

Third Sector Partnership Council
2 November 2020
Teams Microsoft meeting
Meeting Note

Attendees:

Jane Hutt AM – Deputy Minister and Chief Whip (DMCW)
Ruth Marks - Chief Executive, WCVA
Anna Nicholl - WCVA
Ben Lloyd – WCVA
Felicite Walls - WCVA
Fiona Harris - WCVA
Karen Whitfield - Wales Environment Link
Kate Young - Health, Social Care, Wellbeing and Sport Planning Group
Susie Ventris Field - Welsh Centre for International Affairs
Andrea Cleaver - Asylum Seekers & Refugees
Matthew Williams - Welsh Sport Association
Derek Walker - Social Enterprise
Owen Evans - Children in Wales
Patience Bentu- Ethnic Minorities
Sandy Clubb – Volunteering
Jamie Burt - Employment
Iestyn Wyn - Sexual Orientation
Carl Cooper – Intermediaries
Elin Maher – Welsh Language
Chris Johnes - Building Communities Trust
Gethin Rhys – Religion
Paul Glaze - Youth
Cath Hicks – Education and Training
Christopher Williams – Older People
David Bowles – Animal Welfare
Gareth Coles – Arts, Culture and Heritage
Ruth Power – Housing
Sophie Weeks – Guest
Amanda Williams –
Charles Whitmore – Wales Civil Society Forum
Philip Fiander – Interim Chair of TSPC Funding and Compliance Sub-committee

Welsh Government Officials attending:

Alyson Francis - Deputy Director, Communities Division
Chris Buchan – Head of Communities and Third Sector team
Paul Dear – Communities Division
Owen Evans – Head of Security Partnership Negotiations
Aaron Fortt – Third Sector Team
Helen Brown – Third Sector Team
Jenna Pugh – Third Sector Team

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Introduction Deputy Minister and Chief Whip (DMCW)

DMCW thanked attendees and acknowledged that the sector is at the heart of the support being provided to communities. DMCW also reflected on how the sector has adapted at local and national levels and wanted noted that this had not gone unnoticed.

DMCW explained TSPC will be important in informing how we will continue to move forward into our recovery stage, learning to adapt and live through the crisis.

DMCW also noted that the minute's previous meeting had been agreed and published.

Agenda Item 2 - Update on TSPC Recovery Group

Anna Nicholl (AN) and Paul Dear (PD) gave an update on the work being undertaken by the TSPC recovery group. AN explained that the group is a time limited group and will be looking to feed a final report back to TSPC by spring of 2021. TSPC had been sent papers setting out the work being undertaken. This work has identified 5 themes with 3 work streams to focus on, the 3 work streams are Volunteering, relationships and Support. The First area which the TSPC recovery has developed is around volunteering.

AN and PD invited TSPC to feedback comments.

Agenda Item 3 - Update on the TSPC Funding and Compliance Sub Committee

DMCW welcomed Phil Fiander (PF), Interim Chair of the Funding and Compliance to meeting who gave an update on the TSPC Funding and Compliance Sub Committee.

DMCW noted that Ian Davy (ID), Chief Officer of Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil was stepping down as a long standing member of this committee due to his imminent retirement. DMCW thanked ID for his work with the committee and wished him well in his retirement.

A set of new terms of reference had been sent to TSPC for their agreement – no comments had been received and TSPC agreed the new ToRs.

PF explained that the committee agreed that there was maybe a lack of understanding of the role of the TSPC Funding and Compliance Sub Committee, so the committee had revised the Terms of Reference and circulated to TSPC for their agreement at this TSPC meeting. No comments had been received and the ToRs were agreed.

It is the committees plan to develop a work plan which identify areas and agree actions. To develop this PF has met with each of the members to discuss their initial thoughts with emerging actions looking to be centred around, 1 year funding and grant versus procurement. Once developed this work plan will be for forwarded to TSPC for their input and agreement.

The committee had agreed that it is important that their role if there for checks and balance but needed to be looking at mechanics of funding rather than policy. This is why it would be vital to work closely with the Grant Centre of Excellence to ensure fairness and consistency with funding. It will also be important that the committee look at the lessons learned from Covid and ensure we hold on to good working practices which have developed over this period.

Rhian Davies (RD), a member of the committee, expressed the importance of the committee being proactive and entering discussions in a timely manner with Welsh Government when major grants such as the equality grant is being renewed. There is an opportunity for these grants to prompt good practice in areas such as inclusion and equality.

Carl Cooper (CP) welcomed code but noted that the code only relates to direct funding and requested that the sub-committee may be able to look at the principles of the code so that they include indirect funding.

DMCW thanked PF and the sub-committee for their continued work and agreed that there is a need to influence the whole of Welsh Government with systems mainstreamed and agreed that it was important to review the impacts of the pandemic.

Agenda Item 4 - EU Transition

Owen Davies (OD), Head of Security Partnership Negotiations at Welsh Government provided an update on the latest's EU issues. Key issues raised by OD included

- Talks are still in progress with the two sides with matters needing to be resolved fairly soon.
- Governance, fisheries and state aid remain the sticking points.
- Although there will be a deal it is going to be a thin one and believe that we are not facing a no deal as we did last year.
- Welsh Government are aware that the continuing uncertainty makes planning very difficult. While the level of engagement with UK had been poor it had improved.
- Welsh Government will be publishing transition plan towards the end of next week.
- Covid has meant that some of the issues are being addressed
- Act is in the lords and the WG amendments have been taken up by lords.
- While Welsh Government are not opposed to the internal market it should be but around common frameworks

Charles Whitmore (CW) agreed that preparing for this transition has been challenging for several reasons including the need to reallocate resources to deal with Covid. The sector welcomes involvement in the settlement plan and have produced a report relating to food & medicine.

Funding for supporting migrants is also a concern and a lack of information from the UK Government is preventing future planning on how this area will be funded and what processes will be in place for new migrants arriving in the UK.

Engagement with Welsh Government and the third sector throughout this period was appreciated.

Karen Whitfield (KW) expressed concerns that there had been no time due to covid to introduce environmental governance arrangement in Wales while there are arrangement in rest of UK. Interim arrangements are in place and these could be in place for longer but should be strengthen if in place for longer periods of time.

Gethin Rhys (GR) thanked WG for arranging a round table meeting and for the involvement faith groups were able to have at that meeting. Adding that the settlement scheme applies to members of European Economic Area and some members in those categories might not realise it did. GR was pleased to hear WG and UK communications were planned and was happy to help as there are some groups which will not be reached by normal communication methods.

DMCW thanked everyone for their contributions and said that the 4 nations meeting with UK minister, will be very helpful discussion to have.

Actions:

OD will reiterate these concerns from KW to EERA Brexit officials
CW to provide information to officials re: report on food and medicines.

Agenda Item 5 - Socio-Economic Duty

DMCW explained she will be commencing the Socio-economic Duty on the 31 March 2021, this involves enacting Part 1, Section 1 of the [Equality Act 2010](#) – the Socio-economic Duty.

The duty will ensure specified public bodies, when making strategic decisions such as deciding priorities and setting objectives, consider and assess how their decisions might help to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

DMCW said officials are currently co-producing the Statutory Guidance which certain public bodies, to whom the duty will apply, will be required to follow to discharge duty under the legislation. DMCW thanked those third sector partners who are involved in this work.

DMCW would like the statutory guidance to explicitly state that public bodies should engage the third sector when assessing the impact of their strategic decisions on the inequalities of outcomes associated with socio-economic disadvantage. Establishing

this important step would help ensure public bodies make better, more rounded decisions.

DMCW acknowledged that the third sector has shown how crucial it is in working with public bodies to support our communities as well as sharing good practice. Recent events, flooding and Covid, have highlighted the deep inequalities and impacts on the most vulnerable citizens.

Action

DMCW requested officials to arrange a separate meeting outside of TSPC to discuss this further.

Agenda item 6 - AOB

Elin Maher (EM) raised her concern to the DMCW regarding the impact of the decision which was announced 1 November to extend the furlough scheme. EM stated that the impact on this would be not just on third sector organisations but on individuals.

The DMCW confirmed that the First Minister would be making a statement at 12.15 which would address these issues.

Draft Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill consultation

The DMCW highlight the publication of the Draft Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill consultation which the Minister for Education published on 14 July which will close on 4 December 2020.

While the Welsh Government had already engaged widely with stakeholders throughout the development of the Bill and have been very grateful for the feedback received to date. The draft Bill now presents an opportunity for further engagement in a post Covid-19 world and encouraged TSPC to be engage in this consultation including a stakeholder event on the Draft Bill is planned for November.

[Action – officials to inform TSPC members of stakeholders event.]

Closing remarks

To close the DMCW thanks everyone for their hard work to date and for the work that they will be involved in throughout the upcoming firebreak asking people to remember that we must all be thinking about what should we do, not what we can do. Which is why the post firebreak regulations will be clearer and remove some of the anomalies faced by community centres.

Finally the DMCW reiterated the strength of partnership working and the need to ensure these relationships became hardwired.