

**Minister for Housing and Local Government meeting with Wales Council for
Voluntary Action and Third Sector representatives**

30 September 2019, 14.00-15.00

Caernarfon Meeting Room, CP2

Attendee list

Julie James AM, Minister for Housing & Local Government

Third Sector

Judith Stone	WCVA
Dave Cook	WCVA
Noreen Blanluet	Co-Production Network for Wales
Peter Williams	Development Trust Association (DTA) Of Wales
Jocelle Lovell	Wales Co-operative Centre
John Puzey	Shelter Cymru
Ross Thomas	Tai Pawb
Matthew Kennedy	Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru
Iwan Thomas	Planed
Rachel Marshall	Development Trust Association (DTA) Of Wales
Bryn Hall	Clinks
Matt Dicks	Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru
Eli Crouch Puzey	Welsh Women's Aid
Helene Hayes	Citizens Advice Cymru

Welsh Government officials

Paula James	Local Government Transformation & Partnerships
James Burgess	Housing Supply
Simon White	Housing Strategy & Legislation
Siwan Gwyndaf	Housing Strategy & Legislation
Kieran Harris	Private Secretary

Apologies

Ian Davy	Third Sector Support Wales
Paul Glaze	Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services

Welcome

The Minister for Housing and Local Government welcomed the attendees to the meeting.

The Minister invited the first agenda item.

Agenda item 1: Innovative models of community housing in Wales

Peter Williams (DTA) thanked the Minister for this opportunity and talked through the main points of the paper with regard to Co-operative and Community Led Housing.

The Minister confirmed she is very keen to further explore the barriers, issues and practical solutions to innovative models of community housing in Wales. The Minister gave a brief update on how the land Welsh Government owns is to be managed differently and to be considered in terms of its social value, rather than being sold to the highest bidder. The Minister is keen to work through practical examples regarding live sites.

The Minister went on to describe some of the key elements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, in particular that the Bill will enable that Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) be established regionally, by regulation. These bodies are 'corporate' in that they are legal bodies which can enter into contracts, receive grants and employ staff.

The Bill will enable Ministers to create CJCs to deliver functions in the following areas.

- Strategic land use planning
- Transport
- Economic Development
- Improving Education

The Minister went on to explain how CJCs will benefit models of community housing by enabling the sharing of scarce skills and resources amongst local authorities, and also enabling consideration of housing models at a regional, rather than local authority, level. This will help drive more a more strategic approach to planning and exploring more transformative models and solutions.

The discussion went on to explore the importance of housing as an integral part of thriving communities, including the need to retain people and skills to ensure the long term sustainability of communities. Access to funding was an important consideration in achieving this.

The Minister stated she is very interested in further exploring the social models of housing allocation policy. The Minister stated that she had received useful tutoring from Welsh Government officials on the financial options for housing, and she offered this tutoring to the Third Sector colleagues in the meeting.

Action: Financial tutoring from officials for Third Sector colleagues

Concerns were raised by attendees about the difficulties they have experienced in trying to have detailed conversations with Welsh Government Planners about community led housing.

Action: James Burgess to arrange a meeting with WG Planning officials re Community led housing

There was then discussion about a self-build scheme launching in the New Year and the Minister stated she was interested in hearing more about this, and also keen for a further discussion on how to get dilapidated houses back into use.

Agenda item 2: Housing as a Human Right

This paper was introduced by Ross Thomas (Tai Pawb), John Puzey (Shelter Cymru) and Matt Dicks (Chartered Institute of Housing). It referenced the '*Feasibility Report on Incorporation of the Right to Adequate Housing*' by Dr Simon Hoffman, Swansea University.

It was noted that the Minister had attended the launch of the 'Housing as a Human Right' in the Pierhead Building, and also that the Minister was due to meet Dr Simon Hoffman, the author of the cited report, on 15 October.

The request from colleagues at the meeting was that Welsh Government seeks to incorporate the Human Right to Housing in Welsh law.

The Minister stated that she will be discussing this with the Counsel General, but that it was unlikely for there to be a legislative opportunity during the next 18 months due to a full legislative calendar, including Brexit related legislation. The Minister, however, would discuss two areas where there might be an opportunity to include the Human Right to Housing.

If it was concluded that there was no opportunity to include the Human Right to Housing in the current legislative timetable, the Minister confirmed she would consider recommending as a manifesto commitment.

Action: Minister for Housing and Local Government and Counsel General to discuss the possibility of including the Human Right to Housing within the existing legislative timetable.

In the meantime, the Minister confirmed she would be happy to support the requirement 'to have regard to' housing as a human right in other considerations.

Agenda item 3: Co-production and involvement

This item was led by Noreen Blanluet from the Co-Production Network for Wales. Noreen asked the Minister for a statement on the implementation of co-production and involvement by local government.

The Minister stated that the upcoming Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill changes the performance regime for local authorities as the current audit-based approach is not effective and the new regime introduces peer reviews, self-assessment and a more co-productive approach. The Minister also described how citizen engagement and co-production by citizens would be part of that process, in addition to seeking best practice from across the globe.

The Minister also described how the regulations for CJs are being co-produced with local government for the four mandated areas.

The Minister said she would welcome feedback on the draft Bill and ideas on co-producing guidance.

Closing the meeting

The Minister thanked all colleagues for attending the meeting and for the papers, and confirmed her desire to continue to work with them on the items raised.