

Finance Sub Group of the Partnership Council for Wales

Thursday, 15 July 2021

11:30-13:00

MS Teams

Minutes

Welsh Government Ministers

Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government – Chair

Welsh Local Government Association

Cllr Carol Clement-Williams (Neath Port Talbot)

Cllr Aled Davies (Powys)

Cllr Anthony Hunt (Torfaen)

Cllr Andrew Morgan (Rhondda Cynon Taf)

Cllr Mark Pritchard (Wrexham)

Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn (Gwynedd)

Police and Crime Commissioners

Peter Curran – Chief Finance Officer, South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner

Welsh Local Government Association officials

Dr Chris Llewelyn – Chief Executive, WLGA

Jon Rae – Director of Resources, WLGA

Nigel Aurelius – Torfaen (Chief Finance Officer)

Welsh Government officials

Reg Kilpatrick – Director General, COVID Crisis Coordination

Judith Cole – Deputy Director, Local Government Finance Policy & Sustainability

Simon Edwards – Local Government Finance Policy & Sustainability

Debra Carter – Deputy Director, Local Government Finance Reform

Matt Wellington – Budget & Government Business

APOLOGIES

Cllr Rob Stewart (Swansea)

Cllr Paul Miller (Pembrokeshire)

Dafydd Llywelyn – Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner

Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

1. The Minister for Finance and Local Government (the Minister) welcomed new member, Cllr Aled Davies, to the group and noted her thanks to Peter Fox and Alun Michael for their contributions to the group over a number of years. Apologies were recorded for Cllr Rob Stewart and PCC Dafydd Llywelyn.

Item 2: Minutes and Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

2. The minutes from the last meeting were agreed.

Item 3: Minister's update

3. The Minister provided an update on budget planning including Welsh Government priorities and key dates, with the draft budget and provisional settlement planned for announcement on 20 and 21 December respectively, and the final budget and settlement being published on 1 March.
4. On Financial Reform, the Minister confirmed that specific issues would be brought to this group, as well as various supporting groups at officer level, and reiterated her offer of a technical briefing.
5. **Action: Officials to recirculate the *Summary of Findings* on financial reform and to gauge interest for a potential technical briefing.**
6. The group discussed the potential for a settlement funding formula review and the Minister confirmed that the Welsh Government would look at this if local government collectively agree through the WLGA that they want a review of the formula.

Item 4: WLGA update

7. The WLGA presented a paper outlining the modelled financial pressures facing local government through to 2023-24 and, in particular, the costs local government continued to face, as a result of COVID. The Minister committed to continue the hardship fund for the remainder of 2021-22.
8. **Action: Welsh Government officials to circulate a note on the use of the hardship fund on enforcement activities.**

Item 5: Distribution Sub Group (DSG) Report

9. The Minister recorded her thanks to two long-standing members of the DSG: Dilwyn Williams and Andrews Stephens who had recently retired from their positions in local government.
10. Welsh Government officials provided an update on the work of the DSG and the WLGA confirmed that a discussion with local government leaders regarding a potential settlement formula review was due to take place the day after the

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meeting. Cllr Mark Pritchard noted some concerns with the current formula, particularly the distribution of the Non-Domestic Rates Pool.

11. Action: Cllr Pritchard to write to the Minister setting out his concerns.

Item 6: Police and Crime Commissioners' update

12. Peter Curran presented a paper outlining the pressures facing Police Forces in Wales and, in addition, touched on other pressures such as the apprenticeship levy and CCTV cameras funding.

Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business

13. Cllr Pritchard queried why a bid for funding for flood defences in Wrexham had been unsuccessful.

14. Action: The Minister to raise with the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd

Close