

**MINUTES OF THE GRANTS PANEL MEETING HELD ON
29th NOVEMBER 2021 VIA TEAMS**

PRESENT: Randal Hemingway, Head of Financial Services
Caroline Powell, Principal Auditor, Internal Audit (IA)
Stuart Walters, Economic Development 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
Gareth Morgans, Director of Education & Children
Anwen Worthy, Audit Lead, Audit Wales

APOLOGIES: Helen Pugh, Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance
Rhian Phillips, Economic Development Area Manager
Simon Davies, Chair of PWG, Education & Children (Capital)
Helen Morgan, Economic Development Manager

	SUBJECT	ACTION
1.0	<p><u>Minutes of the last meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes were agreed. 	
2.0	<p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service level agreement with Hywel Dda LHB for Wanless (Money Transfers) is still being redrafted. The Head of Financial Services has contacted the respective Head of Service within Communities Department but needs to follow this up. The WLGA has been contacted with regards to WG grant conditions as they do not stipulate a specific period on how long the Authority is required to retain all original documentation relating to each grant funded project. This is considered an all-Wales issue and needs to reflect the new ways of working. A meeting was held between the Principal Auditor (IA), Senior Accountant and GCO from the Technical Grants Section to review which grants are required to be audited by IA and which grants require assurance work for the 2022/2023 Audit Plan. Further discussions to be undertaken with the Head of Financial Services to agree what assurance work is to be undertaken by IA on specific grants. A meeting was held between the Principal Auditor, Chair of PWG, Education & Children (Revenue) and Service Co-ordinator within the Education & Children Department to discuss the audit requirements for the 	<p>RH</p> <p>RH/CP</p>

	SUBJECT	ACTION
	education revenue grants. Information contained within the Terms & Conditions relating to these grants to be reviewed and audit requirements confirmed. Results of the review to be reported back to IA.	NT
3.0	<p><u>Audit Wales - Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update was provided on the 2020/21 audit programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NDR – completed with one issue to be reported ○ Teachers Pension – one outstanding query with one issue currently to be reported ○ Housing Benefits – audit is underway ○ Wanless (Money Transfers) – not yet commenced ○ Pooled Budgets (for 2019/20 & 2020/21) – not yet commenced • It is anticipated that the grant audits will continue into January 2022. 	
4.0	<p><u>Internal Audit (IA) - Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary was provided on the audit of the 2020/21 Education grants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pupil Deprivation Grant has been completed with no major issues identified ○ The audit of the Local Authority Education Grant is continuing – with a completion date of 31st December 2021 	
5.0	<p><u>Education - Regional Working Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive update was provided by the Director of Education and Children regarding changes from ERW to the new education regional consortia which commenced 1st September 2021 called Partneriaeth. The consortia include CCC, PCC and Swansea Council. 	

	SUBJECT	ACTION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partneriaeth legal agreement has been presented to the Authority’s Cabinet and has been formally accepted. • As per previous regional consortia working arrangements, Partneriaeth has been set up in accordance with WG’s National Model for Regional Working. • The key principles in setting up the new regional consortia include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ securing value for money ○ delegation of more funding directly to schools and local authorities ○ reduce central team and defining a clearer role for the central team ○ more direct management by the local authority • The legal agreement outlines a new governance structure and a revised staffing structure. Partneriaeth will be led by the Directors of Education from each of the local authorities. • For 2021/22 WG has disaggregated the whole of the Regional Consortia Schools Improvement Grant (RCSIG) to each local authority i.e. CCC, PCC and Swansea Council. • It is currently unclear if WG will provide funding for 2022/2023 via Partneriaeth as a regional consortia or continue to fund each local authority directly. • It is recognised that the current year is a complex year due to the new consortia changes and the numerous grant variation letters received to date. • The 3 local authorities are due to meet to discuss and agree the different elements within RCSIG and how they are allocated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ what will remain in the local authority’s control? ○ what needs to go back to Partneriaeth to deliver ○ what goes directly to schools in respect of their direct spending and delegated funding 	

	SUBJECT	ACTION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IA have had an initial meeting with officers within Education & Children to agree the audit procedures that need to be put in place in respect of Partneriaeth. Further meeting(s) to be arranged to agree a way forward. 	CP/NT
6.0	<p><u>Grants Register 2021/22</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An updated register was presented to the meeting detailing current grant funded projects. The review exercise has not been completed for all departments. It was noted that copies of grant awards are not always forwarded to the GCO and officers within the appropriate Accountancy Section. An email to be sent to the Chairs of the Project Working Groups to remind officers managing grants of the requirement to forward copies accordingly. 	<p>LJ</p> <p>RH</p>
7.0	<p><u>Project Working Groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes of PWG meetings were received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities: 22/9/2021 Environment: 22/9/2021 The following updates were provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional grants being awarded with tight delivery timescales could result in potential underspends on the projects and also impacts on the additional management and administration needed in order to achieve delivery Issues have been raised with some WG claim forms that are received for completion. These include e.g. the format of the claim forms itself, claim forms in excel format with inconsistent formulae and claim forms which do not note the requirement for an authorised signatory to sign. Concerns to be forwarded to WG's Grant Centre of Excellence Concerns were raised in the deliverability of some projects considering the current climate for the delivery of certain goods and increasing contractor costs The financial impact on the Authority for 	DT

	SUBJECT	ACTION
	<p>projects where additional costs are incurred due to circumstances outside the Authority's control</p>	
8.0	<p><u>European Grants Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The schedule of all current European grant funded projects was presented to Grants Panel. While each project has a specific completion date it was noted that of these the latest end date is 30th September 2023. We are aware that WEFO will need to complete that current programme by 31st December 2023. A meeting to be arranged with Head of Financial Services, officers from the Technical Grants Section and the Economic Development Area Manager to discuss any areas to be considered in preparation for the completion of these projects. An update will be provided in the next Grants Panel meeting. • 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 £19.3m with a total of £2.1m grant income outstanding. 	DT
9.0	<p><u>Successor Schemes Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant approval has been received for 2 projects through the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund however no formal offer letters have been received to date. Project end dates for both projects are March 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ £20m grant towards a Hwb in Carmarthenshire and in Pembrokeshire to enable greater access to services from those people who may not otherwise be able access them. It will do this by co-locating health, employment and learning services so that people can be easily referred; and by providing services in easily accessible, town centre locations ○ £16.7m grant for the Towy Valley Path to create a 20km off-road walking and cycling route from Carmarthen to Llandeilo 	

	SUBJECT	ACTION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Authority has received confirmation that 12 projects have been approved through the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund for the area. The Authority is waiting for the draft funding agreement. Completion for the delivery of the projects has been extended to June 2022. It's anticipated that the Shared Prosperity fund will be launched in the New Year. 	
10.0	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants management training has been provided for officers from Housing, Regeneration & IA. Further training to be arranged in December/January. It's been noted that the GPPF process as documented in the Grants Manual has not always been followed prior to grant applications being submitted. Officers to be reminded of the requirement to comply with the GPPF process. 	<p>DT</p> <p>Chairs of PWGs</p>
11.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of next meeting – 10:00am on 8th March 2022 via Teams 	