

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2 – Senedd

Meeting date:

Wednesday, 11 February 2015

Meeting time:

09.15

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



For further information please contact:

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Agenda

Private

At its meeting on 5 February, the Committee agreed a Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) to resolve to exclude the public from today's meeting (approach to scrutiny and technical briefing of the Renting Homes (Wales) Bill).

1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2 Renting Homes (Wales) Bill: Technical briefing on Bill (09.15 – 10.45)

Neil Buffin – Senior Lawyer, Welsh Government

Neil Martin – Senior Legislative Counsel, Welsh Government

Simon White – Bill Manager, Welsh Government

3 Renting Homes (Wales) Bill: Consideration of the Committee's approach to scrutiny (10.45 – 11.00) (Pages 1 – 11)

4 Papers to note (Pages 12 – 17)

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Agenda Item 4

11 February 2015 – Papers to note cover sheet

Paper No:	Issue	From	Action Point
Public papers to note			
Paper 2	Inquiry into Poverty in Wales	Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty	Additional Information following the meeting on 14 January 2015

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: SF/LG/0345/15

Christine Chapman AM, Chair
Communities, Equalities and Local Government Committee
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4 February 2015

Dear Christine,

At the Communities, Equalities and Local Government Committee on 14 January I agreed to write to you, providing further information on issues raised.

The Committee requested expenditure profile figures for the Discretionary Assistance Fund, from November 2014 until March 2015. I can confirm spend until the end of December 2014 is £6.1 million. The expenditure levels are monitored closely and if spend for the final three months of this financial year follows the predicted trends it will result in a spend of just over £8.1m, from the £10 m budget. This will be an increase of just under £1 million on the spend from 2013/14.

The Committee also requested a note on work which has been carried out to map the impact of economic policy on poverty. No specific work has been undertaken to 'map' the input of the Welsh Government's economic policy on poverty, however, there are clear links being made between economic and tackling poverty policies. Work remains the best route out of poverty. Job opportunities, employment and growth are at the heart of the Programme for Government, as is tackling poverty. One of the three key themes in the Tackling Poverty Action Plan is helping people into work.

The Welsh Government is taking forward a series of specific actions connected to economic policy which link to the tackling poverty agenda. Some of these are set out in Annex A.

*Regards
Lesley*

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

Annex A

Supporting business growth and sustainable job creation

The Welsh Government is tackling worklessness by encouraging and supporting employment retention and creation across Wales. We have taken steps to improve the position of businesses in Wales and facilitate private sector jobs growth.

These steps include work to improve the overall business environment, creating the conditions and framework for the private sector to create and maintain jobs which allow people in poverty, or at risk of poverty, to engage in a positive way with the labour market. They also include direct action to ease the pressure from challenges and barriers faced by businesses in the short term to stimulate investment and promote growth.

Our focus is on tackling poverty by protecting jobs, supporting the creation of employment opportunities and improving the overall conditions for business, recognising employment offers a high level of protection against poverty.

Within this context the Welsh Government is taking forward a number of actions which support Welsh Government efforts to tackle poverty. These include:

- delivering the Wales Economic Growth Fund and other job creating grant and business finance schemes;
- providing start up grants and entrepreneurship advice and support;
- developing and growing the childcare market;
- taking forward social enterprise activity and;
- delivering our Corporate Social Responsibility programme.

Our annual statement on support to business provides further detail on the impact of our work to support businesses in Wales.

Communities First

Communities First (CF) works with a variety of providers to support the implementation of the programme at a local level.

Examples of collaborative working between CF and the Private Sector:

'The **'Empty Shops'** project in Anglesey has supported local retailers and land owners to bring empty units back into use and regenerate the local retail economy. The project has not only resulted in the creation of 17 new retail businesses in Holyhead, it has also given employment opportunities to local young people who have been trained in skills to renovate disused and derelict premises. The Cluster has worked with private sector owners of empty commercial properties to allow them to be used by the new start-ups in return for a package which would relieve them temporarily of the burden of business rates and give their properties a facelift, free of charge.

Flintshire's Business Entrepreneurship Network aims to develop entrepreneurship through a more accessible, more effective range of opportunities,

to develop entrepreneurial skills through mentoring, work experience and apprenticeships for young people in all sectors.

The **EFFECT Project** aims to promote entrepreneurship and stimulate new business starts in the area through a community based enterprise facilitator and local businesses. The project also seeks to engage with individuals who would not traditionally access Welsh Government services.

Lift Programme

The Lift Programme reflects the commitment in the Welsh Government's Tackling Poverty Action Plan to provide 5,000 training and employment opportunities to people from workless households by the end of 2017. Engagement with, and support from, external organisations is a significant factor in the success of the Programme. Discussions are ongoing with a number of private sector partners, many of which have already proved productive.

Officials from both the Lift Programme and ES&T recently met with representatives from Kier Construction, contractors for Network Rail's Port Talbot Parkway Improvement Scheme. The meeting proved extremely successful with several opportunities being identified for Lift participants from the Afan Valley CF cluster area.

Following a Senedd event hosted by the Wales Retail Consortium, officials have continued to engage with individual retailers to explore the potential for their businesses to support the Lift Programme. For example a number of Boots stores provided seasonal work opportunities for Lift participants over the Christmas period and from January onwards, are starting a series of three week work experience placements in their Llanelli and Swansea stores. Also, Morrisons, in partnership with the Centre of Coaching Excellence, have submitted a proposal to Welsh Government to deliver their 'Our Club' project in partnership with the Lift Programme. The project, which is a 6 week intensive employer led programme, will launch in Spring 2015 and will be based on a localised approach with teams of coaches supporting Lift participants on a personal development plan with the overarching objective to prepare them and bridge them into employment.

European Funding

A number of projects are being developed by Welsh Government Departments which involve working with other departments and external partners in relation to European Social Fund (ESF) and European Development Fund (ERFD) which will strengthen the economy.

For example, within my own portfolio I am developing bids; Communities for Work (C4W) and Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE) project.

C4W is part of the CF programme which aims to tackle poverty and will be co-sponsored by DWP. This work will build on the best practice of programmes such as CF, Lift, Want to Work and the Employment Support in Integrated Children's Centres (ESICC). It will further develop the strengths of these programmes in engaging 'hard

to reach' groups who are of working age and furthest from the labour market by providing a personal outreach advisory service across 52 Clusters. Advisers and mentors will identify and provide innovative solutions to address and overcome complex barriers to support eligible programme participants into work

The C4W project will provide intensive support and training for long term unemployed and economically inactive people aged 25+ who have complex barriers; and young people aged 16-24 who are NEET, to enable them to access realistic employment opportunities.

PaCE will help economically inactive parents into sustainable work, where childcare is their main barrier. The operation aims to provide solutions to overcome their childcare barriers to enable the parent to prepare for, and access, employment opportunities. Parents will receive individualised help via a Parent Employment Adviser in their local community. Referrals will come from DWP, Families First and Flying Start tackling poverty programmes.

Community Benefits

Community Benefits policy is a key principle of the Wales Procurement Policy Statement (WPPS) and embedding the 'community benefits' approach is a Programme for Government commitment. The policy directly supports the Tackling Poverty Action Plan by promoting training, employment and supply chain opportunities through public sector contracts in a number of areas across the Welsh economy. Public bodies are required to complete a measurement tool and return to Value Wales for all contracts over £2m.

Since 1 September 2013 all Social Landlords (Registered Social Landlords and Local Authorities) have been required to include Community Benefit clauses in all procurement contracts where such benefits can be realised.

For example, analysis of activity by just a small number Registered Social Landlords, worth £112 million, show 86% of spend has been re-invested in Wales. This includes £38 million directly on salaries to Welsh citizens, and £53 million with Wales-based businesses 74% of which were Welsh SMEs. Some 224 disadvantaged people were helped into employment or training, with 7,744 weeks of training being provided.

