Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

REPORT

Innovation Advisory Council for Wales: Welsh Government engagement report

Summarises Welsh Government feedback on the Amplyfi and Cardiff University innovation reports.

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Context

Welsh Government recently commissioned two pieces of research through the Innovation Advisory Council for Wales (IACW): one on the innovation landscape in Wales, past, present and future, carried out by a team from Cardiff University; one on international innovation comparators, by a team from Amplyfi. This research was concluded at the end of March 2021, and IACW then presented a series of recommendations to Welsh Government. These recommendations, along with the full versions of the two research reports, are available on the IACW webpages.

The Innovation Team within Welsh Government is now in a period of stakeholder engagement, to hear opinions on the research, and to inform future decisions and strategy. There will be three formal stakeholder engagement sessions in total: one aimed internally within Welsh Government, one for the public sector, and one for the private sector.

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The event

We held the internal Welsh Government event on 5 May, and included around 70 colleagues from across several different departments. All participants had the opportunity to read the reports and recommendations in advance of the session.

The participants included representatives from:

- Economy, Skills and Natural Resources:
  - Business and Regions
  - Climate Change, Energy and Planning
  - Economic Infrastructure
  - Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning
  - The Welsh Government Office for Science
- Health and Social Services:
  - Technology and Transformation Directorate
- The Office of the First Minister:
  - International Relations and Trade
  - Welsh European Funding Office
- The Permanent Secretary's Group:
  - COVID-19 Recovery and Restart Directorate

Agenda

1. Welcome from Innovation Team
2. Introduction to the research by IACW
3. Presentation from Cardiff University team
4. Presentation from Amplyfi team
5. General discussion

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Key questions

The Innovation Team posed five key questions to participants in advance, to get the discussion started:

1. Do you feel this research makes the case for a new Innovation Strategy?
2. What is your reaction to the call for a single unified Welsh Government Innovation Strategy?
3. Do you think that there is the need for some sort of National Innovation Body in Wales?
4. Are there any key areas that you think the reports missed?
5. Are there any points in the research with which you strongly agree/disagree?

Key themes from the discussion

Integrated approach: There was strong appetite for an integrated Welsh Government innovation strategy, cutting across different departments, and feeding into several policy areas. This would hopefully then lead to a collective and cohesive government vision for the future of innovation in Wales.

Innovation ecosystem: Innovation, research and skills need to become Welsh Government priorities, with a focus on breaking down silos, and on building an innovation ecosystem.

Social investment: There was a desire to connect investment in innovation to jobs and economic outcomes – to demonstrate clearly that a strong innovation system leads to a stronger society.

Procurement: Several participants raised points around leveraging public sector procurement to support research, development and innovation. There were questions about how to build risk awareness rather than risk aversion in the public sector.

Incentives and quality bid writing: There was discussion around how to

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incentivise and reward innovation, and how to improve the quality and success-rate of bid writing and applications for funding.

Social innovation: Both the Cardiff and Amplyfi research pieces emphasised social innovation and sustainability. Participants were pleased to see references to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and to build links between these and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Feedback

If you have any feedback on the research, or on stakeholder engagement so far, please email **InnovationStrategy@gov.wales** to contribute to the discussion.

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