

Third Sector Partnership Council

Notes of the Third Sector Partnership Council meeting held on 10 November 2011 at Ty Hywel, Cardiff

The meeting note has been annotated with updates on actions arising. All have been actioned.

Action for Members

Members are invited to note this paper.

**Notes of the Third Sector Partnership Council meeting held on 10th
November 2011 at Ty Hywel, Cardiff.**

Present:**Welsh Assembly Government**

Carl Sargeant AM	Minister for Local Government and Communities
Alun Davies AM	Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and European Programmes
Kate Cassidy	Director for Communities and Social Justice
Iain Willox	Head of Third Sector Unit
Wendy Thomas	Third Sector Unit
Lisa Clarridge	Third Sector Unit
Liz Powell	Third Sector Unit
Rob Halford	Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO)
Judith Cole	Public Service Reform Division

Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)**Representatives**

Graham Benfield	WCVA Chief Executive
Miriam Nasrat	WCVA
Judith Stone	WCVA
Margaret Jervis	WCVA
Constance Adams	WCVA (Observer)

Third Sector Representatives

Darren Griffiths	Social Enterprise
Christine O'Byrne	Employment
Catriona Williams	Children and Families
Naz Malik	Ethnic Minorities
Richard Bowers	Disability
Andi Lyden	Health Social Care and Wellbeing
Robert Taylor	Older People
Geraint Hopkins	Religion
Ian Davy	Intermediaries
Kay Richmond	Gender
Barbara Natasegara	Community Justice
Jeanie Gray	Environment
Fran Targett	Advice and Advocacy
Maggi Dawson	Education and Training
Gwenan Davies	Arts, Culture and Heritage

Apologies:

Kirsty Davies	Gender
Aled Rhys-Jones	Arts, Culture and Heritage
Philip Avery	Sport and Recreation
Paul Glaze	Youth
Katy Chamberlain	Employment
Phil Stevens	Disability
John Puzey	Housing
Claire Lawson	Animal Welfare
Bill Upham	Environment

1. Introduction

Kate Cassidy welcomed all to the Third Sector Partnership Council meeting and advised that the Minister was running late. She suggested that the meeting started as there was a full agenda including progress made by the workstreams established at the July meeting.

Apologies were noted.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting and Actions Arising

ACTIONS ARISING

Minister to write to the Deputy Minister for Children in order to highlight the sectors concerns regarding Cymorth transitional funding.

(Further information from Catriona Williams, who raised this point, has only just been received. The action will be carried forward.)

3. Implementation of the Simpson Review Workstream Paper

Judith Cole presented the paper which was intended to provide the basis for the Third Sector to contribute to the public service reform agenda.

Discussion concerning recommendations one and two confirmed that the compact between the WG and local government in Wales is due to be published shortly. The WCVA indicated concern that the Third Sector would have no opportunity to contribute to this before it was signed off. It was suggested that there may be an opportunity for reassurance on this as the compact will be seen by the Public Sector Leadership Group (of which Graham is a member) in advance of it being finalised.

Recommendations 3 and 4 were discussed and it was generally agreed that Third Sector representation would be needed at regional level, but that this would require leadership both by locally based, and national organisations, in determining who is best placed to act as lead body for the particular area of

work being considered. Catriona Williams stated that specialised regional structures would need development support.

It was further noted that in many areas there was no need to unpick relationships that were already working, particularly the strong relationships that have existed with individual local authorities.

Ian Davy reminded the group that most Third Sector organisations were very local. Margaret Jervis added that some very good work was done at local level and that communities should be left to identify themselves rather than be prescribed.

The group was invited to return to the full council in November and report back on actions taken.

4. Future Arrangement for Structural Funds 2014 to 2020.

The Minister joined the meeting during this item.

Rob Halford, Head of WEFO Planning and Strategy updated the group on the first workstream meeting in October. It had been a good meeting, with broad discussion on the lessons learned from the implementation of the current and previous SF programmes. The potential to consider the shape of future programmes was however somewhat constrained by the fact that the European Commission had issued draft regulations for the 2014 – 2020 period, the day before the meeting and there had not been a proper opportunity to assimilate the contents. Nonetheless, the paper tabled at the meeting reflected the Group's discussions and was an informed contribution to the debate about how to move forward in designing future programmes.

The European Commission is being rather more prescriptive in its approach to post 2013 programmes, with its Europe 2020 focus reflected in a proposed 'menu' of thematic options which future programmes will be expected to address. The Commission also proposes to ring-fence funds for actions linked to core Europe 2020 objectives. The development of future programmes is therefore not commencing from a 'blank sheet', with WEFO needing to interpret Commission requirements carefully, before engaging in the design of future programmes. Rob confirmed that partnership was a fundamental requirement going forward, with early engagement with stakeholders planned. WEFO is to launch a two-stage engagement process, commencing: in early December with a reflection exercise to allow stakeholders to contribute to thinking around the strategic direction of future programmes, The workstream's paper constitutes a good starting point as an input to that exercise. Later in 2012, stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the detail proposed for future operational programmes.

Judith Stone responded. A main concern from the past was the significant loss of expertise and sophisticated project delivery mechanisms in the gap between programmes, and emphasised the importance of maintaining investment in current projects that are likely to fit with the proposals for the

future programmes. The sector welcomed the EU's proposals to make more use of both global grants and loan/legacy funding in the future, recognising that competitive grants could be used in place of procurement. The opportunity to bring together ESF/ERDF/fisheries/rural development plan funding for multi-fund projects was welcomed as a significant opportunity, which must be under-pinned by integrated planning at the highest level. The sector also welcomed the Welsh Government's continued adherence to its Code of Practice on Funding, by allowing through WEFO, advance payments to Third Sector project sponsors to provide critical cash flow at the start of projects, but asked WEFO to consider whether this facility might also be extended to include Third Sector organisations that are either joint sponsors, or contract delivery agents for projects led by the public sector. The plans to continue to recognise volunteer time as in-kind match funding were also welcomed.

Individual interventions highlighted an interest in looking at the age profile of recipients and the particular request for consideration of younger people to become eligible; a request to look at how transnationality can be more straightforward than in the current round; a desire to make the most of the 20% of ESF ring fenced for social inclusion potentially through the use of global grants; and an intention to work with individual Ministers through the Ministerial biennials to ensure clarity over likely early Welsh government sponsored projects.

Rob added that it was in everyone's interest to hit the ground running, from the start of 2014, and that the process outlined ideally would do just that. There was however a balance to be struck between committing funds heavily at the start of the programme period and the need to ensure that there was flexibility to respond later in the programming period to events that could not be foreseen.

The Deputy Minister concluded that the WG is trying to stimulate debate over the future of the structural funds. The WG is an active participant in these talks both at the UK and EU levels. He hopes to reach agreement on the approach by May 2012 to ensure a softer transition than in the past.

Action: The Minister added that he welcomed the update on the Structural Funds and looked forward to hearing from the workstream in November 2012 by which time they will have covered a discussion of implementation issues. An invitation was extended to the Deputy Minister to attend this meeting.

5. Updates from other work streams

The Minister drew the meeting's attention to the paper to note, containing full updates from the work streams.

A short discussion took place concerning the current activities of the UK government with regards to welfare reform and the possible requirement to discuss these at the next council meeting.

ACTION: The Implication of UK Government Decisions on Wales's workstream to produce a report on Welfare Reform and changes to Legal Aid for the May meeting.

6. Establishment of a TSPC Climate Change Workstream

Proposals were laid that the sector climate change leadership group becomes a workstream. Iain Willox advised that Jennifer Pride the Head of climate change, would be interested in becoming involved in this. It was agreed that this workstream would be adopted by the Third Sector Partnership Council.

ACTION: The new Climate Change workstream to invite Jennifer Pride to join the group. The group should present a framework paper at the May 2012 meeting. Consideration should also be given to inviting the Minister responsible for climate change to hear this presentation.

7. Papers to note

Council members were invited to note papers eight, nine and ten as follows:

8. WG Programme for Government
9. WG Draft Budget 2012-13
10. Current consultations and legislation

ACTION: it was agreed that Welsh Government and WCVA would work together to draft a paper on the Wales legislative programme and the position of the third sector compact in this for the May 2012 meeting

The Minister thanked everyone for attending and for contributing to the hard work going on within the workstreams so far.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in Cardiff on Thursday 31 May 2012 at 10:30-12:00.

The draft agenda for this meeting will include;

- a report back from the capital asset transfer group,
- the third sector workforce group,
- feedback on welfare reform issues from the UK government group; and
- a paper on the Wales legislative programme.