

**Third Sector Partnership Council**  
**Additional meeting re: Welsh Government Consultation**  
**Welsh Government Offices, Cardiff**  
**10<sup>h</sup> July 2013**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Eleanor Marks	Welsh Government
Paul Dear	Welsh Government
Emily Forbes	Welsh Government
Samantha Cole	Welsh Government
Graham Benfield	WCVA
Win Griffiths	WCVA
Andi Lyden	Carers Trust
Fran Targett	Citizen's Advice Cymru
Daniel Carpenter	VAW
Philip Avery	WSA
Heidi Bennett	BAVO
Derek Walker	Wales Cooperative
Rob Taylor	Age Cymru
Beverley Hampson	Breast Cancer Care
Claire Lawson	AWNW
Graham Price	Cyfanfyd

<b>Apologies</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Barbara Natasegara	CJC
Jeanie Gray	Keep Wales Tidy
Joy Kent	Chwarae Teg
Margaret Jervis	WCVA
Paul Glaze	CWYVS
Salah Mohamed	Welsh Refugee Council
Maggi Dawson	WEA
John Puzey	Shelter Cymru
Derith Powell	CDC

1. Introduction

Eleanor Marks welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Consultation Process Update

Emily Forbes gave a brief update on the consultation process to date. Meetings already held included three pre-consultation workshops, three public consultation events, a volunteering seminar and a special meeting of the Funding and Compliance Sub-Committee (to discuss revision of the Code of Practice for Funding the Third Sector). A Reference Group had steered the consultation process in the early stages and members of that group were thanked for their input.

### 3. Welsh Government Presentation: Emerging Issues

Paul Dear gave a presentation on emerging issues and early indications based on responses made through the meetings and consultation events and early formal responses. These were presented with the strong caveat that the consultation would not close until the 8th August 2013 and therefore 'findings' at this stage were indicative and subject to change, but offered at this meeting to inform a discussion.

#### Infrastructure:

- WG approach is seen as too "top-down" and not clearly supportive of, or relevant to, local organisations and community resilience.
- Existing arrangements obscure the reality that the majority of TS Infrastructure funding goes to CVCs, VCs and local grants, via WCVA.
- A clear consensus on the continuing need for a national representative body.
- The allocation of funding between CVCs is based on a historic formula and is out of date.
- There is some, but not universal, appetite for a regional approach
- The proposal for a 10% innovation fund has had mixed reviews

#### Engagement:

- Considerable scepticism about the effectiveness of the TSPC and what outcomes it achieves
- Also concerns about whether it is adequately representative of the wider third sector.
- Again, a general sense that our approach to engagement is "top-down" and dominated by a relatively small number of big organisations.
- A range of organisations expressing an interest in stronger links with national networks and structures.
- Ongoing discussion about the respective roles of 'infrastructure' bodies and 'umbrella' (i.e. specialist) third sector support bodies.
- Considerable ask for more effective communication and feedback from TSPC members.
- Some support for regional meetings to encourage engagement with local groups. Queries around regional boundaries.
- More use of IT to make engagement more dynamic and wide-reaching. (Video conference/ Skype / social networking).
- Strong support for continuing Ministerial meetings ("2 meetings a year is better than none").
- Recognition that meetings need to be more outcome focused and timely.
- Some interest in other options such as regional meetings, more meetings with officials etc.

#### Local Compacts

- There seems to be support for the proposed approach to strengthen use of Local Compacts through enhanced guidance and monitoring.
- If this is confirmed at the end of the consultation we would NOT proceed with a Compacts Bill.

- The crucial role of Local Authorities is being highlighted throughout this process.

#### 4. Third Sector Paper - feedback from TSPC Consultation meeting

Graham Benfield presented a paper that provided feedback from a TSPC consultation meeting held the previous week which discussed Chapter 4 – Engagement. Key points can be summarised as:

- Engagement can be improved and strengthened
- There is a need for clear identification of shared goals and a common agenda, suggested via a ‘Programme for Action’

#### 5. Focused discussion on Chapter 4: Engagement

Welsh Government had prepared a paper for discussion on Chapter 4 of the consultation document ‘Continuity and Change’ that focused on ‘Engagement’. Comments made on post-it notes at the three public consultation events pertaining to this chapter had been collected together and typed up verbatim to give some understanding of the issues being raised throughout the consultation. The comments had been drawn together under the headings of:

- Engagement
- TSPC meeting
- Networks, participation and representation
- Feedback
- Accountability
- Regional Dimension
- Membership / design of workstreams
- New ways of engaging via workstreams
- Biannual Ministerial meetings
- Ideas for future Ministerial meetings

A detailed discussion followed items 3, 4, and 5, covering many different aspects of the three items.

The focus to begin with was on dialogue and interaction between the Third Sector and Ministers. It was suggested that there should be direct contact between a wider range of people with Ministers, but often there were difficulties in the practicalities of this interaction. There was a strategic role for the sector in its own organisation, via umbrella bodies to offer information, help and support to the organisations that needed it. but sometimes, these umbrella organisations were criticised for being ‘gatekeepers’.

It was noted that it would be difficult for 33,000 organisations to engage directly and that social networking could help support wider engagement. It was felt that there is a careful balancing act needed between criticisms of the ‘usual suspects’ accessing Ministers, and opening up wider access. There was a challenge presented in the relationship between umbrella bodies and

networks and other smaller organisations, in that sometimes umbrella bodies in their own right (such as Wales Scout Association) feel their voice isn't being represented and this causes a problem. The TSPC involves 200 organisations at the moment via the network membership and it was questioned as to how much further this could go if it was to remain practical?

The differences and similarities between engagement and support were highlighted. It was felt that engagement is about providing opportunities for people and organisations to contribute their views; support is needed in some cases where there is reluctance or a lack of capability to use the engagement structures.

It was suggested that the right engagement is not only directly with the Minister. Welsh Government officials act on behalf of Minister and there needs to be a rebalancing of the emphasis placed on engagement with the Minister and officials.

It was agreed that pre-meeting preparation was vital and that Ministerial meetings have varied in the past, with some being positive and others proving more difficult and less productive. It was agreed that planning meetings are essential to choose salient agenda points and that there should be a common purpose between Welsh Government and Third Sector. It was felt that the content of the meetings was important and that there should be no duplication across Ministerial meetings.

Eleanor Marks commented that the current Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty attended a scheduled third sector meeting on his first full day in office. Ministers are interested and there needs to be good engagement from both sides to ensure a positive future working relationship. There needs to be a mature, two way conversation based on trust and an open relationship from both sides in order to engage in conversation about real delivery and co-production.

The suggested *Programme for Action* was discussed as a way to identify common ground and enable priority setting for the sector with Government.

It was agreed that clearer remits for TSPC workstreams are needed that need to be outcome focused and timebound. A *Programme for Action* could work in practice alongside the Annual report on the Voluntary (Third) Sector Scheme.

It was suggested that a *Programme for Action* would need to identify issues for the sector as a whole, issues for parts of the sector, issues for particular organisations and issues where Welsh Government might take the lead, for example looking at how the Third Sector Team's resources could best be used. It was suggested that an internal officials group could raise awareness across government departments on Third Sector issues, and that key information could be included in Welsh Government induction processes.

Different ideas for the mechanics of how the TSPC meeting itself worked were shared, including longer meetings, moving the meetings around Wales and

holding more open public meetings. The idea of an executive group for the TSPC was questioned by third sector colleagues as having smaller meetings might feel more exclusive. It was explained that a small group of people to test ideas, share thoughts and drive things forward (like the Third Sector Reference group throughout the consultation process) could support the TSPC. In response, it was suggested that it would not be useful to put another layer between Welsh Government and Third Sector and that if Welsh Government wanted to consult with the sector, they could use WCVA for that function. If WCVA did not feel it is correct to answer broadly on behalf of the sector, they would hand it over to the correct person. It was suggested that CVCs trust WCVA to facilitate the right representation on issues and to share information more widely when needed.

A closing comment was made that the consultation was a positive process in the overall way it has developed and the sector felt quite optimistic about moving forward together.

It was agreed to hold a further additional meeting of the TSPC in September prior to the full TSPC meeting during November.