

**MINUTES OF THE WALES COMMITTEE MEETING**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 14TH September 2022 @ 10:00 am**

**One Canal Parade, Cardiff.**

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| **Wales Committee** | | |
| Simone Lowthe Thomas | | *Wales Committee Chair* |
| Nicola Russell Brooks | | *Wales Committee member* |
| Trystan Pritchard | | *Wales Committee member* |
| Thomas Andreas | | *Wales Youth Voice Team* |
| Kate Young | | *Wales Committee member* |
| **Staff** | | |
| John Rose | *Director of Wales* | |
| Rob Roffe | *Senior* *Head of Comms & Engagement* | |
| Elizabeth Watson | *Executive Assistant* | |
| James Eul | *Interpreter* | |

1. **WELCOME**

* 1. Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Thomas Andreas who was joining Committee as the Wales Youth Voice Member.

**Apologies**

* 1. Apologies were received from Gwenllian Lansdown Davies and Fadhili Maghiya, Wales Committee members, Andrew Owen & Ruth Bates, The National Lottery Community Fund.

**Minutes from the Previous Committee Meeting on 15th June 2022**

The Minutes from the committee meeting on 15th June were formally agreed.

**Declarations of Interest**

* 1. No declarations of interest were noted.

1. **PORTFOLIO UPDATE**

* 1. Committee noted the Portfolio update, highlighting:

1. Details of Wales response to the Cost-of-Living crisis is now reflected on our website. The UK portfolio had allocated up to £2m of their budget to help with the cost-of-living work, meaning that taking this into account our additional budget to support the cost of living response now stands at £4m
2. Excellent work carried out by the Wales Team.
3. The potential to share topic papers going to the People and Places committee.
4. That four new Board members have recently appointed.
5. Positive progress with work to stabilise the website.
6. Successful Ministerial visits have taken place with more planned

**Action:** Share People and Places topic papers with Wales Committee. (EW)

1. **SUPPORTING GREAT IDEAS: UNITED WELSH HOUSING**
   1. Wales Committee were invited to:
2. Note the background information provided relating to the development of the Supporting great ideas funding offer.
3. Consider the recommended funding requests from United Welsh Housing Association Limited.
4. Note the status of potential future Supporting great ideas proposals
   1. The committee noted that the project was of strategic importance and will provide practical support to vulnerable young people seeking housing, thereby reducing the chance of homelessness. They expressed concern that evaluation of the overall project should have been factored in from the start but understood that secured sources of funding would not cover this. They reflected that the project will need to develop strong dissemination plans, to share good practice and asked that this should be strengthened during grant management.
   2. Noting that they would not normally fund stand-a-lone evaluation costs, but recognising the importance of the project, The Committee agreed to award the full amount requested.
5. **SUPPORTING THIRD SECTOR RESILIENCE / SUSTAINABILITY - FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION**
   1. This paper summarised the characteristics of the Third Sector in Wales, its policy environment, and the key challenges that it faces. It reflected on the Fund’s past support for Third Sector Resilience and discussed potential actions that the Fund can take to support a stronger Third Sector in the future.
   2. The paper provided an overview and critique of the Fund’s past support focused on making organisations more resilient and considers the impact of recent events on third sector organisations, notably the Covid-19 Pandemic and, latterly, the Cost-of-living Crisis.
   3. Committee reviewed the paper and discussed the content. Discussion focused around:
6. The diversity of the third sector in Wales. A wide breadth of purpose, and size meant that one size does not fit all.
7. The Committee questioned the extent to which organisations use existing tools and support like the funds VCSE Strengths checker.
8. Whilst sources of support do exist many organisations are exhausted after Covid and struggle to know what exists beyond their normal sources of support and lack the capacity to consider longer term organisational improvements.
9. There were differing opinions on whether it was the Funds role to provide additional support or whether adequate provision already existed through other sources including Infrastructure Bodies and Business Wales.
10. Committee agreed that further discussion would be required, and it would be beneficial to have input from Committee Members who were not in attendance at the meeting.
11. **CHILDREN ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND NEEDS - TO NOTE AND DISCUSS**
    1. Committee welcomed the report, which detailed the most pressing issues and challenges facing children and their families in Wales; the impact of these issues and challenges; the needs of children and their families and the extent to which their needs are being met. The report outlined potential opportunities for the Fund and posed some questions for Wales Committee to consider.
    2. Committee noted that this was a high on the agenda at present, especially in the current climate; noting that the report had focused on the challenges faced regarding:
12. Bullying
13. Mental health
14. Barriers to play and leisure activities in the Community
15. Affordable childcare provision
16. Child poverty
    1. Committee noted key findings in the report had been the issues that children and families are facing.
    2. Chair passed on thanks for an in depth and comprehensive paper asking Committee for their initial thoughts.
    3. The Committee reflected that the new curriculum which covers Mental Health and Wellbeing and questions over what provision this will provide going forwards in Schools to support children and families. They also reflected on the impact of the cost of living on basic needs such as providing safe and warm spaces.
    4. Given the breadth of need it was important to avoid trying to do everything, balancing the desire to meet immediate needs with longer term preventative action, although at present it is hard to identify a niche where the Fund could make a significant difference. Several suggestions were made such as targeting minority communities or children with learning difficulties, but these would require further investigation later and prior to making any firm commitments.
    5. Some concerns were raised over the absence of children’s voices (as opposed to young people) and the potential to seek further views through the Children’s Commissioner.
    6. Committee agreed further feedback should be sought prior to portfolio development, once again speaking with any Committee members not at this meeting for their thoughts. They highlighted that it would be beneficial to get more detailed information on where resources are required and what are the regional partnerships and mechanisms in place.
17. **UPDATE ON FUND WIDE STRATEGY RENEWAL**
    1. Committee noted the verbal update on the Fund wide strategy renewal.
18. **ANNUAL REPORT TO BOARD: FOR INFORMATION**
    1. Committee noted the content of the Annual Report to Board, highlighting the level of achievement during the year.
    2. Reflecting on the report the Committee made several suggestions about potential additions to the report, how it could be used as the basis for further reports to external audiences and a request for further analysis of the data (not for the report but for a later Wales Committee).
19. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**
    1. Committee noted the paper on terms of reference further noting the minor amendments in the document.
20. **FORWARD WORK PLAN**
    1. Committee noted the calendar of Committee meetings for 2023 is being completed and will be forwarded as soon as this is available.
    2. Committee further noted that the Strategy Day will take place in November. The agenda is currently under development.
21. **FEEDBACK FROM CORPORATE MEETINGS**
    1. The Chair provide feedback from the latest UK Board Meeting. Appointment of 4 New board members had been appointed and 2 new England Directors
    2. UK Funding committee had not met recently, although there had been some recent awards made under climate action fund.
22. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
    1. Committee were updated on the recent and upcoming project visits.
    2. The Group discussed the length of meetings especially if there were a significant number of longer papers. Options could include:
23. Committee time limits
24. Extension to the meetings
25. Pre-meetings if necessary