

EVALUATION OF MEASURES INTRODUCED IN CONNECTION WITH ECONOMIC SUMMITS

Summary

A range of actions is being undertaken and is proposed to evaluate the impact of measures taken forward in connection with the Economic Summits held between 2008 and 2010. The Council is asked to note progress and comment on proposals for the over-arching evaluation.

The Issues

1. There have been various elements to the evaluation of the Summit process. Some of these remain in progress, and the final element, the overall evaluation of outcomes, is yet to start.

Summit process and delivery of initiatives

2. Evaluation of the Summit process was discharged through seeking the views of attendees and these views have been reflected in the proposals developed for the Council for Economic Renewal.
3. The final Economic Summit in May was presented with a paper which gave a snapshot of progress at the time with the various Summit measures. A copy of that paper, for background information, is attached.

Evaluation of major measures

4. The two largest novel initiatives (REACT and PROACT) taken forward under the aegis of the Summits are subject to their own evaluations which have recently been published or are nearing completion.
5. In respect of ReACT, key conclusions have included:
 - The programme is generally regarded as highly successful, offering individually and economically relevant support at what is widely seen as a difficult time for individuals;
 - Aims and objectives of the programme appear to have been met, and in a changing and uncertain economic environment remain valid for a successor programme;
 - Results identified by the evaluation appear to support wider Assembly objectives, such as achieving the 'One Wales' target rate of employment of 80%;
 - The evaluation considers a range of 'hard' and 'soft' impacts from ReAct. There are significant challenges in quantifying the overall position, but the report concludes that 'hard' benefits (e.g. redundant people getting new jobs more quickly, or better jobs, because of ReAct) are likely to be broadly in line with cost per

beneficiary (around £2,000), with a wide range of 'soft' benefits arising in addition.

6. A full evaluation of Proact is underway and nearing completion. Discussions with the contractors have suggested that the results are very encouraging. Early indications are that the support provided has had a range of beneficial impacts with participating companies and is meeting the original key objectives of the scheme.

Over-arching evaluation

7. In addition to the evaluation of the individual elements within the programme, it is also important to consider the combined effect, focusing on the question of how far outcomes have differed from those that would have occurred without the programme.
8. Such an over-arching evaluation is challenging since it is difficult to determine the counterfactual. The approach to be adopted will combine both "top down" and "bottom up" methodologies. The former will essentially attempt to assess the likely effect on high level economic indicators (including employment and GDP) through a combination of modelling and comparisons with other parts of the UK. The latter will take the impacts are reported from the monitoring of individual projects, combine them and adjust them to take account of deadweight, displacement, and multiplier effects.
9. The evaluation will be managed as part of the Economic Research Advisory Panel's economic research programme, and will be undertaken on an independent basis and peer-reviewed.
10. This work only becomes possible as official statistics become available covering the overall course of the recession. We currently anticipate that it will be most appropriate to seek to appoint contractors to carry out the evaluation in the early part of 2011-12.
11. Given the complexity of the scale and nature of the programmes and projects covered by the work of the Summit it is intended that this research study will be split into two stages: first, an assessment of the data availability and feasibility of a full evaluation and, second conducting the full evaluation (if considered feasible and expected to provide value for money).
12. It is recognised that this evaluation raises a number of challenges, including the extensive and diverse nature of the activities, assessing the contributions of the Summits in bringing forward or extending existing activities (i.e. measuring the additional and attributable impacts of the Summit actions), and collecting appropriate data which could be sufficiently flexible to pick up real impacts of activities of very different scales, characteristics and occurring at different timescales.

13. The key objectives of the first stage are likely to include:
- review the aims and scope of the interventions, including changes to existing programmes, their economic rationale(s), and provide a description of activities, and the trends in activities, conducted to date;
 - assess the coverage and suitability of the data currently being collected for use in an economic evaluation, including consideration of issues such as the quality of the available data and the extent of any missing data;
 - consider where additional data collection would be required providing an assessment of appropriate and cost-effective methodological options to achieve such information collection requirements, including the potential use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. This could also, for example, involve the use of pilot surveys or interviews to test the feasibility of alternative data collection methodologies;
 - to consider the data needed (and data collection methodologies) to meet the requirements of best-practice economic evaluations in estimating the net economic impacts – taking account of relevant issues such as additionality, displacement and substitution, and also covering aspects such as addressing potential double counting (where relevant) and the development of suitable counterfactuals in assessing the economic impacts;
 - develop a coherent evaluation framework and methodology for conducting the economic evaluation in stage 2; covering the issues above, with a coherent and cost-effective strategy for data collection and setting out the approach(es) could be employed in the economic analysis of the intervention impacts. This could, for example, include the use of micro data linking and / or model simulations;
 - identify other issues of relevance in conducting a full economic evaluation and assessment of value for money.
14. Assuming that a decision is taken to proceed to a full evaluation, this is likely to cover the following issues:
- undertake the collection of any additional required data – scheduled to examine potential differences in the timing of behaviours and impacts arising from the interventions;
 - develop an economic baseline to assess the overall economic impacts;
 - estimating the net economic impacts of the interventions, taking account of additionality, deadweight, displacement, substitution, the counterfactual, and addressing double-counting issues (where relevant), identifying the impacts attributable to the specific recession interventions;
 - assess the efficiency of the delivery and targeting of the relevant interventions;
 - determine the value for money of the specific activities and interventions, where appropriate benchmarking the outputs and outcomes against other similar interventions elsewhere;

- consider the extent to which the original aims and objectives have been / are being met, and the lessons learned in terms of the most effective elements of the interventions;
- examination of other relevant issues emerging from the stage 1 assessment.

Recommendations

15. The Council should note the progress that has been made and to comment on the proposals for the over-arching evaluation

ANNEX: WALES ECONOMIC SUMMITS – REVIEW OF PROGRESS

Background

The first all-Wales Summit gave the opportunity for all partners to hear collectively the issues being faced by Wales. It was agreed that the Summit would pull together a full response programme to help businesses and individuals cope with the economic downturn. As part of this the Summits received a regular update paper which covered details of progress on each of these programmes.

As an early step to beginning to evaluate the effectiveness of these programmes and the Summits, the paper attached outlines what measures were put in place and what we did, along with details of how the Summit may consider commissioning a longer term economic study.

Introduction - Establishing the Summits

What we said we would do.

Assembly Government Ministers established the series of Economic Summits to “unite Government, business and trade unions in a determined response to overcome the testing times that Wales and the Welsh economy would face during the recession”.

What we did

Establishing the Economic Summits put Wales in the vanguard across the UK in its response to the recession. There have been ten Summits so far, held in different locations across Wales. While no formal evaluation of the role of the Summits has been commissioned, the feedback which we have received from attendees (which is covered in a separate paper) has been overwhelmingly positive. The Summits received significant media coverage and served to reassure the people of Wales that the Welsh Assembly Government, businesses and other Social partners were willing to respond corporately to challenging times. In addition, one of the benefits emerging from the Summits has been a demonstration of a very effective form of partnership working and the learning from this experience is being used to inform the future development of social partnership.

Tackling the Challenges

What we said we would do

The first all-Wales Summit gave the opportunity for all partners to hear collectively the issues being faced by Wales. It was agreed that the Summit would pull together a full response programme to help businesses and individuals cope with the economic downturn. Activities to be focussed on:-

- Working with the UK Government to implement UK wide measures
- Improving intelligence between businesses and government
- Creating a specific banking forum to help with advice to businesses
- Improving procurement processes and introduce faster payments to suppliers
- Reviewing our support to Businesses
- Supporting businesses and workers threatened with redundancy
- Ensuring EU Convergence Funding s having maximum impact

- Looking at capital programmes to bring forward construction opportunities

What we did

The Summit received regular updates on the economic and financial situation in Wales and listened to front line businesses and Trade Union representatives about the potential challenges facing the economy including the outlook for tourism, the outlook for the financial, manufacturing, industrial, business and Third sectors. It also considered the proposed actions from the Welsh Assembly Government to tackle some of these challenges which centred on:-

- Procurement
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Energy Efficiency
- Skills and Training
- Funding
- Business and Property rates

Since the early days of the Summits, each meeting received an Update Paper which covered detailed progress across a wide range of projects since the last meeting. At the last Summit in Llanelli on 11 February, the Deputy First Minister invited key stake holders to work with the Welsh Assembly Government in providing a shorter and more strategic evaluation and overview of the Summit measures and what they have achieved.

A working group convened by the Welsh Assembly Government met subsequently to consider the way forward. The view of stakeholders was that the regular update reports had become too lengthy and detailed to fulfil their original purpose and that it would be helpful, instead, to have a high level strategic look back at the main measures which had emerged which were

linked more closely to the Summits themselves. The group also felt that there would be merit in commissioning a longer term economic study, perhaps by Economic Research Advisory Panel (ERAP), which looked at the effectiveness of the Summit measures in helping to combat the recession. This professional study would need to be completed over a longer timescale but the group felt that in many cases it was simply too early to evaluate outcomes adequately.

This paper does not, therefore, attempt to encompass all the activities that have been referred to in the Summits and have been included in the Update Papers. Instead it seeks to cover the major activities which arose directly from the Summits themselves. Links to sources of more detailed information are included wherever possible.

Major Activities

a) Working with the UK Government

What we said we would do

“Ministers and officials from the Assembly Government will work closely with the Secretary of State for Wales and the UK Government to implement UK-wide measures, as well as continuing discussions with Scottish and Northern Ireland counterparts.”

What we did

The Secretary of State for Wales has attended each of the Summits so far and, at each Summit, has briefed the meeting on developments at a UK level. The Secretary of State has also had the opportunity to listen at first hand to the attendees on matters which are the responsibility of the UK Government and so has been well placed to participate in discussions.

b) Skills and Training

What we said we would do

“We will look to support businesses and workers who are threatened with redundancy.”

“We will expand the support available through our flagship programmes”

What we did

The Welsh Assembly Government works closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to implement programmes to help unemployed and those at risk of unemployment. The Director for Wales for the Department of Work and Pensions attends the Economic Summits regularly.

ProAct - Unique to Wales, [ProAct](#) provides up to £2,000 per employee for training and a further £2,000 wage subsidy to firms who are on short-time working. Introduced in January 2009 for 15 months, the ESF funded scheme has been continued to end June 2010. By end April, nearly 10,000 workers in 218 firms were supported by ProAct.

Education and Learning – 82% of 16 year olds stayed on in education at 6th forms and FE colleges in September 2009. This followed an additional £8m funding for about an extra 2,500 places. The ‘staying on’ rate is 3% points higher than in 2008. Additional funding has been provided to the coming academic year so that fewer young people leave school with no job prospects.

In addition to this more young people were able to enter University education. Although official (HESA) figures for 2009/10 HE enrolments will not be available under January 2011, UCAS figures on accepted applications for 2009 entry provide an indication of the direction of trends. These figures indicate that there was an increase of 12% in accepted applicants to Welsh HE institutions in 2009 compared with the previous year, whereas in England the comparable increase was 5%. There was an 11% increase in Welsh domiciles accepted to Welsh HE institutions. 71% of successful Welsh domiciled applicants were accepted by Welsh HE institutions, 1 percentage point higher than in 2008 and 19 percentage points higher than in 1997.

Apprenticeships - [Pathways to Apprentices](#) was introduced in September 2009 to meet the demand from young people wanting an apprenticeship but unable to find an employer. 1,736 have benefitted from college based apprenticeship training. Over 400 employers are providing quality work placements. It is a priority is to find these young people an employer to continue their apprenticeship this summer. Pathways to Apprenticeships will be continued on a similar basis in September 2010. Colleges are being encouraged to best fit the 2010 / 11 programme with the needs of local industry and employment requirements.

The Young Recruits Programme - provided a wage incentive to employers to take on a young apprenticeship. Labour market conditions have depressed demand but 303 employers have applied for support to end March. The programme will continue throughout 2010 and 2011. [The Young Recruits Programme](#)

Young People and Work – provision of the ESF funded [Skill Build](#) provision has been expanded to provide young people (and adults) with training and work experience to develop their employability skills to return to work. Comparative figures for numbers engaged on Skill Build from 1 August to 18 March 2008 / 09 and 2009 / 10 show an increase in participation of 1982 in the first 8 months of the contract year.

The Young Person's Guarantee - led by the [Department for Work and Pensions](#) with support from the Assembly Government is providing work and training for 18 - 24 year olds who have been out of work for more than six months. 28 projects have so far been approved for Wales under the Future Jobs Fund. The total number of jobs created – including conditional extensions of early bids – is now approximately 10,600 and the total amount of funding they will potentially attract to Wales is over £60m. Additional funding has been made available to support the training elements of the Young Person's Guarantee in 2010 – 11.

Go Wales - Since January 2009, this ESF funded scheme has supported 1423 work placements and tasters for Welsh graduates. [Go Wales](#)

Redundant and Unemployed Workers - [ReAct](#) participants stand at over 15,000. When introduced ReAct was funded to assist 2,577 people each year. The 489% increase in assistance during the recession was made possible by significant additional Assembly Government investment on top of that planned for and £24m ESF. Employer demand for the recruitment subsidy has met profiled take up and an internal evaluation of delivery between October 2008 and February 2010 shows that 72.8% of participants have found new employment as a result. ReAct has worked in tandem with Jobcentre Plus' Rapid Response to Redundancy Team, Wales TUC and Careers Wales. Careers Wales' capability has been boosted. An example of this was Corus-Llanwern in April 2009 where Jobcentre Plus worked with A4E and other partners to deliver awareness session to 'at-risk' employees. Feedback was very positive and resulted in over 300 employees being helped

into alternative employment, self employment, future learning opportunities and retirement.

DWP's recruitment subsidy, 'Golden Hello', for the out-of-work for six months or more, has been complemented by a training offer available through Skill Build.

Skills and Business - Providing practical support to businesses to weather the recession storm has been a top priority. 'Skills Growth Wales' has been introduced to provide accelerated training support for firms coming out of the recession. The first projects will be underway in May.

The Workforce Development Programme has been expanded and the grant intervention rate for SMEs, increased from 50 to 70%, increasing the training help businesses can receive. Since April 2009 2,150 businesses have joined the programme (42 per week) covering 93,197 employers. Other business skills support services have also been extended and expanded like the Basic Skills Employers Pledge and Leadership and Management Workshops.

New targeted programmes, backed by ESF, have been introduced, covering sector skills, development, leadership and management, Foundation Degrees and postgraduate research. Universities have been provided with extra resource by HEFCW to extend their services to Welsh businesses.

Local Employment Partnerships – The Welsh Assembly Government, Cardiff County Council, Jobcentre Plus, John Lewis and A4E has helped over 100 people into employment as part of the Local Employment Partnership approach in Cardiff. The Local Employment Partnership approach involves employers supporting Jobcentre Plus' priority customers into employment. Other examples include a North Wales branch of Debenhams employing 45 priority customers and Tesco in Newtown employing 80 priority customers. Since September 2009 10,317 people have found work with employers through Local Employment Partnership arrangements

Support for the newly unemployed – DWP have offered access to a one hour group information session for those needing more support who are newly unemployed. In addition sessions have been delivered by the Recruitment and Employment Confederation and its commercial members, providing coaching sessions for those customers with a professional and executive background. DWP have also organised specific awareness days in Llanelli and Cardiff where over 150 people from quality advice sessions, including those delivered by Jobcentre Plus in-work Psychologists.

c) Bank Funding

What we said we would do

“Welsh Ministers will create a specific forum for the Welsh banking and finance sector to see what additional advice and support can be given to Welsh businesses”

What we did

We have introduced an initiative to support business with access to financial support and advice. Working with the accountancy professionals, we have agreed support for businesses requiring professional help to sharpen a business plan or develop a financial diagnosis. This is delivered through the Single Investment Fund. Further information can be found at [Single Investment Fund](#)

In conjunction with banks the Assembly Government produced “A Guide to Accessing Bank Finance”. The guide, aimed primarily at SMEs, existing business and start ups provides practical information and advice to optimise chances of success in applying for bank funding. The guide also includes a summary of the criteria banks apply in considering funding applications and is an initial demonstration of cooperative working with the Banks. A series of 24 workshops have been arranged throughout Wales for 2010 to complement the

'Guide to Accessing Bank Finance' to introduce entrepreneurs and business owners to the basic principles of accessing business finance, the financing options available to companies in Wales and to equip them with the basic knowledge to successfully approach finance organisations, especially, but not exclusively, banks. ([FS4B](#))

Concerns were raised by stakeholders in a number of Summits about the levels of funding which banks were making available to businesses in Wales and the sectors in which they were prepared to lend, were raised by stakeholders in a number of summits. As a result of these concerns, the Welsh Assembly Government held a series of introductions with a number of banks and also invited them to attend the summits to discuss the issue. Professor Colyn Gardner was commissioned by the summit to look at the position more closely and he reported back on two occasions. The discussions at the summit helped each side to understand the position of the other and gave the banks the opportunity to explain constraints as well as allowing businesses to air their concerns. The Welsh Assembly Government continues to discuss with the Banking sector ways in which businesses can be helped to access finance.

d) Business Support

What we said we would do

We will review our business support to ensure that it is flexible enough to respond to the changing economic environment.

What we did

In addition to the measures outlined under the Banking and Finance sector:

Weathering the Storm - Regional seminars, entitled 'Weathering the Storm', were held during March 2009 to provide information and advice to businesses

in Wales on the support available to help them during the economic downturn. The events included specialist speakers, Q&A sessions and information on specific support. Information fairs were run in tandem to provide opportunities for 1:1 sessions with DE&T and DCELLS relationship managers. A suite of information on the support available was prepared for the seminars including fact sheets on key areas of support, including innovation, start up and environmental and sustainability. To date 13,838 'Weathering the Storm' fact sheets have been downloaded from the [Flexible Support 4 Business website](#).

Enterprise Networks – This ERDF funded project will involve a £25 million investment to support strategic supply chains in key sectors of industry ensuring Welsh businesses and economy benefit from the opportunities in large scale investments such as the decommissioning of nuclear power stations and development of off shore wind farms. Support is also available to SMEs individually and in 'lots' to bid collectively for public sector contracts. A key tool that is being enhanced and developed is [Sell2Wales](#) which will improve support to Welsh business and the award winning xchangewales electronic procurement programme which will improve efficiency, increase productivity, stimulate greater collaboration and reduce costs. The project is also supporting the delivery of [Access to Finance Workshops](#), these build on the booklet 'A Guide to Accessing Bank Finance' produced by the Assembly Government in conjunction with the banks. To date the Enterprise Networks project has assisted 1531 enterprises, created 273 jobs and helped safeguard 746 jobs.

Business Innovation Support (BIS) - Five [Innovation and eBusiness](#) road shows were held at various locations in Wales in February and March 2010 to help ensure that businesses are aware of the wide range of advice and support services available from DE&T Technology and Innovation teams. The road shows were well attended with more than 75% of the 550 delegates coming from the private sector. In the year to date the team have dealt with more than 2080 technical enquiries from businesses and individuals. 248 businesses have benefitted from in-depth reviews (Enterprises Assisted). 195 businesses / individuals have received Intellectual Property (IP) advice. 34

businesses / individuals have filed new IP as a result of this ERDF funded Business Innovation support scheme. 32 Business Innovation events have been held with more than 1300 attendees. Technical input with SIF R&D applications has helped clients receive more than £38.4m grant funding, leveraging in more than £10.2m private sector investment.

International Trade - More than 1,000 businesses have received advice and assistance about International Trade since the beginning of April 2009 with over 200 having participated in overseas trade missions. Others have received assistance from their International Trade Advisor and accessed consultancy support in Wales or Overseas. Companies of all sizes from a broad range of sectors in all parts of Wales have benefitted from support.

Almost 200 of the companies that received support reported that they had secured new business from overseas customers in 2009/10. The value of this new business is, at just under £174m, on a par with that achieved in 2008/09. Of the companies reporting new business, 40 have secured orders of more than £1 million.

Welsh companies reported successes in many markets worldwide. The traditional markets of the USA, the EU and the Middle East feature strongly as would be expected but there have also been successes in high growth potential markets such as Brazil, Russia, India and China.

Business Rate Relief - Following the first Economic Summit, Ministers agreed to raise the issue of empty property rates at the UK Government level and also assess the cost implications of business rate freeze holiday. These discussions contributed to empty property relief changes that were announced by the Chancellor and adopted in Wales, the implementation of business rate deferment scheme and also subsequent increases to the small business rate relief scheme.

e) Funding

What we said we would do

Introduce “£150 million investment fund, operated through Finance Wales, to provide commercial investment to SMEs across Wales.”

What we did

Wales is the first UK region and among the first in Europe to establish a [JEREMIE](#) fund worth £150m, supported by ERDF funding and the European Investment Bank. Launched by the First Minister in April 2009, Finance Wales invested a total of £24m last year which included £17m in 119 investments from the JEREMIE fund. Finance Wales’ current investment activity and approve deal pipeline stands at over £33m. It began making investments from JEREMIE last May and is seeing continued strong demand for commercial investment

European Funding – The commitment of EU funds has been accelerated and by the end of April 2010 nearly £1.2 billion of EU funds (59% of EU funds available) had been awarded to 164 projects, helping to provide over 33,000 opportunities for businesses and almost 480,000 employment and training opportunities for individuals.

This commitment represents a total project investment of over £2.4 billion, 30% (£735 million) of which is helping business; £1.1 billion (44%) individuals; and 25% (£595m) communities, environment and transport.

Together, EU funded projects, including flagship projects such as ProAct, ReAct, Business Start-Up and JEREMIE, have already assisted over 106,370 participants, of which some 10,390 have been helped into work and 36,115 supported to gain qualifications; while 3,625 (gross) jobs and 1,000 new enterprises have been created.

In the summer of 2009, against the backdrop of the falling value of sterling against the Euro and public and private sector match funding pressures, we successfully negotiated increases to programme intervention rates with the European Commission resulting in what is effectively a £267m reduction in the level of co-financing or match funding required. Programming changes were also agreed to enable a further 20 thousand unemployed people to be assisted to gain employment.

f) Brought Forward Capital/ Infrastructure

What we said we would do

“We will bring forward capital budgets to implement works which could commence with short lead times and offer local employments opportunities”.

What we did

The capital funding brought forward into 2009/10 relates to projects in the areas of:

- Health and Social Services (£29.2m)
- Affordable Housing (£28m)
- Education (£25m) and
- The Economy, transport and Regeneration (£25.9m)

Recipients of funding have been encouraged to employ local labour wherever possible and previous Summit reports have outlined the results for some areas.

Affordable Housing (£28m)

£9.5m of the £28m was spent in 2009-2010 on the Welsh Assembly Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme which since it started in 2008 has

resulted in 609 adults and 319 children being able to stay in their homes in Wales

g) Housing

What we said we would do

“We will release land for affordable housing shortly with an initial tranche of eight sites”.

What we did

Each of the initial tranche sites have now had Registered Social Landlords (RSL) appointed to them by the Local Authorities. DE&T are in detailed dialogue with these RSL's to facilitate a transfer to them as soon as is feasible, taking into account outside criteria such as planning; RSL financial arrangements; and legal processes.

A total of £12m brought forward capital into 2008-09 for the Social Housing Grant resulted in 477 adults and 253 children being able to stay in their homes. SCIF funding received resulted in 200 additional housing units and assisted 25 private sector developers. Further programmes have been agreed and a three year programme (until 2011) will provide up to 500 additional affordable homes across Wales.

SCIF 1 funding of £42m (15m in 2008/9, £16m in 2009/10 and £11m in 2010/11) was awarded to make the most of opportunities to meet increasing housing demand and to act quickly to take advantage of new properties and land, bringing with it the added benefits of helping maintain employment in the building industry. Funding in 2008/9 resulted in 200 additional housing units and assisted 25 private sector developers.

Strategic Capital Investment Funding 2 of £20m was awarded in 2009 for affordable housing and a housing market support package. This money has now been allocated to Local Authorities and should result in between 400-500 new housing units being delivered. The money must be spent in 2010-11. Housing schemes on two of the initial tranche of eight WAG sites to be released have been funded through SCIF 2.

h) Energy Efficiency

What we said we would do

“Through the Green Jobs Strategy deliver enhanced resource efficiency through FS4B”.

What we did

Following amendments to the EU Structural Fund Regulations arising from the EU Recovery Plan, we successfully agreed changes to the Structural Funds programmes 2007–2013 in Wales to allow up to £34m of EU funding to support energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy generation in low income housing.

i) Procurement and Payments

What we said we would do

“We will be announcing improvements to our procurement process for SMEs, including faster supplier payments across the public sector”.

What we did

Increase the proportion of payments made within 10 days, and ensure the 30 day target is met consistently – to date the Welsh Assembly

Government paid 90.1% of its invoices within ten days and to date local Authorities are making 56% of their payments within ten days and 93% within 30 days. We reviewed the processes for making payments to Local Authorities to increase cash flow and increase the speed of payments with the result that the Welsh Assembly Government has brought forward Revenue Support Grant payments to local Authorities to 5 working days per month.

Maximise procurement opportunities - the [Sell2Wales](#) portal has been extended so that the successful prime contractors that win large contracts will be able to advertise contract opportunities for their second and third tier suppliers – the Sell2Wales tier 1 portal has gone live with six major prime contract holding companies registered on the portal and three tier 1 notices placed advertising contract opportunities for their second and third tier suppliers.

Improve Clarity and Consistency of Procurement across Public sector – We have made provision for additional training for the wider Welsh public sector on the benefits of SME-friendly procurement and social benefits. Value Wales is currently reviewing the alignment of [xChangeWales](#) training programme with Value Wales training and people development programme to ensure consistency across the Welsh public sector. There has also been an increase in the numbers of procurement practitioners from across the Welsh public sector achieving accreditation through the Value Wales CIPS cohort programme.

Deliver a Trading and ePayment pilot for Community and Town Councils through One Voice Wales – The second trial period of the Online Trading Information System (OTIS) commenced on 2 May and a positive report is due shortly. Commercial implications remain under discussion.

Review how further acceleration of sustainable procurement practices across the public service would bring forward added social, economic and environmental benefits - the unique Wales only Supported Factories and Businesses Framework is now operating. A new revised Community

Benefits procurement guide has also been published and we have delivered 'Make it Happen' courses which focuses on the use of the Sustainable Risk Assessment template which is now being used widely across the Welsh Assembly Government and Local Authorities.

Next Steps

For the future we hope to further develop our evaluation of the measures implemented as a result of the Summit as suggested earlier in the paper. This professional study, if agreed, will be completed over a longer timescale and the outcomes reported to our social partners at the Business Partnership Council.

Useful Contacts

ProAct

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/foremployers/proact/?lang=en>

ReAct

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learners/worklearning/gettingbacktowork/redundancyaction/?lang=en>

Pathways to Apprenticeship

<http://wales.gov.uk/publications/accessinfo/drnewhomepage/educationdrs2/educationdrs2009/feiapprenticeships/?lang=en>

The Young Recruits Programme

<http://www.ccwales.org.uk/GetDocument.aspx?DatabaseID=2&DocID=76622>

Skill Build

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learners/worklearning/gettingbacktowork/?lang=en#named1>

The Young Persons Guide

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learners/worklearning/gettingbacktowork/?lang=en#named1>

Go Wales

www.gowales.co.uk

Single Investment Fund

<http://fs4b.wales.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?site=230&itemId=5001457744&type=RESOURCES>

Business Wales

<http://fs4b.wales.gov.uk/bdotg/action/home?site=230>

Sell2Wales

<https://www.sell2wales.co.uk/>

Access to Finance Workshops

<http://ms.fs4b.wales.gov.uk/publications/campaigns/ABF/Access-home3-en-microsite.html>

Innovation and eBusiness

<https://www.welshvents.co.uk/event/innovationebusinessforwales2010>

JEREMIE

<http://www.eif.europa.eu/jeremie/>

xChangewales

<http://www.xchangewales.co.uk/>