

**MINUTES OF THE GRANTS PANEL MEETING HELD ON
3rd JUNE 2024 VIA TEAMS**

PRESENT: Randal Hemingway, Head of Financial Services
 Caroline Powell, Principal Auditor, Internal Audit (IA)
 Stuart Walters, Chair of PWG, Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development (Economic Development)
 Nia Thomas, Chair of PWG, Education & Children (Revenue)
 Les James, Chair of PWG, Communities
 Adrian Harries, Chair of PWG, Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development (Place & Infrastructure)
 Rhian Phillips, Economic Development Area Manager
 Eleanor Ansell, Audit Lead, Audit Wales
 Delyth Thomas, Grants Compliance Officer (GCO)

APOLOGIES: None

	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"> Proposed changes to some of the Education grants for 2024/25 are currently being reviewed within the department. A meeting to be arranged with IA to discuss the proposed changes and agree an audit plan going forward. A meeting to be held with Legal Services to ensure that the Grants Manual clearly covers the Welsh Government's (WG) new public subsidy requirements. The Authority is still waiting for clarification on whether an extension to the current Shared Prosperity Fund Programme will be granted by UK Government. Following the restructure of the Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development Department confirmation to be sought on arrangements for PWGs moving forward. Additional funding of £7m has been awarded via the Health and Social Care Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF) by WG for the Carmarthenshire Hwb. The works contract is due to be awarded with a revised start date of July 2024. The Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) relating to 	<p>NT/CP</p> <p>RP</p> <p>AH/SW</p>

	SUBJECT	ACTION
	<p>the Towy Valley Path project which is funded via LUF has now been approved. The Authority has started the General Vesting Declaration process (GVD) following the approval. The end date for the project has been extended to September 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is progressing on the development of an online system to manage the submission of the grants project proposal form (GPPF). Details to be circulated and considered at Grants Panel. 	RP
3.0	<p><u>Audit Wales – Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update was provided on the 2023/24 audit programme. There are currently no changes to the submission and audit deadlines for Housing Benefits, Teachers Pension, NDR, Pooled Budget & WANLESS returns. • There is a significant change in the number of Education grants that are being merged in 2024/25. Clarification is being sought from Audit Wales if the audit requirements may now change as a result. 	EA
4.0	<p><u>Internal Audit (IA) - Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audits of the 2023/24 grant funded projects has started. These include Local Authority Education grant, Education Improvement Grant (which is part of Regional Consortia Schools Improvement grant), Enable and the Housing Support Grant. 	
5.0	<p><u>Grants Register 2024/25</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information currently recorded on the corporate grant register was considered with a view to incorporating claiming requirements. This to be further reviewed. 	DT/RP/NT

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6.0	<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: 23/11/2023, 24/1/2024 ○ Education & Children (Revenue): 24/11/22, 1/2/23, 23/3/23, 25/5/23, 29/6/23, 21/9/23, 23/11/23, 18/1/24, 21/3/24 • Works on the YMCA building in Llanelli have been completed. The project was funded via WG Transforming Towns. • Managing the process of authorising documents using E-signatures was considered. To ensure its security an authorised document should then be sent direct by email from the approved authorising officer. Guidance on the use of E-signatures due to be issued corporately. • There are a number of grants where claims are submitted in March with estimated costs to the year end and the final claim costs submitted in April/May. There is duplication and an extra burden on the authority. Issue to be referred to WLGA. • A number of grant funded projects have been impacted by the pre-election protocols. This impacts project delivery and consequently project spend. Issue to be raised with the Returning Officer and S151 officer. 	<p>RH</p> <p>RH</p>
7.0	<p><u>European Grants Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £811k of grant remains due to the Authority relating to the Celtic Routes project under the Ireland Wales programme. 	
8.0	<p><u>Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and Levelling Up Fund (LUF)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of projects funded by SPF are progressing and budgets have been fully committed. The deadline for the completion of the programme is 31st March 2025. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LUF funding of £15m has been awarded to the Llanelli project with a project end date of March 2026. 	
9.0	<p><u>Successor Schemes Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No information has been received to date for the next funding programme following SPF or LUF. 	
10.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of next meeting – 12th September 2024 at 3:15pm via Teams 	