	MINUTES OF THE GRANTS PANEL MEETING HELD ON 7th JUNE 2021 VIA TEAMS	
PRESENT:	Randal Hemingway, Head of Financial Services Caroline Powell, Principal Auditor, Internal Audit (IA) Rhian Phillips, Economic Development Area Manager Nia Thomas, Chair of PWG, Education & Children (Revenue) Les James, Chair of PWG, Communities Alan Howells, Chair of PWG, Environment Delyth Thomas, Grants Compliance Officer	
APOLOGIES:	Helen Pugh, Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance Simon Davies, Chair of PWG, Education & Children (Capital) Stuart Walters, Economic Development Manager Helen Morgan, Economic Development Manager	
	SUBJECT	**ACTION**

1.0	**Minutes of the last meeting** • Minutes were agreed subject to an amendment being actioned and approved by the Head of Financial Services	
2.0	**Matters Arising** • The service level agreement with Hywel Dda LHB for Wanless (Money Transfers) is currently being redrafted. A letter is to be sent from Hywel Dda LHB to the Authority which will cover the financing and delivery arrangements that were in place for 2020/21. Update to be provided at the next Grants Panel meeting. • The approval for an exemption to apply restrictions on properties relating to the Childcare Offer Small Grant Scheme funded by WG has been approved by the Director of Corporate Services. • No updates have been received to date regarding the audit requirements for the COVID 19 grants managed by the Authority and those administered on behalf of Welsh Government. • A guidance note has been provided by Audit Wales on how grant monies received and issued by the Authority as agency payments are to be reported in the Statement of Accounts. • The document retention guidance for European funded projects has been reviewed by the Economic Development Area Manager, Grants Compliance Officer and the Records Management Officer. It has	DT

		SUBJECT	ACTION
		been agreed by the Records Management Officer that the introduction of SharePoint will meet the requirements as detailed in the guidance. SharePoint is a web-based collaborative platform that integrates with Microsoft Office and is used as a document management and storage system which will provide the required audit trails for managing documents on an electronic basis.	

3.0		**Audit Wales - Update**
		
		• The audit programme for the 2020/21 audits remains the same as 2019/20. Audits include:
		  o Housing Benefits
		  o NDR
		  o Teacher's Pension
		  o Wanless (Money Transfers)
		  o Pooled Budgets
		
		• The 2019/20 return for Pooled Budgets has yet to be submitted for audit.
		
		• It's anticipated that the audits of the NHS and local authority accounts will impact on 2020/21 grants audit programme.
			RH

4.0		**Internal Audit (IA) - Update**
		
		• Grant audit work as part of the 2021/22 plan has started.
		  o Children & Communities
		  o Local Authority Education Grant
		  o Enable Grant
		  o Supporting People
		
		• It's also noted that the Pupil Deprivation Grant and Education Improvement Grant for 2020/21 has been extended to 31st August 2021.	

5.0		**Project Working Groups** • Minutes of PWG meetings were circulated to Grants Panel members for: o Education & Children (Capital): 27/01/21	

	SUBJECT	**ACTION**

	o Education & Children (Revenue): 2/11/20, 10/12/20, 24/2/21
	  o Communities: 27/01/21, 24/3/21
	
	• A number of issues were raised by the chairpersons of the PWGs, and these included:
	  o Management of grant underspends due to the COVID 19 crisis
	  o Managing the impact of funding from WG grants after the COVID 19 crisis e.g. Homelessness
	  o Management of grant funding where grants have been awarded by WG to the Authority at the last minute
	  o Management of grant funding that has been extended into 2021/22
	  o Awaiting guidance from WG relating to changes in the way grants are administered for 2020/21 grant awards due to the COVID 19 crisis and how these changes will be incorporated in the 2021/22 grant awards
	  o Concerns regarding the supply and increase cost of materials for grant funded construction projects and the impact on the Authority. This impacts on project deliverability and meeting grant timelines.	

7.0	**<u>European Grants Update</u>** • A schedule of all current European grant funded projects was presented to Grants Panel. The total estimated project costs approved and in development is £49.6m with grant of £32.6m. • The Authority has now received approval for the Economic Acceleration & Regeneration Through Innovation project (EARTh) which is a regional project led by Carmarthenshire County Council in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council, Neath Port Talbot Council and Swansea Council. • The Growing Green Infrastructure project to be led by Neath Port Talbot of which the Authority is a partner, has not yet been approved. This project application is under the Rural Development Programme.	

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		• The EOI for the Food COVID Recovery Plan project under the Rural Development Programme has been approved. The full application is due to be submitted in August 2021. The project is to appoint officers to support the supply chain food procurement and food distribution modules across the county. • An update was provided to Grants Panel on the amount of grant income outstanding to the Authority for European grant funded projects. The total amount claimed to date is approximately £17.3m with a total of £2.7m grant income outstanding. Main reasons are: ○ Claims recently submitted ○ Claims submitted to the lead partner where a claim has not yet been submitted/finalised by the funding body ○ Potential delays due to the impact of the WEFO grant retention rules	
8.0		**New & Proposed Project** • Food Poverty Grant (£102K) which is a WG grant awarded via the WLGA for both revenue and capital spend. The project intends to provide third-party grants for the community to access. • An application for the Allotment Support Grant (£39K) which is WG funded and covers 9 individual projects has been submitted by the Authority.	
9.0		**AOB** • Within the Grants Manual there is a requirement to complete a grant project proposal form (GPPF) so that internal approval is be sought before a project application proceeds. The online system is no longer working, interim arrangements will need to be put in place until a new online system is developed by IT.	RP
10.0		• Date of next meeting – 2:00pm on 11th October 2021 via Teams	