

**Environment and Rural Affairs Roundtable
People and Communities Working Group**

**5th Meeting: 6 March 2018 10:30 – 14:30
Cribyn & Garn Ddu, Welsh Government Offices, Merthyr Tydfil**

Key Points and Actions

Group Members in attendance

Ceredigion CC/Growing Mid Wales Partnership
Independent 2
Brecon Beacons NPA
WLGA
Cardiff University
NFU Cymru
CLA
NRW
One Voice Wales
FSB

Welsh Government officials in attendance

Eleanor Marks – Head of Rural Development Division (Chair)
Welsh Government Official 3
Welsh Government Official 9
Welsh Government Official 11
Welsh Government Official 14
Welsh Government Official 15
Welsh Government Official 16
Student

Apologies

Gwynedd Council
PAVO
WCVA
NRW
Independent 1
Severn Wye EA
Welsh Government Official 6
Pembrokeshire Council
Welsh Government Official 10
CLLD
Severn Wye EA
FUW
Llais y Goedwig

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Eleanor Marks (EM) welcomed members to the meeting and welcomed first time attendees. Those present introduced themselves to the group.

Thanks to previous Chair, was noted by all and everyone wished him well in his future ventures since his retirement.

2. Minutes and Actions of the last meeting

EM asked members whether they had any amendments to the minutes. One amendment was put forward and noted, the minutes were otherwise agreed by the group.

Action – [Welsh Government Official 3] to make the amendment to the minutes to re-circulate.

An update on the action points from the last meeting was also given:

- **Loading sub-Group documents onto Welsh Government website**

Under pt.1, p.1 of the minutes there is an agenda item concerning the intention to load all Agendas, Minutes and Terms Of Reference of the sub-Group onto the Roundtable Wales section of the Welsh Government website. The process was supposed to be that each secretariat would supply (bilingual) papers to the Welsh Government's EU Exit and Strategy team (EPRA) who would then agree whether or not the content could be uploaded. Once agreement was reached the Wales Rural Network Support Unit would load the relevant papers. This process had been described to the members and there is an expectation that this will happen. The papers were duly translated and sent to the EU Exit and Strategy team but they did not agree to their publication. The latest message conveyed by the EU Exit and Strategy team is that only the output of the sub-Groups may be published. The first document has been loaded onto Roundtable Wales which is the "Summary of EU Exit Scenario Planning Workshops" produced by the Evidence and Scenarios sub-Group:

<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/wales-rural-network/roundtable-wales/evidence-and-scenario-sub-group/?lang=en>

- For the People and Communities sub-Group it is intended to upload the "Sustaining our Communities" paper onto the website once the final version of the paper is accepted by the sub-Group (at Agenda item 3, below).

- **Sharing the library of reports via Sharepoint**

Also under pt.1, p.1 there are two actions concerning "Sharepoint". The policy lead supporting the sub-Group has created a library of relevant policy documents, reports and evaluations which is currently held on i-Share and therefore inaccessible to the external members of the sub-Group. This means members can neither read documents nor upload their own additional resources to share.

The EU Exit and Strategy team (EPRA) has access to something called “Sharepoint” and sub-Group members had been told previously that this would be the vehicle for sharing. However, this facility was discussed at the last Chair’s meeting and none of the Chairs who were present wish to use Sharepoint. Problems described by the EU Exit and Strategy team include browser compatibility since Sharepoint is not accessible via e.g. Internet Explorer, lack of written guidance and no “technical helpline” resource to assist members to access Sharepoint.

- **Sea and Coast Sub-Group report**

Under pt.2 on p.3 of the agenda there was an action for [Welsh Government Official 3] to request sight of a paper being drafted by the Sea and Coast sub-Group which was due to meet on the 15th January 2018. [Welsh Government Official 3] asked EU Exit and Strategy team who reported that the paper was not available yet – it is intended to be put before the Roundtable at their April 16th meeting or a later one.

- **Training and Skills**

Under pt.2 on p.3 of the agenda there was an action for [Welsh Government Official 3] to ask the EU Exit and Strategy team which sub-Group is dealing with training and skills (rural skills, training and business experience). Two answers were provided: each sector specific sub-Group will take account of the training and skills needs of their sector during their discussions. The EU Exit and Strategy team also mentioned the Brexit Readiness Programme and said that [Welsh Government] was due to present on this at the 8th March Roundtable.

- **Regional Investment in Wales after Brexit**

Under pt.2 on p.3 there are two actions, both have been addressed - the topic is on the Agenda for this meeting (6th March) at pt.5 below.

- **EU Transition fund**

Under pt.2 on p.3 there is an action for [The previous Chair] to circulate details about the EU Transition Fund. This doesn’t appear to have been done. The First Minister announced on the 8th of January 2018 that an EU Transition Fund – supported by an initial £50m – will be developed in partnership with Welsh businesses, public services and other key organisations, to provide tailored support as the UK prepares to leave the EU. The fund is to “provide a combination of financial support and loan funding, and will support the provision of technical, commercial, export-related and sectoral-specific advice for businesses” and “help employers retain and continue to attract EU nationals, who make a crucial contribution to Wales”. The Welsh Government News Article is attached at Annex A. Of particular relevance to the Roundtable and its sub-Groups is the following statement:

- “The fund will also provide dedicated development support for Wales’ agricultural industry as it prepares for transition and the future once the UK has left the EU.”

- **NUTS3 data**

Under pt.2 on p.3 of the agenda there was an action for [Welsh Government Official 13] to circulate NUTS3 data for Wales – this has not been circulated yet, the Secretariat has now received this and will send it round after this meeting (6th March).

- **Sustainable Communities paper**

All action points under pt.4 on p.4 have been completed. The paper is on this agenda at point 3 below.

- **Digital Connectivity Paper**

Under pt.5 on p.4 there is an action for members to send any final comments to [Gwynedd Council] and [The Previous Chair] by 12th January 2018. No comments were received by Welsh Government – [Gwynedd Council] has sent apologies to the 6th March meeting but [WLGA] may know.

DECISION: The Chair confirmed that in the absence of any further comments the report is now considered “final”.

Any other Business

All actions related to the preparation for this (6th March meeting) and were completed.

Update from other Working Groups

[Welsh Government Official 3] provided an update on the work of the other sub groups. Lesley Griffiths AM, the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs gave a speech at the NFU conference in Birmingham on the 20th February 2018, regarding Core Principles for a new Welsh Land Management Policy.

Action Link to be circulated with papers.

[Welsh Government Official 3] advised the group that outputs from the other sub-groups is still work in progress.

3. Agree the ‘Sustaining Our Communities’ paper

The paper was circulated in advance of this meeting.

One amendment was suggested by [Gwynedd Council] and agreed by the group. Once the amendment has been made, the paper is agreed by the members of the sub-group.

Action – [Welsh Government Official 3] to make amendment and paper to be re-circulated.

Land Management Paper

Action – Circulate Farming Improvement part of Land Management paper. It was noted that Farming and Food is core to Communities – the heart of our businesses.

4. 'The Summary of EU Exit Scenario Planning' Presentation

Presentation given by [Welsh Government Official 16] and [Welsh Government Official 15] – 'The Summary of EU Exit Scenario Planning'

Action – Presentation slides to be circulated along with paper outlining Socio-Economic Mapping.

5. 'Regional Investment Post Brexit' Presentation

Presentation delivered by [Welsh Government Official 14], WEFO.

Action – Presentation slides to be circulated and [Welsh Government Official 3] to send the Sustaining Our Communities paper to WEFO on behalf of the members of the sub-group as their contribution to the consultation.

6. Any other Business

No other business.

Action – Update on progress with regard to UK Frameworks to be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.