

Third Sector Meeting with the Deputy Minister for the Economy and Transport via MS Teams

21 October 2020

Attendance

Lee Waters	–	Deputy Minister for the Economy and Transport
Ben Lloyd	–	WCVA
Gemma Lelliott	–	Community Transport Association
Peter Jones	–	Guide Dogs Cymru
Derek Walker	–	Wales Co-operative Centre
Clare Rudall	–	Business in the Community
Peter Williams	–	DTA Wales
San Leonard	–	Social Firms Wales
David Smith	–	Co-ops and Mutuals Wales
Hazel Lloyd Lubran	–	Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations
Michelle Rowson-Woods	–	Coalfields Regeneration Trust
Shea Buckland-Jones	–	World Wildlife Fund / Wales Environment Link
Gurmit Randhawa	–	Interfaith Council for Wales
Rhiannon Hardiman	–	Living Streets

Officials

Dewi Rowlands	Chris Buchan
Claire McDonald	John Watkins
Gethin While	Susan Francis

Introduction

1. Ben Lloyd – WCVA chaired the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance.

Agenda Item 1: Paper for discussion – Wales Transport Strategy

2. Gemma Lelliott gave an overview of the Transform Cymru report on the role of the third sector in developing and delivering an effective transport strategy for Wales.
3. The purpose of the paper was to set out the role that the third sector could and should play in the development and delivery of the Wales Transport Strategy with a view to ensuring that the final strategy fully recognises the capabilities of the sector in developing and delivering an integrated transport network for Wales.
4. The positive direction of travel in terms of Third Sector engagement in the scoping phase of the strategy document was acknowledged.

5. A number of case studies were cited to evidence the effective response of the Third Sector including:
 - a. Asthma UK & British Lung Foundation Wales: 'Slowing down the rise in Air Pollution';
 - b. Traveline Cymru; Living Streets Riverside (Cardiff) group;
 - c. ACORP - Finding ways to help communities during lockdown and
 - d. Partneriaeth Ogwen, Dyffryn Gwyrdd / Green Valley Project.
6. The Welsh Government were asked to ensure that the final strategy acknowledges the unique contribution from the sector and set out a commitment to maximise opportunities for the sector to add value.
7. The Deputy Minister responded by confirming that it was an important initiative and asked that engagement between the Third Sector and Welsh Government Officials be more structured and asked officials how this could be achieved, if not already in place.
8. Dewi Rowlands acknowledged how helpful the Transform Cymru report had been and their input into drafting the new Wales Transport Strategy. Welsh Government were planning to consult on the new Strategy for 12 weeks from the 16th November.
9. The strategy would set long term vision, 20 year ambitions based on 'good for people and communities', 'good for the environment', 'good for the economy and places and 'good for culture and Welsh language'. A five year set of priorities would target interventions and investment to:
 - a. reduce greenhouse gas emissions,
 - b. provide a comprehensive public transport system,
 - c. ensure a safe, accessible and well maintained infrastructure and drive modal shift and behaviour change by:
 - d. making sustainable transport choices more attractive
 - e. supporting innovations that help more people and businesses adopt sustainable transport choices.
10. The Minister confirmed that Welsh Government recognised the significant role the Third sector have and could play. Community transport has the ability to plug gaps that traditional transport systems cannot reach.
11. There are 8 mini frameworks within the Strategy including one for Community and Not for Profit. This includes more detail on how we might secure a thriving not for profit transport system in Wales where community transport would be equally promoted and be part of peoples transport planning, including inclusion on the transport app.
12. Included in the strategy would be a measurement of success. Welsh Government will be allocating further funding to Community Transport Association to assist them with finalising the Wales Transport Strategy.
13. Gemma Lelliott – welcomed Welsh Government call on the Third Sector and wanted to ensure that there was a wider request than just community transport.

14. Derek Walker felt the suggestion of a meeting and agreeing a memorandum of understanding with Transport for Wales would put engagement on a more substantial footing. The Minister asked Transport Officials to consider further.

ACTION: WG Transport Officials to investigate the development of a Transport Memorandum of Understanding between Third Sector Welsh Government and Transport for Wales.

Agenda Item 2: Paper for discussion – Green and Just Recovery

15. Clare Rudall gave an overview of the paper. Highlighting the struggles businesses were experiencing due to procurement. Reduced procurement and extended payment terms were resulting in a high economic and human cost.
16. Toolkits and guides had been developed on COVID19: helping the supply chain and in partnership with Deloitte, Responsible Sourcing: How to embed sustainability into procurement processes. Including best practice examples of businesses using sustainable purchasing practices.
17. A place based approach was being followed, matching needs with larger organisations who have been able to provide support. A view was expressed that this was having an impact on food insecurity. Newport was given as an example with a request to promote with SMEs in the area.
18. A recommendation in the paper was highlighted - Recommendation: Welsh Government should use public procurement to help realise its aim for Wales to be a zero-waste nation with a circular economy by 2050. Public Health Wales were cited as an example of good practice.
19. Suggestions of measures included:
- a. Ensuring circular economy strategies have a clear link to the concept of circular public procurement, including through objective setting
 - b. Considering the possibility of making sustainable and circular public procurement contractually binding
 - c. Drawing key learnings from local circular procurement pilot projects (e.g. Public Health Wales NHS Trust's office furniture project), on gaining internal buy-in for the approach, and upscale these to a national level.
 - d. Using life cycle costing rather than only considering the initial purchase price to incentivise longer lasting and easily repairable products
 - e. Including circular criteria in public sector tenders, for example setting requirements for renewable material sourcing, including recycled content, recovery of end-of-life products etc. (the relevant criteria will be specific to the product type).
 - f. Continuing to provide financial support for businesses adopting circular principles, available for circular business models that go beyond incorporating recycled product. This support could be focused on SMEs in resource intensive sectors.
20. Shea Buckland-Jones spoke about the review of the Welsh Government Economic Contract. In particular:

- a. Welcomed the expansion of the decarbonisation pillar to include climate resilience.
- b. Would welcome deforestation in supply chains to be included. Opportunity for Wales to be a Deforestation Nation. Two mechanisms to achieve that, one public procurement the second the Economic Contract.
- c. Asked, how we can drive a more circular economy? Suggested place based farming, food production methods, import of products, connecting consumption and production, local food partnerships etc. would be needed.
- d. Food Policy Alliance manifesto was being launched in the following week.

21. David Smith, mentioned how public health and health inequalities had been addressed.

22. There were some questions about free school meals and sustainable food supply and a recent Welsh Government announcement addressing this. It was asked how Government ensured that free school meals could drive up farming and food production in Wales. Welcomed the opportunity to share ideas with the Deputy Minister to drive this agenda forward.

- Peter Williams summarised some activities which demonstrated the key role Social Enterprises can make in any Green Recovery. He also went on to ask about the definition of a 'green job' and how that was seen to be valued against other jobs.
- Felt there was real value in the role of local economies and local business and social enterprises to support food chains. This could be supported via Welsh Government procurement and supply chain purchasing.

23. The Deputy Minister welcomed this paper and felt it was on point. He echoed the comments on the foundational economy and procurement. The capacity in the public sector had been hollowed out. He was frustrated not to be further forward with this agenda. Lots of local authorities were not sufficiently joined up. Procurement was still generally based on best value rather than social value.

24. The Welsh Government has commissioned the Centre for Local Economic Strategy (CLES) to support efforts to boost the social value of procurement based on their community wealth building model, but assessing the potential and barriers in the structures here in Wales. Early results were showing significant spend taking place within and outside Wales and demonstrated a lot of potential there. The barriers to progress are a mix of behavioural, cultural, and some regulatory. Need to be looked at systematically but this was an area which is within the control of the Welsh Government and its partners.

ACTION: DMET to have a discussion with Clare Rudall on her report.

25. Engagement with the Third Sector on the refresh of the Economic Contract has begun and will continue. All encouraged to get in touch if contact had not been made. The Economic Resilience Fund has and continues to provide support to organisations through Covid. Different layers of sign-up to the Economic Contract with larger companies agreeing to a full contract in the next 6 months

and smaller companies signing up to the principles of the contract. Work is ongoing on the refresh of the economic contract.

26. Michelle Rowson Woods raised the development of industrial sites e.g. Ebbw Vale, Lime Avenue – WG funded £3m via Tech Valleys and £5m Trust funds. The Trust were able to replicate that elsewhere and felt the income generated would support trainee and apprenticeship opportunities.
27. The Deputy Minister responded that whilst we need new and replaced units in areas like Ebbw Vale that regeneration would come from the foundational economy. Infrastructure was something that was a known response but could tie up funds without achieving the desired change and suggested a further conversation.
28. Peter Williams mentioned that adapting and growing the supply chain could be the same in terms of the foundational economy. There was an assumption that price is the determining factor in procurement but not so much around growing local supply chains.
29. The Deputy Minister gave an example from construction, where a list of procurement opportunities was published allowing organisations the time to respond. He felt this just needed more focus and attention by Government that has not been there so far.
30. Shea Buckland-Jones mentioned the Food Policy Alliance, Food Sense Wales - doing brilliant work on linking food production using mapping developed by Cardiff University. He suggested setting up food hubs and building relationships could bring opportunities.
31. David Smith agreed that the Finance Minister had been supportive and asked if there was scope to put money into food procurement, a system to make these changes effective and sustainable. He felt that enabling local authorities to make this happen by putting more money into the system and making it accountable would be the best way forward. No excuse for LAs to add 1p on the price of milk.
32. The Deputy Minister stated that understanding the detailed change and synchronizing it was tough and felt monitoring officers to be key. Primary legislation states best value, if they choose to use it. This is a tough mind set to change. Procurement needed to be boardroom rather than backroom and seen as an agent for change. He stated that we are in a crisis and that resilience could be built. There was an urgency that this was sorted.

Agenda Item 3: Paper to note: Update on Social Enterprise Vision and Action Plan

33. San Leonard reported that the Social Enterprise Stakeholder Group had been meeting weekly to work on the nine outcomes and actions outlined in this paper.
 1. More people will choose to engage with social enterprises – as customers, employees, volunteers, or leaders.

2. More people will choose a social enterprise model to start a new business.
 3. Policy makers will prioritise social enterprise solutions when considering how to address problems and create conditions which help social enterprises to rebuild and thrive.
 4. Social enterprises will be better connected to each other and will speak with a more unified voice.
 5. Social enterprises will play a greater role in tackling climate change and protecting the environment.
 6. Social enterprises will adopt Fair Work practices, pay the Living Wage, and increase diversity amongst their employees and volunteers.
 7. Social enterprises will be better able to exploit digital technology for social good.
 8. The range and value of funding options tailored to the needs of social enterprises will multiply.
 9. Good quality specialist business support tailored to the needs of the sector will be available to everyone who needs it.
34. She emphasised the need for jobs that were more long term and were recognised as sustainable. This was something that social enterprise was good at. There was a need to broaden them to make supply chains more responsive.
35. Peter Williams asked that growth aspirations be viewed flexibly due to Covid impacts.
36. The Deputy Minister agreed that this was an important agenda and would welcome further discussion once he had time to digest the papers. He was reassured that this areas was being led by the Third Sector.

Agenda Item 4: AOB

None.

Links / comments provided in the Teams Chat facility

Ben Lloyd – WCVA

Here's the platform BITC are matching community/charity/social enterprise needs with offers of support by larger businesses as a response to COVID - this is being extended to SMEs as beneficiaries (particularly in Newport as a placed based approach to have compound impact) [National Business Response Network](#) This supports a Green and Just Recovery and Build Back Responsibly

Rhiannon Hardiman – Living Streets

Thank you Ben, I haven't been able to hear contributions and I'm sure Gemma will have covered this, Transform Cymru pleased with the engagement with Welsh Government over the past months as the WTS being drafted, good constructive

relationship a positive indication of future working with the sector and certainly something to build on.