MINUTES OF THE GRANTS PANEL MEETING HELD ON 3rd SEPTEMBER 2015 IN THE RESOURCES CONFERENCE ROOM, COUNTY HALL		
	DATE: 4th September 2015	
PRESENT:	Helen Morgan, Interim Economic Development Manager Emma Powell, Technical Accountant Alexa Thomas, Senior Auditor, Internal Audit Delyth Thomas, Grants Compliance Officer (GCO) Stuart Walters, Interim Economic Development Manager Jason Blewitt, Financial Audit Team Leader, Wales Audit Office (WAO) Alan Howells, Chair of the Project Working Group, Environment Services	
APOLOGIES:	Chris Moore, Director of Corporate Services Wendy Walters, Assistant Chief Executive Owen Bowen, Chief Accountant Helen Pugh, Audit & Risk Manager Geraint Norman, Audit Manager, Wales Audit Office (WAO)	
	SUBJECT	**ACTION**
1.0	**Minutes of the last meeting** • The minutes were agreed.	
2.0	**Matters Arising** • A review has been undertaken and a Grant Matrix will be retained by WWEC for grant development and approval for projects under European Funding, RDP & HLF. A separate Grants Register will be maintained by GCO to record all grants received within the authority.	
	• Draft final report for Grants Management 2012/13 has been received by WAO. The Action Plan to be completed and returned to WAO as soon as possible so that final report can be closed.	OB/WAO
	• The audit certificate for Supporting People for 2013/14 has been finalised.	
	• The draft report regarding the lessons learnt exercise on Carmarthenshire Local Service Board (LSB) projects is due to be circulated shortly and the final report will be presented in the next Grants Panel meeting.	HM
	• Discussions are ongoing between WEFO, WAO & officers of the authority regarding the issues raised in the Accountants Report for Property Development Fund.	

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3.0	**Project Working Group**
	
	• Minutes from the following Project Working Groups were received:
	  ○ Education & Children Services (Cap) 21/7/15
	  ○ Social Care, Health & Housing 20/7/15
	  ○ Regeneration & Leisure 20/7/15
	  ○ Technical Services 25/3/15
	
	• The Chair of Technical Services Project Working Group (now Environment Services) attended the meeting and provided a brief overview on the role of the PWG. The group review and discuss both revenue funded and capital funded projects. Any updates from SASG and GCO are also discussed. Reports are also discussed at the Departmental Management Teams.	

4.0	**Convergence**
	
	• There are currently 2 Convergence projects that are still live and an update was provided for each of the projects:
	  ○ Spatial European Team (SETS) - end date 30/9/15
	  ○ Carmarthenshire Physical Regeneration Package (ADREF) - end date 30/11/15
	
	• A total of 34 Convergence projects have now ended. WWEC and Finance have undertaken a review and identified any outstanding actions that need to be completed before a project can be fully closed and archived. Copies of the review has been sent to the chairperson of the Project Working Groups for them to monitor and follow up on the outstanding actions.
	
	• An update on the PIV (Project Inspection & Verification) and EFAT audits (European Funds Audit Team) was presented to Grants Panel.
	  ○ The final PIV report has yet to be received for Collaborative Communities
	  ○ An EFAT audit is due to be undertaken BWCABUS
	  ○ We are awaiting any feedback from the EFAT audits on Castles & Princes & Workways	

5.0	**Post 2013-Funding/New Funding Initiatives** • The authority is due to be a partner in a ESI funded	

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	project named Workways +. The project is to be led by Neath/Port Talbot. Approval by WEFO expected in October 2015. The project will then go into the mobilisation phase.
	
	• The capital pot for European funding is far smaller than in previous programmes and it is expected that the majority of the pot will be utilised by Welsh Government. The Authority will know by the end of September what monies are left available for local authorities to apply for.
	
	• GCO attended the WEFO Workshop for the Claims Process for the next round of European Funding. Key changes include:
	  ○ Use of electronic standardised transaction listing on the WEFO on line system. The claim will be populated via the uploaded transaction listing
	  ○ All procurement exercises in excess of £25k will need to be signed off by WEFO before any costs can be claimed
	  ○ No audit required by External Auditors
	  ○ All claims are subject to verification checks by WEFO before any grant payments are made by WEFO
	
	• The team for RDP Leader is now in place and work has started on facilitating projects.
	
	• 3 schemes are currently going to the Outlined Logic Tables stage for the Ireland & Wales Co-operation Programme:
	  ○ Tourism Scheme
	  ○ Social Enterprise Scheme
	  ○ Community Benefit (Energy) Scheme
	
	• The Authority has been successful in receiving an Award of Repayable Funding for a Fund to support town centre regeneration in Llanelli. A report is due to go to the Executive Board meeting next month.	

6.0	**<u>Wales Audit Office</u>** • Audit work is currently being undertaken on the Authority's Final Accounts. Once this work has been completed then WAO can concentrate on the grant audits. Issues identified in the audits are going to be sent to project managers on an ongoing basis rather that at the end of the audits in order to speed	

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	up the audit process. • Draft Accountants Report for Collaborative Communities has been sent to the project manager. Deadline for comments by 10/9/2015. • LIF – final claim submitted to WAO. Information for audit sample has been provided to WAO. Expected date for the completion of the audit is mid October. • Crosshands East – final claim submitted to WAO. Audit work not started. Expected date for the completion of the audit is end of October. A request has been made to WAO to send a sample of transactions to the project manager so that work can be started to retrieve information. • The January 2015 annual audit for Carmarthenshire Physical Regeneration Package (ADREF) has yet to be finalised. A report is currently under review within Resources Department. • The final claim for Property Development Fund has not yet been submitted. Ongoing discussions with WEFO and WAO and a possible reprofile are delaying the submission of the claim. • Concerns have been raised to WAO on the invoicing of WAO audit fees for the final claims for Convergence. As any delays in the audit of the final claims could result in the authority being unable to claim the fees if defrayment hasn't occurred before 31/12/15. • There is no longer a zero tolerance for reporting issues to Welsh Government for grants funded by them. The new materiality threshold for reporting is £10k. Issues under this threshold will still be reported internally to the authority. • The Pupil Deprivation Grant 2014/15 originally on the list for audit by WAO has now been removed. No information has been received via the ERW lead of the change or any revised arrangements. • Indications from WAO in Cardiff that grants are being reviewed by senior managers in Welsh Government and they are now taking a much closer look at which grants they will want the auditors to cover in the future as the size of the audit work programme decreases.	

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7.0	**<u>Internal Audit – Update</u>**	
	• Audit work is due to commence on Supporting People for 2014/15. The deadline for the audit is end of September 2015. Information is due to be received from the department in order for audit work to start.	HP
	• The audit on the Foundation Phase grant has been completed.	
	• A request has been made by the ERW Lead to provide an audit certificate for the following grants for 2014/15: o SEG o WEG o 14-19 Learning Pathways The request was made on the 23rd July with a submission date of 24th August. The lead has been contacted stating that the timeline does not provide sufficient time to conduct the audit. However, the audit work on 14-19 Learning Pathways has been completed, WEG is work in progress and information is still to be received to commence the SEG audit.	HP
	• Discussions are ongoing with the ERW lead regarding the audit work that is expected to be undertaken by Internal Audit for the new Education Improvement Grant for 2015/16. Concerns have also been raised by other local authorities within the region.	HP
8.0	**<u>AOB</u>**	
	• An up to date schedule of grant income outstanding to the Authority was distributed to members of Grants Panel: o Convergence projects where the authority is lead - approximately £6.9m is outstanding o Convergence projects where the authority is a partner – approximately £699k outstanding o RDP - approximately £1.1m outstanding Regular updates are to be provided to Grants Panel members to monitor to situation. A request has also been made to forward a copy of the schedule to the Chairperson of the PWG.	DT
	• A meeting to be set up to the review the current Third Party Grants process and to implement	OB

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	• improvements where needed. • A report is due to be received by Grants Panel regarding the document retention arrangements for the procurement frameworks within the authority. A request has been made to invite the Procurement Manager to the next meeting. • A newsletter regarding changes to State Aids was distributed to member of Grants Panel. A request has been made to forward newsletter to the PWG. • A request has been made to discuss the remit and membership of Grants Panel in the next meeting.	 DT DT All
9.0	• Date of next meeting – 16th November 2015 at 2pm	