

**MINUTES OF THE WALES COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020**  
**Online via Teams**

**MEMBERS:**

Adrian Webb	Wales Committee Chair
Rona Aldrich	Wales Committee Member
Sian Callaghan	Wales Committee Member
Nicola Russell-Brooks	Wales Committee Member
Helen Wilkinson	Wales Committee Member
Fadhili Maghiya	Wales Committee Member

**ATTENDEES:**

John Rose	Wales Director
Dawn Austwick	CEO (for first hour)
Ruth Bates	Head of Communications
Andrew Owen	Head of Funding
Rob Roffe	Head of Knowledge and Learning
Dominic Newlyn	Governance Officer (Minutes)
Josh Coles Riley (Item 7)	Knowledge and Learning Officer, Wales

**1. CHAIR'S WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 1.1. The Chair began the meeting and ensured members were clear on the process and format of the online Teams meeting. The Committee welcomed Fadhili Maghiya to his first meeting.
- 1.2. There were no apologies for absence.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

- 2.1. There were no outstanding matters for the Committee.
- 2.2. Dawn Austwick was attending the meeting for the first hour. Dawn thanked the Committee and the team for their contributions towards ensuring a smooth and effective response to the COVID-19 crisis across the Fund. The Committee noted an update on joint funding with DCMS, and an update on the upcoming staff survey.

**3. PAN UK RESPONSE TO COVID-19 - WBM 20/08**

- 3.1. John Rose introduced the above paper. The Committee noted the Fund's flexible approach to grant management, using variations to support existing grants and placing trust in organisations to react responsibly and effectively. In addition, organisations could still hold 2 (rather than 1) NLA4A awards in any one year.

- 3.2. The Committee noted the differences in response in England and NI, impacted by the further complexity that these portfolios will be distributing government funding.

#### 4. WALES PORTFOLIO UPDATE

- 4.1. The committee noted the overall impact of COVID-19 on the portfolio, as the team made fortnightly decisions on A4A applications and delivered over £1m worth of upward grant variations.
- 4.2. The Committee discussed the Fund's ability to support organisations in adapting to a new normal as focus transitioned away from COVID-19 crisis response and towards returning to business as usual.
  - 4.2.1. The Fund had maintained core principles and a requirement for applications to embody the People in the Lead framework, however the requirements for evidence and examples had been reviewed to support organisations applying for funding.
  - 4.2.2. Some applications being assessed in the People and Places programme had been submitted prior to the crisis and would not yet reflect the new situation.
  - 4.2.3. The Fund continued to share knowledge and learning within the wider sector to promote success stories, collaborating with other key players to support organisations in tackling the crisis.
- 4.3. The Committee congratulated Rona Aldrich on her reappointment to the Committee as Vice-Chair

#### 5. THE DORMANT ACCOUNTS SCHEME (DAS) - WBM 20/09

- 5.1. Rob Roffe introduced the above paper. The refreshed policy directions had been signed off in April, maintaining a strong focus on funding of Young People and Climate Action projects.
- 5.2. The team were pursuing discussions with the Welsh Government on the delivery of the next round of DAS funding. The Committee approved the following approaches to funding policy;
  - 5.2.1. **Agreeing a jointly-funded programme with Welsh Government based on the Fund's updated approach to young people funding programmes.**
  - 5.2.2. **Proposing a 50-50 split of DAS funding between young people and climate change programmes.**
- 5.3. The Committee discussed the potential involvement of Welsh Government in the funding model in this approach, and whether this would be dependent on the Fund's working relationship with the relevant government departments. It was noted that DAS policy directions allow for a more directive involvement from

government, however there was a strong working relationship and the strong possibility of an effective working partnership. Should we be able to agree on a jointly funded approach the option remains to develop 2 different funding streams.

## **6. REVISED WALES GRANT BUDGET 2020/21 - WBM 20/10**

6.1. Andrew Owen introduced the above paper. The Committee approved the following elements of the Grants Budget;

### **6.1.1. Increasing the NLA4A budget by £1m**

The Committee approved, noting that Q4 will be significantly impacted by the duration of COVID-19 response measures. An increase of £1m will enable the Fund to continue to fund good quality A4A projects not limited to crisis response.

### **6.1.2. Maintaining the People and Places budget for 2020/21**

The Committee approved, noting that the Fund had not seen a clear and constant increase in funding requests to the programme as a result of the crisis.

6.2. The Committee discussed the ability for the team to maintain the micro-grants programme given increased workload during the crisis. The team confirmed that the majority of the groundwork had been completed prior to the pandemic emerging, and the proposed launch date wasn't until Q3/Q4 when current demand for crisis response funding would have hopefully declined. The Committee noted that these grants provided a relevant and effective resource for learning and would continue as planned subject to regular reviews of team resourcing.

## **7. YOUNG PEOPLE: ISSUES, CONTEXT AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT - WBM 20/11**

7.1. Josh Coles-Riley introduced the above paper and provided further context on the key emerging challenges facing young people across the UK. In addition, he outlined the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic detailed, in particular;

- Education impacts amongst young people currently of school age
- Economic impact, particularly due to a high proportion of workers in the gig economy
- Mental Health
- Lack of respite and access to safe spaces for vulnerable young adults

7.2. The Committee were asked to provide feedback on the principles and parameters of the programme. They thanked Josh on the quality and content of the paper and some areas were highlighted that could receive more focus in the coming months.

7.3. The Committee noted the change in approach away from 'in person' activity and discussed the impact on the programme's ability to engage harder to reach young people, particularly from rural areas. The team would use their existing network

of groups who have a wide reach amongst young people to ensure the programme had a wide and diverse audience.

- 7.4. Procurement for an agency to deliver the programme engagement, including strategy days, had been put on hold due to the pandemic. The Committee approved the revised approach to hold digital strategy days and engage with an organisation which focuses on digital engagement practices to support delivery of the programme.
- 7.5. The Committee noted the increased importance of safeguarding measures as digital communications increased.
- 7.6. The Committee approved the revised development of the programme and asked that the team remain flexible and reactive to changes in government action, in order to assure that the Fund's support is delivered to those who need it most.

## **8. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC - WBM 20/12**

- 8.1. Rob Roffe introduced the above paper. The pandemic was exacerbating issues across the sector and significantly impacting service delivery and financial stability.
- 8.2. In addition, new challenges were emerging such as the disproportionate impact of the virus on the BAME community and the groups that support it. Issues of rising poverty, educational issues, and alcohol or nutrition issues would have an increased impact on the BAME community across Wales.
- 8.3. The Committee discussed the impact of economic downturn in Wales and the challenges facing workers in the gig economy, micro-businesses and sole traders. It was noted that the fund cannot specifically support targeted economic development and must further identify the issues that it can influence and has the understanding and capability to support.
- 8.4. The Committee drew on some of the positives that could be seen despite the pandemic. Organisations were adapting quickly and embracing the new digital ways of working. Restructuring plans for a new normal should illustrate a clear commitment to tackling climate change and incorporating digital solutions.
- 8.5. Furthermore, the volunteering response across the UK had been a great positive. The Committee urged the Fund to keep NLA4A funding easily accessible for small groups of proactive volunteers, particularly given the challenges for government to utilise this voluntary support.
- 8.6. The Committee noted the challenges facing organisations' trustees and governance functions in unprecedented times for the sector.

## **9. WALES COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN - WBM 20/13**

- 9.1. The Committee noted the contents of the work plan.

10. **AOB**

10.1. There was no other business.

**MEETING ENDED**