

Briefing paper for the Cabinet Secretary for Education and the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning 10 January 2018

‘Ambitious and learning’ and the third sector

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The third sector education, Welsh language and lifelong learning planning group (see list of members in [Appendix 1](#)) welcomes Prosperity for All, the national strategy to deliver the Welsh Government’s key priorities for the rest of the Assembly term.
- 1.2 In November the planning group received a briefing from a senior Welsh Government official on the national strategy, creating a forum for discussion about the role for the third sector in supporting the implementation of the ‘ambitious and learning’ theme.
- 1.3 The purpose of this paper is to highlight parts of the strategy and the ‘ambitious and learning’ theme that the third sector believes it can help Government to deliver; to provide some context for a discussion with the Cabinet Secretary and Minister about the third sector’s role with a view to identifying some priority areas to strengthen joint work.

2. What role can the third sector play in delivering *Prosperity for All*?

- 2.1 The network welcomes the First Minister’s aspiration to *“build a sustainable relationship with the Voluntary Sector, based on the outcomes we all want to achieve for communities and the right funding model to deliver them”* (p20) and commitment to *“a radically different way of working for us and our partners”* (foreword).
- 2.2 The important shift in ‘how’ services are delivered is noted and the intent to encourage greater cross-portfolio working and collaboration is wholly supported. Governance structures to enable this approach will be important to ensure that third sector organisations are able to engage appropriately, report back to, and involve a wider network of stakeholders. We ask officials to use the infrastructure of third sector support to mobilise third sector representatives with the appropriate skills and experience and structured links with a wider network of organisations to effectively influence policy development and implementation. WCVA can enable government to facilitate this process by connecting with the following structures:
 - The Third Sector Partnership Council (TSPC) - national networks elected to represent 26 categories of third sector interest;

- Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) - WCVA working at national level, and the 19 county voluntary councils (CVCs) working at local level, as umbrella bodies for the third sector.

2.4 It is understood that the objectives of the ‘ambitious and learning’ theme are underpinned by [Education in Wales: Our National Mission](#). The Cabinet Secretary is asked for views as to how and through which tier of activity (Welsh Government, education consortia or schools) the third sector should seek to contribute to the enabling objective to create strong and inclusive schools, committed to excellence, equity and well-being, and for clarification as to how this connects to the areas of learners experience (AOLE) of the new curriculum, and in particular the plans to:

- work with partners to identify the most effective means of measuring and improving learner well-being and strengthen the work of schools and their partners to enhance the safeguarding and resilience of all learners;
- support high-quality summer learning programmes, ensuring that our young people don’t lose ground in learning over the summer, helping to reduce the attainment gap;
- implement the Wales Charter for Youth Work and establish an independently chaired National Youth Support Services Board to secure a shared vision for effective youth work.

3. Support young people to make the most of their potential

3.2 Some members of the planning group are involved in the Strategic Stakeholder Group (SSG) for the development of the new curriculum, and look forward to receiving further information about the new AOLE . Engagement with officials would be welcomed to better understand the vision for joint working, to enable third sector organisations to consider how their activities might be aligned to future requirements.

3.3 Teachers are well placed to notice problems with children and young people, and the network agrees that it must be made easier for the teaching workforce to draw on the widest possible support. Third sector organisations work with individual schools to provide vital information, advice and support services for children and families, including support for children with disabilities or additional learning needs, counselling, family learning, food banks, money and debt advice etc.

3.4 We understand that school staff are stretched and want to make it easier to access and refer into services within the community, and see the proposed model of Community Learning Centres as a useful mechanism to help to make this happen. County voluntary councils (CVCs) are well placed to support schools to connect with third sector organisations and community anchor organisations, to strengthen engagement and partnership working.

3.5 It is recommended that criteria for investment from the 21st Century Schools programme includes a requirement for schools to engage with local statutory and third sector services to design facilities that maximise the asset base within the local areas. New practices to maximise this approach should be promoted as part of the programme, for example a model of how the use of school facilities may be maximised for community use ‘out of hours’ may be a ‘Dual-Use Agreement’ between individual diocese, each VA governing body and the Local Authority.

- 3.6 The sector has an important role in enriching the learning experience for every child through participation in volunteering, sports, arts and cultural activities, and education-business link activities that enable them to build skills for life, confidence and networks that will sustain them outside of the formal school environment. The sector welcomes the 'Business Manager' resource that is being piloted with primary schools to work with Clusters of schools to provide additional capacity to organise quality engagements, linked to the AOLE, that add value to the delivery of the curriculum in schools. What is the anticipated role and remit of the Business Managers and how can and should third sector organisations work with them?
- 3.7 The proposed National Leadership Academy has an important role in leading reforms and culture change. Is there scope to include content within the programme to promote understanding of working in partnership with the third sector? Planning Group members are working with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) to host a 'Twitter hour' on this subject, to help to strengthen the understanding of the workforce about the role, structure wide range of support and services that are available from third sector organisations. Similar content could be replicated for the National Leadership Academy.
- 3.8 The third sector welcomes the Welsh in Education Policy and Delivery Plan which aligns Cymraeg 2050 - one million Welsh speakers and the primary objective of *Education in Wales: Our national Mission* for young people in Wales to be bilingually competent and to develop a transformational approach to the learning and assessment of Welsh with the aim of ensuring that, in future, all learners will be able to use the Welsh language when they leave school. The third sector believes these plans should also encompass professionals and delivery and support staff from partners outside of the core education workforce.

4. Build ambition and encourage learning for life

- 4.1 Promoting volunteering and social action from a young age makes a contribution to the goal to *"widen people's horizons and lift their aspirations"*, by giving young people opportunities to explore their passions, develop new skills and confidence, and to broaden their perspective on life. Starting volunteering and engaging with social action from a young age may help to build a lifelong habit of volunteering, contributing to individual and community resilience, with a clear link to the goals of the 'united and connected' theme.
- 4.2 WCVA and officials from the Third Sector Unit and Education department exploring synergy between the Welsh Bacc, the MV programme for recognition and reward of youth volunteering and other youth volunteering and social action initiatives, which enrich learning outside of school. What is the vision for the Welsh Bacc as part of the new curriculum and how could the third sector's role in supporting its implementation be strengthened?

5. Equip everyone with the right skills for a changing world

- 5.1 The goal to support people to develop skills for the digital economy is vital. The third sector welcomes the roll out and implementation of the Digital Competence Framework, which notes that digital competence is more than the 'technology'. The strands of the framework are at the core of third sector principles - namely, citizenship, interaction and collaboration. Involvement of learners with third sector organisations can develop learners' understanding together with the critical

‘thinking’ skills required. Third sector network members are interested to learn of plans for how the sector will be engaged in the expansion of code clubs, and how this work will be commissioned

3. Next steps

3.1 The Cabinet Secretary and Minister are asked for their views about:

- the third sector’s role in delivering the ‘ambitious and learning’ theme of Prosperity for All and for direction on the priority areas in which to strengthen joint work between Government and the sector; and
- how the vision to build a sustainable relationship with the voluntary sector is understood by Government in the context of the ‘ambitious and learning’ theme.

3.2 Specifically, the Cabinet Secretary and Minister are asked to:

- work with WCVA to engage with third sector infrastructure bodies to involve sector representatives in the governance arrangements to support the implementation of the strategy;
- support engagement between relevant officials and the Planning Group to enable a better understanding of the vision for joint working as part of the implementation of the new curriculum, to enable third sector organisations to consider how their activities might be aligned to future requirements;
- identify and disseminate good practice and innovative models to ensure that community use of the new 21st Century Schools is maximised eg ‘Dual-Use Agreements’ between individual diocese, each VA governing body and local authorities;
- include content within the programme of the National Leadership Academy to promote understanding of working in partnership with the third sector; and
- comment on whether the anticipated role of cluster ‘Business Managers’ might include engagement with local third sector organisations to build a programme of enrichment activities to add value to the curriculum, and to maximise community use of school facilities;
- comment on whether the plans to support objective for young people in Wales to be bilingually competent will encompass professionals and delivery and support staff from partners outside of the core education workforce;
- provide a steer on the vision for the Welsh Bacc as part of the new curriculum and how the third sector’s role could be strengthened in supporting its implementation;
- outline plans for how the sector will be engaged in the expansion of code clubs, and how this work will be commissioned.

Appendix 1: Members of third sector education, Welsh language and lifelong learning planning group

Adult Learning Wales
Age Cymru
Barnardo's Cymru
Business in the Community in Wales
Children in Wales - Plant yng Nghymru
Chwarae Teg
Citizens Advice Cymru

Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services
Cytûn: Churches Together in Wales
EYST
Flintshire Local Voluntary Council
Governors Wales
Menter Iaith Casnewydd
Mentrau Iaith Cymru
National learning and Work Institute
Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service
Net-Teach Ltd
Newlink Wales
Oxfam Cymru
Play Wales
Race Council Cymru
Race Equality First
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff
RSPCA Cymru
Save the Children (Wales)
Siawns Teg
Size of Wales
SNAP Cymru
Techniquist
The Prince's Trust Cymru
UNA Exchange
University of the Third Age
Urdd Gobaith Cymru
Vision in Wales
Voices From Care
Wales Assembly of Women
Wales Co-operative Development and Training
Wales Council For Deaf People
Wales Council for Voluntary Action
Wales Environment Link
Welsh Centre for International Affairs
Welsh Sports Association
Welsh Women's Aid
WEN Wales