

**Minister for Finance & Trefnydd Meeting with Third Sector Representatives
20 June 2019**

Present:

Rebecca Evans AM

Minister for Finance & Trefnydd

Third Sector:

Ruth Marks

WCVA

Anna Nichol

WCVA

David Cook

WCVA

Sheila Hendrickson-Brown

Third Sector Support Wales

Kate McColgan

Interfaith Council for Wales

Helene Hayes

Citizen's Advice Cymru

Anne Meikle

Wales Environment Link

Catriona Williams

Children in Wales

Rocio Cifuentes

BAME Alliance

Welsh Government Officials:

Matt Wellington

Strategic Budgeting

Simon Griffiths

Value Wales

Rhiannon Caunt

Office of the Chief Digital Officer

Aaron Fortt

3rd Sector Unit

Paul McDonagh

Permanent Secretary's Group

Sandra Stephenson

Permanent Secretary's Group

Alex Bevan

Special Adviser

Agenda item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

1. The Minister extended a warm welcome and invited delegates to introduce themselves.
2. Apologies were received from John Gallanders TSSW, Iwan Thomas PLANED and Paul Glaze CWVYS.
3. The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted; all action had been completed.

Agenda item 2 – Welsh Government Up-date on Finance & the Budget

4. The Minister advised that, unfortunately, the Welsh Government's current revenue settlement did not extend beyond the current financial year (2019-20) but that the capital budget was allocated until 2020-21. The Minister reported that it is now looking unlikely that there will be a Comprehensive Spending Review by the UK Treasury this year, thereby preventing the Welsh Government from making long-term commitments. The Minister acknowledged and sympathised with the implications of this for the Third Sector but stressed that the Devolved Administrations were pushing the UK Government hard on this issue at their

quadrilateral meetings; she intended to make a statement to the Assembly on the Future of Public Spending in July.

5. From an environmental sector perspective, the Third Sector felt that funding was under threat from the UK Government. However, they welcomed the recognition by the Assembly's Minister for Environment, Energy & Rural Affairs of the environmental crisis but acknowledged the difficulties and challenges. Whilst the Third Sector stated that not enough was being done globally around climate change, they acknowledged that a lot of activity was taking place in Wales.
6. The Minister assured delegates that she had discussed this issue with Cabinet colleagues and with the Future Generations Commissioner and apologised that she was unable to provide more certainty at this time.
7. The Third Sector noted that Welsh Government currently has no certainty over its forward revenue budget but welcomed that there is a capital budget for 2020-21 and reminded the Minister of the interest from and experience within the Third Sector. They also highlighted the sector's interest in devolved taxation and its involvement in the Bank of England's citizenship programme. They called for an early announcement of the revenue budget once it is known.
8. The consequences of Brexit uncertainty for the Sector were stressed, including the increased take-up of services (eg 19% increase in enquiries to Citizens Advice), that many networks operate/funded on an EU basis and the need for whatever is designed going forward to meet Welsh needs. Members welcomed the announcement by the Deputy Minister & Chief Whip on the prevention of hate crime but stressed the need for additional funding for areas of migration. The Minister was interested in the statistics on the increase of take-up of Citizen's Advice, particularly in services associated with immigration and welcomed further information. [**Action: Third Sector – Helene Hayes**]
9. The Minister advised that she had announced £85m capital stimulus in 2019-20 relation to a no deal Brexit. The Minister said she would consider making a further capital package available, and urged the Third Sector to speak to individual Ministers regarding their priorities.
10. The Minister also highlighted the EU Transition Fund, especially in relation to civil contingencies and community cohesion. The Minister reported that the Shared Prosperity Fund had been debated in the Assembly and was pleased to see political parties in agreement on the issue. The Minister had written to James Brokenshire, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in the UK Government looking for multi-year funding, and agreed to share the letter with the Third Sector [**Action: Welsh Government – Paul McDonagh**]

Agenda item 3: Value of the Third Sector and Implications for Government Investment

11. Third Sector colleagues highlighted that it was Refugee Week and wanted to acknowledge the role of volunteers and paid employees in this and other designated weeks.
12. The Minister welcomed this and emphasised the need to celebrate the richness immigrants bring to Wales and the voluntary roles played by immigrant communities themselves. She also highlighted the Better Jobs Closer to Home Project and how it linked into the Valleys Taskforce and Foundation Economy led by the Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport.
13. Responding to the Third Sector's call for data showing where funding is going, the Minister agreed to share her comments to the UK Government and to consult on the guidance being prepared for local authorities on open data. Rhiannon reported that an open data workshop is was planned for the Autumn; Third Sector colleagues welcomed this announcement and were keen to be involved in the workshop **[Action: Welsh Government - Rhiannon Caunt]**.
14. Third Sector colleagues raised the issue of funding for the Third Sector, including their preference for grant funding rather than commissioning through procurement contracts. Simon Griffiths reported that 4 pilot programmes were being tested, with a mixture of grant and procurement funding, and that he would be happy to talk to Third Sector colleagues to hear their views. **[Action: Welsh Government – Simon Griffiths]**
15. Turning to the Future Generations Act, the WCVA highlighted the involvement and engagement of the Third Sector in the work around preventative budgeting but stated that this focused too heavily on social care prevention. There was a feeling amongst Third Sector colleagues that there was a lot of money being spent by the Welsh Government in this arena and they were keen to demonstrate that good things were happening locally by colleagues on the ground. The Minister asked Third Sector colleagues to let her have details of some of the positive action being taken forward locally. **[Action: Third Sector – Anne Meikle & Sheila Hendrickson-Brown]**
16. The WCVA drew the Minister's attention to the 4 points at the foot of their paper for potential action; some of which had been discussed earlier in the meeting. However, in relation to a statement on the importance of strategic investment in the voluntary sector, the Minister agreed to take this issue up with the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip. In the meantime, the Minister asked Third Sector colleagues to clarify what they were seeking from the statement. **[Action: Welsh Government & Third Sector]**

17. The Third Sector welcomed the restoration of the Funding & Compliance Sub Committee.

Agenda Item 4 - Joint Third Action Plan

18. The Third Sector welcomed the opportunity to work with officials on the refresh of the Action Plan between the Minister and the Third Sector **[Action: Welsh Government & WCVA – Paul McDonagh & Anna Nicholl]**