that the more value might be secured by focusing future work more narrowly.

Paul Matthews (CE, Monmouthshire CC) posed a leadership challenge on how to capitalise on the energy and inspiring examples of best practice seen at the Continuous Improvement (CI) Conference on 26 September, which was attended by experts from across public services in Wales. Peter Vaughan (CC, South Wales Police) shared his experience of how SWP had achieved savings of 20% on their £300m budget through these approaches. Paul and a number of PSLG members will be shaping a fresh programme of work on this, building on the CI Community of Practice, Academi learning programmes and cutting edge academic research. Please make contact with Paul directly if you are interested in participating.

Jack Straw, (CE, Swansea CC) Chair of the Organisational Development and Simpson Implementation (ODSI) Board presented a report on implementation of the Compact for Change. In outlining the report, which sets out continued governance arrangements for the individual commitments, Jack also reflected on discussions at ODSI on cultural and attitudinal changes and momentum on collaboration that has developed alongside the detailed work on the Compact. The Minister expressed her thanks to the ODSI members who have given leadership to individual commitments. The ODSI Board had also discussed future priorities, which the Minister for Local Government and Government Business will consider.

A final opportunity, highlighted by Michael Hearty, is the imminent re-opening of the Invest-to-Save Fund to applications, with £19m available for investment in 2014-15.