



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau a Diwylliant
The Communities and Culture Committee**

**Dydd Mercher, 20 Chwefror 2008
Wednesday, 20 February 2008**

Cynnwys
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cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Paul Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Nerys Evans	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Janice Gregory	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Lesley Griffiths	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
David Lloyd	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Lynne Neagle	Llafur Labour
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Swyddogion Gwasanaeth Seneddol y Cynulliad yn bresennol
Assembly Parliamentary Service officials in attendance

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Neil Cox	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members' Research Service
Chris Reading	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.00 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.00 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Janice Gregory:** Good morning. The usual housekeeping rules apply. Headsets are available for translation or the amplification of sound; translation is on channel 1, and channel 0 can be used for amplification. Please ensure that your mobile phone, BlackBerry, pager, or any other electronic device, is turned off. There is no fire alarm test scheduled for today, so, if the alarm sounds, we will be required to leave the building in an orderly and safe fashion.

[2] I understand that Mark Isherwood will be late. Lynne Neagle has told me that she will also be late and may not be able to make it this morning. We have no substitutions.

9.01 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Gyllido Sefydliadau yn y Sector Gwirfoddol yng Nghymru—
Argymhellion Allweddol

Inquiry into the Funding of Voluntary Sector Organisations in Wales—Key Recommendations

[3] **Janice Gregory:** We have finished gathering evidence for this inquiry. I do not know how anyone else feels, but I was interested in the evidence provided by the people who came in; they did a good job of articulating their concerns and comments about voluntary sector, or third sector, funding in Wales. Issues have arisen from that evidence gathering, and I thank Chris for the easy-to-read paper that he and his team have prepared for us. We need to go through this paper, and I believe that we have the time to go through each individual item on the grid, which is on page 4. Someone may have some bright ideas and may not feel that we need to go through it line by line, but I think that it would be useful for us to do that.

[4] Once we have all this information, we will prepare a draft report, which we will consider after the Easter break. The other thing that we need to do this morning is to think about our next inquiry.

[5] Does anyone want to start, or do you have anything that you wish to add, Neil?

[6] **Mr Cox:** No, I have nothing to add.

[7] **Janice Gregory:** Okay. Let us go through the key issues that came up. It was clear fairly early on that there were emerging issues and common threads, one of which was funding. We always knew that virtually everyone who came through the door to present evidence to us would raise that issue.

[8] The first point under 'Funding Criteria' is,

[9] 'We found a positive acknowledgement of the pioneering support that the National Assembly for Wales has provided through the Voluntary Sector Scheme'.

[10] That is evident. If anyone has a contrary view, please stop me. The next point is,

[11] 'It can be difficult to obtain funding for core activities; a regular amount of guaranteed core income allows voluntary organisations to develop, build on existing projects and plan ahead'.

[12] That was pretty clear. The third point is,

[13] 'There is an emphasis on funding 'innovative' projects, often at the expense of those with a proven track-record'.

[14] That was an important comment, which was made by several groups. The fourth point notes that,

[15] 'The Welsh Assembly Government targets funding at national organisations; with some inconsistency in defining what this means. But there could be local groups that are better able to provide this service in particular areas'.

[16] We will be here until 12 p.m. if I read every line. You are all very polite this morning; you did not say 'Shut up.'. Had you noticed that I had started to leave words out? [*Laughter.*] I was just checking that you were all keeping up.

[17] So, we think that the funding criteria are an incredibly important part of this. I may be wrong, but I do not think that that was our reason for taking up this inquiry. The funding

criteria probably need to form the first part of our recommendations. Does anyone have any ideas on how we can best link all of these together? We cannot make a recommendation on each one or we will end up with 150 recommendations. In my experience from the old Social Justice and Regeneration Committee—I am sure that Peter will agree and I apologise for harking back to the last Assembly—the fewer recommendations you make, the more chance you have of those being accepted by the Minister and taken forward. We were always successful on that committee; we made numerous recommendations, but they were always very focused. They were accepted by the Minister and taken into account.

[18] **Joyce Watson:** We must start with the issue of the funding criteria, because it sets the basis for everything to follow. It also separates immediately those who need capital from those who need revenue. The voluntary sector is mostly looking for revenue. Logically following on from that, it then decides which pot it is going for and who is administering it. When we are talking about funding criteria, there is a separation between providing services and, perhaps in many cases, providing information. Those are two distinct parts. That is where everything flows from, because if it is the case that they are providing only information, and primarily for a statutory sector body—whether it be the Assembly, local government or whoever—they will not be able, in many cases, to get their funding from anywhere other than those statutory agencies. If we have identified a need, and that need is always going to exist, long-term funding and sustainability are crucial. If organisations are providing a service, they do better, because there are many more pots from which they can draw money. That message is implicit here, but perhaps it is not absolutely clear. I say that only on the basis of my own experience and expertise.

[19] Therefore, that is a base. Following on from that, there is an issue about innovation. We need innovation, but we need to handle it sensibly. Things work because they have been tried and tested and will always work. We need innovation, but not at the expense of things that work; that is a key issue.

[20] **Peter Black:** On the recommendations, the important thing is that they are focused and measurable. That must be the main criterion. It might mean having 20 or 30 recommendations. I agree with Joyce about the funding criteria. There is clearly an issue about core funding, but, on the part of several organisations, there is an issue about clarity about what is available, how they should access it and what mechanisms they need to use to get money. Greater clarity needs to be provided by the Assembly Government and by local authorities. It is difficult to make recommendations for 22 local authorities, and I do not think that it is our business to run 22 local authorities. However, we may need to look at the Assembly Government guidance to see whether it can provide greater clarity with regard to the funding streams that are available and provide more information about those and how to apply for them. Many organisations would appreciate that service.

9.10 a.m.

[21] **Janice Gregory:** Does anyone else have a question? I see that you do not.

[22] The point about access to information was important, and the people who came in to give evidence certainly thought that there should be easier access to information. Access seems to be disjointed, if there is any at all, and my understanding is that some groups spend most of their time trying to access information. Are we happy with the broad thrust of the two boxes in the grid? I think that Chris, Ian and Sarah have covered this very well in their paper, but would anyone like to add anything? I still think that the county voluntary councils have a role to play in securing access to information. This is a bit of a hobby-horse for me, but I believe that, while they do excellent work across the 22 local authorities, their reason for being is to support the voluntary sector in their local authority area. Therefore, they should be the one-stop shop for access to information, and people should be able to pick up the

telephone and get this information—and you can in some areas. The service is not patchy, as such, but it is not consistent throughout the 22 local authority areas. I would like to see a recommendation on firming up the role of CVCs, looking at a mission statement of what they are supposed to provide, and outlining what they are supposed to be doing. If that includes access to information, I think that it should be added to that missions statement.

[23] **Nerys Evans:** Cytunaf â'r hyn yr ydych newydd ei ddweud, ond yr arweiniad cenedlaethol ddylai darparu gwybodaeth am y grantiau sydd ar gael, gan fod y rheiny ar lefel genedlaethol. Dylai'r wybodaeth sydd ar gael yn lleol fod am bethau lleol, a dylai'r arweiniad gynnwys yr hyn sydd ar gael yn genedlaethol.

Nerys Evans: I agree with what you just said, but the national guidance should provide information on the grants available, given that they are available at a national level. Any information that is given at a local level should reflect what is available locally, but guidance should outline what is available nationally.

[24] **Peter Black:** I do not think that it is beyond the wit of the Assembly Government to provide a website, for example, with details of all the funding streams that it has available. It could list the grants that have already been allocated, and incorporate similar information for the 22 local authorities. It would take a bit of work to set up—and it is the sort of project that the Wales Council for Voluntary Action could be commissioned to do—but if that website were provided and updated regularly, all organisations could see what was available and what had already been allocated, and they could assess what was possible for their own projects.

[25] **Janice Gregory:** Would you include the grantfinder information in that? That is available to CVCs, but I think that it costs some £500 or £600, off the top of my head.

[26] **Peter Black:** Grantfinder is a database that is available commercially, as you say, but most CVCs have it. I am thinking of information available on Government funding sources. You could throw in, if it were feasible, the lottery funds, and funds from any other organisations that are directed by Government, and that would include local authorities. That kind of information could be collected as an online database, and could be made available freely to all organisations. If people then wanted to get more information about trusts and various other charitable organisations that might give grants, they could go to the CVC and access the grantfinder there.

[27] **Mark Isherwood:** To endorse that last point, I am sure that all of us have been to the Members' research service on many occasions on behalf of such and such an organisation looking for funding, and asking what it can produce. There is always a long list of voluntary and charitable trusts, as well as the statutory and mainstream bodies. So, that information is available, and should be accessible to all.

[28] **Janice Gregory:** It should be. There is no doubt about that. So, are we happy with that? The idea about the website is very good, Peter, as are the ideas about the CVCs and the access-to-information issue, taking on board what Nerys said as well. I see that you are all in agreement. Sustainable funding was another thorny issue, was it not?

[29] **Lesley Griffiths:** I feel quite strongly about this. Many witnesses said that they had lost staff because their funding came to an end after three years. They then got funding through different routes, but had lost the staff and their expertise. I think that a five-year funding regime would be better.

[30] **Mark Isherwood:** I would endorse that, provided that they maintain the terms of the original funding. One issue that has been raised both in this review and the last, during the second Assembly, is the rollover period: far more notice is required to get things in place. Part of the problem is that, even when groups apply in time and get the money, it is too late to save

the jobs. So, it is not just about the term, as the period of application and portability also came up as issues in the last commission report, as you will recall. At that transition period, there should be a streamlined process for an organisation that is simply renewing the same or a similar grant.

[31] **Peter Black:** The other side of this sustainability argument is having robust tapering arrangements in place at the very beginning of the grant process, so that both parties are clear about what happens at the end of that three-year or five-year period, and both plan for the end of that grant period, whether that means a new grant being made available or finding alternative funding sources. It is not easy to do that in many instances, but it is important that everyone's mind is focused on that, because that in itself will help sustainability.

[32] **Janice Gregory:** We cannot make any recommendations on any underspends, although that was another reason given: money is available at the end of the year. We certainly would not want groups to hang onto that money and not divvy it up between the voluntary groups and organisations. I think that we should comment on it, but do we want to put a recommendation in about that?

[33] **Peter Black:** The key thing is that, if money is to be available at the last minute, at the end of the financial year, it should be on the same basis as the money that is available at the beginning of the financial year. So, it is not about saying, 'Here is a pot of money; spend it', and then, when it is spent, you leave them in the lurch. It has to be on the basis that this is part of a long-term grant.

[34] **Janice Gregory:** We want to mention that, do we not?

[35] **Peter Black:** I think so.

[36] **Janice Gregory:** We have to mention it.

[37] **Peter Black:** That has to be sustainable, too. You cannot just throw money at an organisation and then, when it is spent, say, 'Sorry, there is no money left, so you have to make all your staff redundant'. There has to be proper planning behind that. There is a big issue in Government about money being carried forward; it happens in a number of areas where proper planning would have meant that the money was used more efficiently. In housing, for example, and social housing grants, it can take two or three years to get a housing scheme off the ground, by which time, the money that has been allocated to it has gone elsewhere or is underspent. The same can happen here. Perhaps Government needs to plan the use of its resources better, and be prepared to carry money forward within existing budget headings, if necessary, to meet its objectives.

[38] **Janice Gregory:** I think that we need to handle that one quite delicately, because I am sure that we, around this table, all know of organisations that benefited hugely from year-end slippage if they were able to spend it within the allotted time. However, you are right to say that there is uncertainty, and you have to be on the ball to be able to access that and get it through the door within the timescale. Chris has taken note.

[39] **Peter Black:** We should try to make that process sustainable as well.

[40] **Janice Gregory:** Exactly.

[41] **Nerys Evans:** I fynd yn ôl at y pwynt am yr amserlen, cytunaf â'r sylwadau a wnaed ynghylch symud tuag at amserlen pum mlynedd o hyd, ond, os ydym yn rhy gaeth, **Nerys Evans:** To go back to the point about the timetable, I agree with the comments made about moving towards a five-year timetable, but, if we are too rigid about this,

onid ydym mewn perygl o eithrio y are we not in danger of excluding those
prosiectau hynny sydd eisiau arian mewn projects that need money at short notice?
amser byr? Efallai fod eisiau rhyw fath o Perhaps there needs to be some flexibility in
hyblygrwydd yn y system yn hytrach na the system rather than our taking a one-size-
chymryd bod un system yn addas i bawb. fits-all approach.

[42] **Janice Gregory:** Definitely. We will do a disservice to some projects and initiatives if we say that it has to be five years long. Some projects do not need five years in which to deliver. So, there needs to be that flexibility. It will be a little more difficult to work out which ones deserve five years, which ones need five years, and which ones need only two or three years. Okay, I think that we have covered that issue.

9.20 a.m.

[43] The next issue is on the CVCs, and you all know my opinion on that. Does anyone else have any ideas? It is very much covered.

[44] **Peter Black:** The one question that I have, Chair, is who does the reviewing? Is it done on a partnership basis at a local level, or is it done by the Assembly Government? It would be inappropriate for the Assembly Government to review a local CVC, and perhaps that should be done between the partners involved. Normally, there are tripartite partnerships between the local health board, the local authority and the CVC, and maybe there should be a process whereby the partners involved carry out this review. The discipline of carrying out that review should, hopefully, be enough to carry forward any recommendations.

[45] **Nerys Evans:** Ond yr ydym wedi **Nerys Evans:** But we have heard evidence
clywed tystiolaeth bod rhai cynghorau'n that some county voluntary councils work
gweithio'n well nag eraill, neu'n gweithio better than others, or work in different ways.
mewn ffyrdd gwahanol. Mae'n bwysig ein It is important that we have some sort of
bod yn cael rhyw fath o arweiniad national guidance on that, so that we can
cededlaethol am hynny, fel ein bod yn gallu share good practice and share information,
rhannu arfer da a gwybodaeth, yn hytrach na rather than that we concentrate only on the
chanolbwyntio ar y lefel leol yn unig. local level.

[46] **Peter Black:** Maybe that could be done by the WCVA overseeing the process and disseminating best practice. I am reluctant to allow the Assembly Government to get involved in this.

[47] **Janice Gregory:** I think that the WCVA, as the umbrella body, should look at how it best reviews the performance of its CVCs. There is no mention of whether they are reviewed now, but I do not believe that they are. So, I think that our recommendation should be that the WCVA sets up some type of review body. Do we want it reviewing them itself?

[48] **Peter Black:** The WCVA is a membership organisation, so it is not as though it oversees the CVCs; the CVCs affiliate themselves to it, do they not? If so, they do not really have the authority to review them. What we should be saying in guidance to local authorities and the various partner CVCs is that they need to carry out this review. We would task the WCVA to work with them in doing it and we would just have to trust them to do it. At the end of the day, the Assembly Government has the finger on the funding, and if it feels as though that is not being dealt with properly, it can say, 'Look, we are giving you money but we are not satisfied with the process, so you need to review it'. I would like to keep this as a bottom-up process, with those mechanisms to safeguard it.

[49] **Mark Isherwood:** I suppose that what you are talking about is an audit process, which should be reviewed periodically to assess performance and to identify areas of

improvement. That is what audit is, largely. So, should we not be talking about reviewing the audit process and establishing standard criteria? Auditors, as professionals, have standard criteria anyway, and the question is whether standard national audit guidance needs to be applied to CVCs. However, rather than setting up a completely new body, it seems to me that it just needs an effective audit process.

[50] **Peter Black:** Are CVCs subject to audit?

[51] **Janice Gregory:** I am sure that they would be.

[52] **Peter Black:** So, that process is in place.

[53] **Janice Gregory:** That process is in place; it is an audit of the performance.

[54] **Peter Black:** What we are talking about here is more of a political process, whereby the CVCs are reviewing their objectives, how well they are achieving objectives, and whether they could do anything better. If they do that in partnership with the organisations that they work with—and the local authority and the health board will have their own objectives—the question is how can we bring all three together?

[55] **Janice Gregory:** I think that the audit process is in place; I am almost positive of that. I assume that what we want is to ensure that they are delivering, but, taking on board Nerys's point, some are delivering better than, or differently to, others, so some thought would need to be given to how the review would take place, who would carry it out and how often. So, that is an important recommendation, taking on board everything that has been said, but there has to be a common theme in the review process. However, it cannot be too rigid. One CVC could not be seen to be failing against a set of criteria when it is delivering successfully locally. So, we need to think about that one quite a bit, Chris. We will come back to you with what we have had. Once all these are done, you will be sent them, and we would welcome any comments on them as soon as possible. Neil, feel free to jump in if you want to add anything.

[56] The next point is on strategic planning. I assume that Members do not want me to read it out. Does anyone have any comments on this?

[57] **Joyce Watson:** The local service boards really worry me, even before they have got off the ground, because it is about who sits on them and who benefits from that. If we are not careful, one of the major losers on a local service board could be third sector organisations, because they may not have a strong voice or even the capacity to sit on a local service board. When will those service boards meet, who will they listen to and who will they be made up of? It worries me hugely. If we are going to use the service boards as a vehicle to set the delivery of services in a local area, the composition has to be right and it has to be equal and fair. I will be forthright and say that I believe that one of the major losers on local service boards could be services for women. Unless there is a gender balance and a balance in terms of people from the black and minority ethnic community, women and the BME community could be key losers on local service boards. So, unless I can see that they are set up equally and fairly, I would not want to see them as a delivery vehicle for anything, because if they are predominantly made up of key people from local authorities, you will be lucky to get a woman on there. That is my concern, even before they start.

[58] **Janice Gregory:** I understand your concern. The trouble is that I cannot see that we would have a great input into the make-up of the local service boards. That is the whole point. I understand your concern, but if it is not going to be the local service boards doing this, we need to decide what vehicle we are going to use.

[59] **Peter Black:** The local service boards worry me too. My understanding is that they are not there to deliver services; they are there to co-ordinate cross-border services on a strategic level. In that sense, they are not suited to the sort of role that we have for them in this paper. Clearly, most voluntary sector activity centres around the county voluntary council on a local authority level and most of the strategic planning and commissioning of services takes place at local authority and local health board level and so it is at that level that that work needs to be carried out. In many ways, one of the purposes of the review referred to earlier is to carry out that strategic planning and to ensure that all the organisations are working to the same strategy and towards the same aims in terms of the area that they serve. I am not trying to impose uniformity but to ensure that the best possible use of public money is being made in local authority areas to deliver services for local people. It seems to me that local service boards do not really have a role in this regard. If we are talking about clear, strategic planning and the commissioning of services, I would rather link it to the review that we referred to earlier than have it linked as it is in this paper.

[60] **Mark Isherwood:** I want largely to endorse what we have heard. Too often, the voluntary sector is seen as a consultee rather than a strategic partner and that applies in the areas that Joyce refers to and to so many others. It also applies to commissioning, directly by local authorities, individually, by local health boards, by community safety partnerships, substance misuse action teams and so on. So, there should be some comment on that, because the sector has a huge, front-line, strategic contribution to make and often gets frustrated when it feels that its voice is not being heard and it has to tender for what it sees as a less-than-perfect solution.

9.30 a.m.

[61] There is also the issue around wherever the commissioning is being done from, ensuring that commissioning is on a genuine level playing field for all sectors, subject to their meeting the relevant criteria.

[62] **Janice Gregory:** Thank you, Mark. The next point is on strategic funding.

[63] **David Lloyd:** My point follows on from the last point about strategic planning, in terms of being about the mindset of how Government views the voluntary sector. Therefore, it is not just about planning, it is about funding and about the voluntary sector's being a proper, strategic partner, as opposed to a mere consultee, or recipient of funding. It is meant to be an equal partner, but the way that the voluntary sector is currently treated means that it is not. Therefore, the whole mindset of how voluntary sector bodies have to apply for funding has to change fundamentally, to reflect the idea that they should be equal partners.

[64] They should not be made to apply for project funding, various bids, and so on. As strategic partners, signed up to Government aims, they should have some guarantee of long-term secure funding. Obviously, there would have to be some safeguards in that, because it cannot be seen that the voluntary sector has been captured by Government. However, voluntary sector organisations deserve security of funding and strategic planning, because they are proper strategic partners, rather than just someone else out there who is bidding for money, which is how they are treated at present, be that annual, three-year, or five-year funding. The voluntary sector is supposed to be on a different plane, because we have a strategic equality partnership with it, and that is ill-reflected in how we treat it, and have treated it for the last few years.

[65] Therefore, that is the fundamental point, to change that mindset. It applies to planning and to funding. We need to change the mindset. I do not know how you put that into words.

[66] **Janice Gregory:** I am sure that Chris will manage it.

[67] **Joyce Watson:** I believe that that is the basis for where we should be. We need to start treating the voluntary sector—or the third sector, as I prefer to call it, and it prefers to be called—as an equal partner, as you say, Dai. It is not only about funding for minority issues, because often the sector is the only mechanism to deliver a service. Voluntary organisations are often the only ones with expertise in a particular service. That is often the case with regard to mental health services, and is most definitely the case when it comes to domestic abuse and dealing with all of those issues. Without them, that service, and many other services, cannot function, because the expertise does not exist elsewhere, yet they are subject to the vagaries of being funded, or not funded, by unitary authorities. If you look at the record of unitary authorities, and where they are most likely to cut funding, it is in the voluntary sector. That is the rub of all of this, is it not? That is what we are trying to unpick. Therefore, Dai's point is crucial—we must see the third sector as an equal partner, and everything can flow from that.

[68] **Peter Black:** The areas that local authorities are most likely to cut are the non-statutory services; if you make a service statutory, and it is being delivered through a voluntary sector organisation, it is more difficult to cut. If you have a crucial service for a particular area, or a Wales-wide service that is being delivered locally, making it a statutory service is the best way to protect it from local authority cuts.

[69] The paper notes, under 'Strategic Funding', that there are 'too many individual pots of funding'. I believe that everyone would agree with that. The history of the Assembly since 1999—and this is true of every committee that I have sat on where this has been discussed—is that we have said over and over again that we must streamline funding, reduce the number of pots, and reduce the amount of bureaucracy in applications. To an extent, we have succeeded, but in some ways we have not. We see the same pattern in local government, where we try to reduce the number of grants, yet every local education authority has about 70-odd individual grants of a few thousand pounds each.

[70] It seems to me that one advantage of having the portal or website that we talked about earlier, is that, suddenly, it all becomes transparent. We will be able to see how many pots there are. That could be a mechanism to cast some light on what is available and, I hope, concentrate minds in doing so. There should be a recommendation about streamlining the number of pots of money and making it easier to apply along the lines of the community facility grant for example, which is very simple to apply for, as opposed to Objective 1 or lottery funding, which is a nightmare. However, we should also say that the portal should be used to concentrate minds.

[71] **David Lloyd:** Following on from that and from Joyce's point, on the strategic funding issue, the third sector is engaged in activity that private enterprise cannot or will not engage in because there is no money in it. A great deal of funding at the moment is predicated on a successful business plan or the idea that something will become self-funding after a time. Some recognition of the difficulty is needed; business has not entered that arena and therefore there will not be a strong business plan. There must be an understanding that the third sector is filling a gap that will not be filled by anybody else, and that is why it needs the guarantee of strategic equality of funding and that it will not have to apply for so many miserable little pots of money. No-one else would be doing this work; if it were profitable, private enterprise would already be in there with successful business plans and driving huge profits. Therefore, we are talking about gaps in provision that would remain gaps without the third sector. This must include some recognition of that.

[72] **Janice Gregory:** What about the idea from the Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services about community foundations?

[73] **Peter Black:** It is quite a useful model, but it is down to each area to decide where it

feels that that model is appropriate to it. We could highlight this as a way forward, but we would then have to leave it up to each county voluntary council to decide whether it wanted to take it on board.

[74] **Mark Isherwood:** Following on from that, do we need a little more information about what the outcome of this has been, and how effective it has been? I have one reservation. In my previous job, I had a pot of money to allocate to good local causes, but the requirement of my employers was that we got publicity for doing it. We wanted it to be publicly known, but if it just went into a huge pot that would not happen; you would not know that it was handing over a cheque for a church steeple or a football club or whatever. About two years ago, there was a seminar in the Assembly on corporate social responsibility, which, among other things, identified the fact that while many givers want that public acknowledgement, there are many others who wish to give in absolute confidentiality—and for them this would be ideal. However, for the other group, which is doing this for two reasons—to help the community, but also to be seen to be helping—this model would not be any good at all. Therefore, we need to know about the outcome.

[75] **Joyce Watson:** I like the principle. I am going to sound like a real sceptic, but that may be because I have worked in the third sector. I like the idea of a pooled pot of money, but it will be successful only if everyone is equally able to access it. I really like the idea, and I would like to know more. Manchester is quite far away, but Bristol is just across the water; you can get there by train in 35 minutes.

[76] **Mark Isherwood:** Manchester is just across the water from me. [*Laughter.*]

[77] **Joyce Watson:** I am going from here—from where we are sitting now. I do not know how you feel, Chair, but I would like to look at that model to see whether it has any value. I would not like to sign up to something that PAVs has recommended to us without our knowing what it is.

[78] **Janice Gregory:** Joyce is volunteering to go off to Bristol.

[79] **Joyce Watson:** I will go to Bristol, but I am not going to Manchester.

[80] **Mark Isherwood:** My father is a Manchester city councillor—not for my party—so I could ask him to ask the officers in the council for information.

[81] **Janice Gregory:** You could go to Manchester, Mark.

[82] **Mark Isherwood:** That would be all right.

[83] **Janice Gregory:** Joyce can go to Bristol and Mark can go to Manchester. It is a good idea. Is everyone happy with that? If anyone else wants to go they can. So, we will hold any recommendation on that in abeyance. Is that okay? I see that it is. Marvellous, I will make a note that Mark is to go to Manchester and that Joyce is to go to Bristol.

9.40 a.m.

[84] **David Lloyd:** Does the foundation also work in the Seychelles? [*Laughter.*]

[85] **Janice Gregory:** Who is volunteering for the Seychelles? You never know.

[86] We will move on to the application process. We will not take these one at a time, but they are absolutely vital. Most of us have a bee in our bonnet about the application process, have we not? Peter mentioned CFAP, which I think has one of the easiest application forms

that anyone has ever seen, thanks to Edwina Hart. Everyone is very complimentary about that. I feel that that is something that we need to push. The application process has to be streamlined; it has to be made simpler. However, at the same time, it has to gather the information that is required for the proper audit of the awarding of public funds. We all understand that. Are there any comments on this? I would like us to put in a strong recommendation about this.

[87] **Lesley Griffiths:** I agree with you on that. I also feel the same as you do about CVCs; they should support organisations and offer more help with access to funding and application forms. That should also be a strong recommendation.

[88] **Janice Gregory:** Thank you. Does anyone else have anything to add?

[89] **Peter Black:** I think that this is spot-on.

[90] **Janice Gregory:** It is spot-on, is it not?

[91] **Mark Isherwood:** On passporting, having applied successfully, the information is then presumably held on a database, so could they not simply access the database? On the new form, you would simply indicate any changes since the last application.

[92] **Janice Gregory:** Yes. Does anyone have a strong objection to that? I think that it is a good idea. It would need to be clear that any changes would need to be indicated on the new application. I am happy with that. Is everyone else happy? I see that you are. Chris, have you noted that?

[93] **Mr Reading:** Yes.

[94] **Janice Gregory:** Thank you. There were some bilingual issues. Nerys?

[95] **Nerys Evans:** Dywedodd rhai tystion bod angen nid yn unig i'r Llywodraeth roi digon o arian i'r rhai sy'n darparu cyllid ond, hefyd, fod angen sicrhau bod prosesau'r Llywodraeth ei hun yn ddigon da i ddarparu'r wybodaeth yn ddwyieithog. Clywsom hynny gan rai tystion. Yn ogystal â darparu digon o gyllid i eraill, mae'n bwysig sicrhau bod prosesau'r Llywodraeth yn ddigon da—fel y dylent fod.

Nerys Evans: Some witnesses said that there was a need not only for the Government to provide enough money to those who provide funding, but it also had to ensure that its own processes were good enough to provide the information bilingually. We heard that from a few witnesses. In addition to providing sufficient funds for others, it was also important that it ensured that the Government's processes were good enough—as they should be.

[96] **Janice Gregory:** Yes, we are all happy with that.

[97] Are there any comments on monitoring and evaluation? One point made was that the process is too bureaucratic, which we all know to be true. We know that the same is also true of the evaluation process. We know that there has to be a robust monitoring and evaluation system, but almost all of the presenters found that it was too bureaucratic, was very time-consuming, and, in many instances, detracted from staff doing all of this. If my memory serves me correctly, applicants are being asked for the evaluation of the wrong things. We seem to have a blanket evaluation and monitoring system. It does not always ask the right questions to have the right outcomes. So, that needs to be a strong recommendation. They all need to be strong recommendations, but I think that there needs to be a review of the monitoring and evaluation process. How do we tell them that they need to monitor and evaluate what is relevant? Well, it is easy, we tell them to monitor and evaluate what is

relevant, and not something that is relevant to another funding stream.

[98] **Peter Black:** The emphasis on outcomes and clear feedback are the two important parts of this. If you focus on outcomes as opposed to process, then hopefully things will become clearer. If you ensure that organisations get timely and clear feedback, they will all benefit from that—in fact, both the funder and those who receive funding will benefit from it. That would be an improvement.

[99] **Joyce Watson:** Peter is right. However, if you start at the beginning, with a clear service level agreement, or a clear application form, you understand why you are funding people. Often, people are funding people without even understanding why they are doing so and what they expect the outcome to be. Therefore, the whole system starts from the beginning, does it not? There should be clear forms that are already set up, within that, the SLA, or the expected outcome; then you can get your monitoring. I have seen—I will not name names—Assembly departments that do not understand where it all started, because things shift along, and they end up in another department. They are trying to monitor an outcome and change an SLA halfway through; you cannot do that to people.

[100] **Nerys Evans:** I ychwanegu at hynny, os ydym wedi argymhell ein bod yn symud tuag at amserlenni cyllido pum mlynedd, yn hytrach na thair blynedd, bydd gan hynny oblygiadau ar gyfer y broses hon hefyd, oherwydd y bydd monitro'n digwydd yn llai aml. **Nerys Evans:** In addition to that, if we have recommended that we move towards a five-year funding timetable rather than a three-year one, that will also have implications for this process, because monitoring will happen less often.

[101] **Janice Gregory:** Okay, is everyone happy with that? Therefore, we know the basis of that recommendation. The next heading is 'Marketing and Branding'.

[102] I believe that we need to stress this point. I have always felt that, if we give money as an Assembly, we should make that known; if money is given by Europe, everyone knows it—you pass a sign with the European emblem on it and you know who has given the money. I believe that we sell ourselves short in terms of funding. We have all talked to people who ask, 'Is there any money in the Assembly for my project?'; when you start listing it, you find that virtually every penny that they have had is Assembly money, but channelled in different ways. We need to get a grip on this; we are not blowing our own trumpet, and people need to understand that the Assembly is giving money but that it goes through another route. Therefore, we need to include something to make it clear that the Assembly's name needs to be included.

[103] The next heading is 'EU Structural Funds—Convergence and Competitiveness'.

[104] **Peter Black:** This is like wandering into a minefield. [*Laughter.*]

[105] **Janice Gregory:** Yes. We need to make the process simpler.

[106] **Lesley Griffiths:** I do not believe that it is a perception; in my experience, there are real difficulties. With the Genesis project in Wrexham, for instance—which Mark is probably aware of—the Welsh Assembly Government has just had to come in with an interim payment so that it can carry on until June. Therefore, I would like to recommend that the Government keeps the third sector fully informed of progress and current activity.

[107] **Peter Black:** There is a huge problem with structural funding, in terms of the application process, the monitoring process, spending the money and claiming it back. I believe that everyone finds it difficult. Any voluntary sector, or third sector, organisation that

applies for convergence funding, even with its eyes wide open, is stumbling into a minefield; I do not envy those organisations at all. My recommendation is, 'If you can avoid it, please do'. However, there are times when it would be appropriate, and that is important.

[108] Therefore, it seems that the important thing here is not just information, but, if a voluntary sector organisation wants to make an application, it is going to need to some assistance. Some sort of advice centre needs to be available in the Welsh European Funding Office that will focus on helping the voluntary sector access this funding. Professional funding organisations, and local government, find it bad enough; a voluntary sector organisation, even one with full-time employees, will find this to be a complete nightmare.

[109] **Janice Gregory:** I agree. We need to be able to provide assistance for serious EU bids, and I would like to see that strengthened here. Are you all happy with that? I see that you are.

9.50 a.m.

[110] The next one is the thorny issue of lottery funding. Does anyone have any comments on this? I am sure that we all do.

[111] **Peter Black:** The big issue here is the money, is it not? The process is well established, and most organisations understand it. There are big issues around sustainability with lottery funding. Some organisations seem to have got over that, such as the KPC Centre in Pyle, which is on its third three-year lottery grant. It has overcome that problem. However, there are issues of sustainability. The big issue is the money being taken from that and poured into the Olympics—that black hole.

[112] **Janice Gregory:** Even in the case of KPC, it went to the wire, did it not? It is very unfair.

[113] **Peter Black:** As the lottery works under Government direction, I think that it would be useful for us to make a recommendation to Ministers that the lottery examines the sustainability of its own funding in a similar way to that which we discussed earlier in relation to tapering arrangements, clear objectives, and so on. If it carried out that review, it might help the voluntary sector to access lottery funding. Most organisations go in with their eyes wide open and know that it is a one-off grant. Many of the grants are capital grants, which is okay. However, there needs to be revenue funding attached to that and they need to have a plan with regard to what will happen after that. Perhaps Ministers need to recommend to lottery funders that they review themselves, to ensure that they are meeting the criteria that the Assembly Government would apply to the funding that it gives to the voluntary sector.

[114] **Janice Gregory:** Okay. Mark, do you want to comment on this?

[115] **Mark Isherwood:** The last sentence contains the key objective in this recommendation. The report states that examples of good practice 'should be disseminated to local authorities'. Should that not be, 'to all commissioning bodies' and not just local authorities?

[116] **Janice Gregory:** Okay. What about the dormant account scheme?

[117] **Lesley Griffiths:** This could be quite exciting. We do not know how much money we will get, but it could be a significant amount. It is vital that the Government ensures that Wales gets its fair share. I hope that you could include some recommendations on this.

[118] **Janice Gregory:** I have £1.12 in an Abbey National account somewhere in my

maiden name. [*Laughter.*] I absolutely agree with you.

[119] **David Lloyd:** It could have been in Northern Rock. [*Laughter.*]

[120] **Janice Gregory:** I thought that you were going to say something about my £1.12.

[121] **Peter Black:** The famous Government bank.

[122] **David Lloyd:** That is the one. It is one big dormant account.

[123] **Janice Gregory:** That is enough. I see that we are happy with this. It is exciting. If only we knew how much was in there. This subject has started them all off about Northern Rock.

[124] We will move on to local authority funding. Joyce, do you have a comment?

[125] **Joyce Watson:** This really worries, because I know of a local authority that gives more to the young farmers than to Women's Aid; the difference is that Women's Aid relies on that funding, as there is not another source of funding. This is due to the composition of the local authority, and not necessarily the needs of the organisations. I am on record as having said this many times. What is highlighted here is the lack of clear monitoring of the money that we give to local authorities, that they are supposed to pass on equally and fairly, without prejudice, to those who need it. It says here that only 10 of the 22 local authorities, which is less than 50 per cent, are following that code. That worries me. What I am reading here is that it is the composition of the local authority that leads to decisions being made on the distribution of money, rather than the criteria. That cannot continue. We have to do something about this. Since they can often be the main funders—or non-funders—we have to get a hold on this. I cannot stress how strongly I feel about this. This is one vehicle that can discriminate.

[126] **Lynne Neagle:** Sorry, Chair, have you dealt with the issue of the local compacts under this?

[127] **Janice Gregory:** No, we have just gone on to the local authority funding.

[128] **Lynne Neagle:** The point that I wanted to raise was on compacts. The draft highlights the fact that we were told by the WCVA that only 10 of the 22 local authorities have actually implemented them. I just think that this wording leaves too much to chance. Local authorities have had years to get to grips with this, and we should be making a clear recommendation to the Assembly Government that it should ensure that local authorities all have compacts. It is not a terribly big ask for local authorities, and things will just drift further if we go with the wording that we have here.

[129] **Janice Gregory:** That is fine. It will be rewritten anyway, so we can make that point strongly.

[130] **Peter Black:** I am okay with the guidance to local authorities stating that they should be entering into compacts, and maybe putting some pressure on them to do that, because it is quite important that those compacts are in place. In fact, in terms of our earlier recommendations about a joint review, that would only really work if you have a compact in place, so it is a prerequisite, if you like, to a lot of the reviews that we have discussed. It should involve not just local authorities and the voluntary sector, but local health boards and other statutory funders in the area. Bridgend is a good example—or is it Neath Port Talbot? The authority has a tripartite compact, which is a very good one.

[131] In terms of the audit of local authority funding codes, we must be realistic—we cannot tell local authorities how to go about spending their money, short of walking in and taking over the local authority. So, we are asking the WCVA to take an advisory role, whereby it goes out and seeks information, establishes what best practice is and what bad practice is. That information could then be used by the Assembly Government to put pressure on local authorities to try to improve, although, at the end of the day, local authorities will decide for themselves whether or not they do it. I cannot see how any Government could walk in and force local authorities to do that, short of taking over the local authority. However, it is worth while as long as we understand that that is how the process will work. Most local authorities will fall into line when they see good practice elsewhere. We must understand it in that way.

[132] **Mark Isherwood:** Given the strategic argument, local authorities need to approach the voluntary sector in a joined-up way. I had an e-mail just last week—I will not say from which local authority, but from one of them—and it had informed its tenants, including Women’s Aid drop-in centres, that their terms, conditions and rent had changed, forcing most of the tenants to leave the building. That decision was taken by the economic development department, but, paradoxically, many of the voluntary sector organisations in the building, including Women’s Aid, have services commissioned by the local authority, and yet they are effectively being made homeless. Strategic funding would have identified the outcome required and looked at that on a joined-up basis. In this case, the approach taken was not joined up.

[133] Secondly, there is a public perception argument. For example, I have noticed examples of local authorities seeking to transfer services to a third sector body, and that is being whipped up by the local press as the privatisation of local services. How do we help the public to understand that that is not the case? We are trying to procure on a level playing field to maximise the services that they receive.

[134] My last point is about something that the UK Government has sought to do, which is to act as an exemplar. It is all very well asking others to use a fair process and have a level playing field for procurement, but what is Government itself doing? The UK Government, for example, has given the benefits-to-work scheme to A4e, a third sector provider. So, it is showing others that it is not simply telling them what to do—it is acting according to its own edict.

10.00 a.m.

[135] **Peter Black:** To pick up on the procurement side of things, I noticed the recommendation for full-cost recovery. Local authorities obviously have a duty in terms of the way in which they use public money, but they also have policy objectives, and they have to balance out those policy objectives against that duty. Sometimes, they may be able to say that a voluntary sector organisation did not provide the lowest tender because of the full-cost recovery elements, but that they will make an exception because it is for the public good that it wins the tender to provide the service. However, many local authorities would go with the lowest tender, so there is a danger that when you make a recommendation that full-cost recovery should be a part of that process, it could exclude voluntary sector organisations from winning tenders. I am not saying that it is not right, but we have to be aware that that is how the process works. Perhaps they need to find a way around that in the way in which you frame the recommendation.

[136] **Janice Gregory:** That is something that we need to think about. Do you want to come in, Joyce?

[137] **Joyce Watson:** Are we doing all of the last lot?

[138] **Janice Gregory:** No, but you can if you want to. Do you want to move on to that? Is everyone happy that we go into dialogue with the funding bodies with our minds still with the local authorities?

[139] **Lynne Neagle:** On the local authorities, I do not think that we should invite local authorities to review their procurement processes; we should ask them to do it.

[140] **Janice Gregory:** These are not the recommendations; they are just the notes.

[141] **Lynne Neagle:** All right. We should ensure that they do it, or instruct them to do it—‘instruct’ is a good word.

[142] **Peter Black:** We cannot instruct them, Lynne.

[143] **Janice Gregory:** I know that we are nearly at the end, but these are not the recommendations; they are just the notes on the recommendations. We have strengthened a few of the previous ones, taken things out, and said what we want and what we do not want to be included.

[144] **Peter Black:** In a way, in asking the local authorities to review their procurement policies, you are asking them to look at whether they should always be going for the lowest tender. However, you cannot tell them to do it, because they are independent organisations that are democratically and locally accountable. That is the problem.

[145] **Janice Gregory:** I am sure that we can find a word that is stronger than ‘invite’ and slightly less prescriptive than ‘force’. If anyone has a word, could you please e-mail it to us later on? I am sure that we will find a word that we can all sign up to.

[146] **Joyce Watson:** I am going to take you from local authority funding straight over to the gender budgeting.

[147] **Janice Gregory:** That is fine. So, we are going from local authorities to gender budgeting, and we will come back to the other two later. I know why Joyce is going to do this.

[148] **Joyce Watson:** I will tell you why.

[149] **Janice Gregory:** I know that you will.

[150] **Joyce Watson:** If you review whom they fund—that is, any local authority—in the third sector, and you start to unpick it, you might find that there is a gender bias. In fact, this is likely to be the case. It goes further than that. If we are looking at funded sporting activity in the voluntary sector, for example, what sporting activity is being funded? By looking at any funded activity, you can start to look at whether there is a balance or a clear imbalance. By using gender budgeting, you get to the end result, and you get to the net recipient and gainer. You can identify whether it delivers what you intended to do with your policy. There is a good example of this. In care homes, where the clients are mostly but not uniquely women, if all the activity that is provided in the care home is targeted at women and there is absolutely no activity for men, you are clearly letting them down. I use that example so that people do not think that I am biased. If we look at who is being funded in sporting activity—and the target is to get more girls engaged in sporting activity, because they drop out at an earlier age—you start to understand why this might not be happening. That is why I have mentioned gender budgeting. It really unpicks where your budget is going and whether you are likely to have your final outcome. It is a good way of doing that.

[151] **Janice Gregory:** So, you want gender budgeting to be a part of the review process that we talked about at the beginning.

[152] **Joyce Watson:** Absolutely.

[153] **Janice Gregory:** Okay. Is everyone happy with that? I see that you are. The point about the funding bodies is another important issue. I do not think that anyone wants staff not to progress naturally through the civil service, but it causes a problem when key staff move on, because organisations, particularly smaller ones, will have built up a relationship with certain staff. There is a strong recommendation on thinking this through.

[154] **Lynne Neagle:** I was mindful of the evidence of the Women's Institute when its representatives came before us to talk about the terrible difficulties that the organisation had had with late notification. I am sure that it is not the only voluntary organisation that raised this issue. Therefore, I think that this should be reflected and that Assembly officials should have to work to a certain timetable and notify voluntary organisations. It is all very well for us to complain about local government announcing its grants late, but if we are doing exactly the same, then that is no better.

[155] It is important that we monitor how well organisations feel they are being supported and represented by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action and by the county voluntary councils. We no longer have the voluntary sector partnership council, but that was very much a national platform and local voices were not coming through. At the end of the day, it is the local groups that are delivering the services that most of us care most strongly about. That is an important point.

[156] **Peter Black:** From memory, some of the evidence that we received showed that there was an inconsistent response from department to department. Some departments were particularly receptive, while other departments were more difficult to deal with. Any recommendation in terms of the Assembly Government should state that it should specify one or two individuals to deal with the voluntary sector to try to get that consistency across departments. I know that you cannot recommend that you have a unit and everyone goes to that unit, because every department manages its own budget. There needs to be greater consistency across the Assembly Government in relation to how it deals with voluntary sector organisations and the level of service that it gives to them. We should perhaps look at that sort of recommendation.

[157] **Janice Gregory:** It is tempting to recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government should have a unit that deals with that work, because it is so important.

[158] **Peter Black:** But then you would need to be a natural centraliser, which I am not, unlike Lynne. [*Laughter.*]

[159] **Janice Gregory:** I am just thinking about all the poor people in the voluntary sector who have been passed from one department to another. That is why it is so tempting, and I quite agree with that point.

[160] **Mark Isherwood:** I have one point following on from the evidence given to us by the Institute of Fundraising Cymru last time. Allowing voluntary organisations to be critical friends gives rise to a difficult situation. On the one hand, they are financially dependent on the funders, particularly Government funders, which makes them very deferential and unwilling to upset, while, on the other hand, they have many things that they want to say. I have lost count of the meetings that I have attended at which people have told me things and then said, 'Don't tell them who told you', or, 'Yes, we have the annual report coming and

these are the points, but, for goodness' sake, please don't tell them who said this', or even, 'If I tell you, I know that the phone will ring, because it has happened before'. We must move to a more mature relationship where organisations feel that by speaking politely and assertively, rather than aggressively, it will not prejudice their relationship with the statutory funders. I think that the phrase that we heard last time was that one word spoken in Bridgend will be heard in Cardiff bay.

[161] **Janice Gregory:** Did he not say Wrexham? I thought that he said that one word heard in Bridgend would be heard in Wrexham—but he probably meant via Cardiff bay.

[162] **Mark Isherwood:** Whereas in England they can stay anonymous because they are so much bigger.

[163] **Janice Gregory:** Absolutely.

[164] **Joyce Watson:** On the point about being a critical friend, I think that you have to be fair to the Assembly Government, because many working groups invite voluntary organisations to be a critical friend, but it might be that you do not know about them. I used to sit on several bodies and feed into several equality departments, and there is an equality department in the Assembly Government. People were invited to be a critical friend on those working groups, and it was welcomed. I am only saying this because I know about it, and we need to be mindful of it. Perhaps the issue is not that they exist, but how people find out that they exist.

10.10 a.m.

[165] **Mark Isherwood:** I think that it is also about how we modify our language and behaviour accordingly when we are sitting around a table formally; whereas you might have a coffee after the meeting and start chatting to a colleague from a different organisation, and say something honestly, only to have it reported somewhere else and used against you. That is the sort of situation that I am concerned about.

[166] **Janice Gregory:** I accept that, but groups need to be able to have a relationship that continues after a key member of staff leaves. All groups should be able to express their pleasure with, or displeasure at, what goes on. Dai, did you want to make a comment?

[167] **David Lloyd:** I want to reinforce the first point that I made about having this more mature funding relationship. In other words, it is not about superiors and subordinates with the Government and the third sector; it is about equals. It would be natural if it were an equal relationship.

[168] **Janice Gregory:** Okay. On the next page, you can see the plea from Stonewall Cymru, which has made that point loud and clear. The next heading is 'Ethnic Minorities'. Peter, do you have a point on this?

[169] **Peter Black:** I am not particularly happy with the wording of this, and, were this wording to appear in the report—

[170] **Janice Gregory:** It will not appear in the report.

[171] **Peter Black:** If it did, it would be the headline for the report and would take away from everything else in it. There are cultural issues of understanding and access that need to be overcome, and perhaps there needs to be better education on both sides about that. I know that this is the evidence that we had, but the language is quite difficult.

[172] **Janice Gregory:** It is, but it reminds us of the strength of the evidence given. That will not go into the report, but the witnesses were very clear in their evidence.

[173] **Mark Isherwood:** We are right to raise these issues of ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and so on, but we have six or seven strands. We now have the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Should we not have a recommendation that applies equally to them all, and perhaps ask Kate Bennett and her team to advise us on the wording of that?

[174] **Janice Gregory:** Do you mean that we should not mention them individually?

[175] **Mark Isherwood:** Well, we could name them all.

[176] **Janice Gregory:** Yes, we could do that.

[177] **Mark Isherwood:** But the principle applies to them all.

[178] **Janice Gregory:** That is a good idea. We could ask for a wording. Is everybody clear on that and happy with it?

[179] **David Lloyd:** To flesh out the points on ethnic minorities, the representatives that we had here—and not just ethnic minorities, but all minority groups—said that sometimes their frustration at being a minority who had been overlooked repeatedly for years would boil over and, when they finally got a chance to say something, it did not come over very well. So, that is what this white-men-in-suits business is all about. When they get the opportunity to say something, they do not say it in the right way. That also applies to gender issues and the Welsh language. When people finally get the chance to have their say, they say it far too forcefully, purely because of their pent-up frustration. This paragraph should reflect that. When minorities of whatever description eventually get a chance to have their say, their humanness lets them down and they do not convey their message very well, because of all that pent-up frustration; it comes over as being extremely hostile to the people who are trying to help them. The people trying to help them must realise that all those years of pent-up frustration is why you get evidence like that.

[180] **Peter Black:** So, really we are looking for better dialogue.

[181] **David Lloyd:** Yes.

[182] **Janice Gregory:** Yes. I thought that their evidence was very powerful. They mentioned their perception that, when they applied for any type of funding, their evidence would be viewed differently if somebody else were presenting it, because of the predominance of white men in suits. I am just repeating what they said. We need to be thorough, and we will have to be careful about the wording that we use. Consulting with the EHCR is a good idea.

[183] We have come to the end of the recommendations. We will draft the recommendations based on the discussion this morning. That will be e-mailed to you, so please have a look at it, and please let us have any amendments, recommendations or suggestions as soon as possible so that we can work on the draft report. Are you all happy with that? I see that you are. Thank you all for that; it was most useful.

10.15 a.m.

Trafodaeth am y Pynciau Posibl ar gyfer yr Ymchwiliad Nesaf
Discussion of Possible Topics for the Next Inquiry

[184] **Janice Gregory:** We are now running over time, but this item should not take too long. You will recall that we have previously discussed a few issues, but we now need to decide what we would like to do for our next inquiry. We can do a quick inquiry, or a longer inquiry; it is entirely up to you. We are looking at the Members' research service briefing paper from Neil. Does anyone have any comments?

[185] **Peter Black:** I would like to get my teeth into an inquiry into domestic abuse. It is a focused topic, it is one that can be done reasonably quickly, and it would be useful to undertake a proper examination of the whole issue.

[186] **Janice Gregory:** What is the general opinion on that?

[187] **Joyce Watson:** We have been the forerunner on this, and we have an all-Wales domestic abuse strategy. We should be proud of that, because we have been at the forefront. What I believe would add value is reviewing that.

[188] **Peter Black:** Yes, we should review the whole area.

[189] **Janice Gregory:** That is great. The clerk and I have discussed this, and that was the No. 1 topic, but I was not going to push it. Edwina Hart, as the then Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, brought forward a report on this issue in 2005, so we have a lot of stuff to look back on. The time is about right now, about two and a half years on. Therefore, is everyone happy with that?

[190] **Lesley Griffiths:** [*Inaudible.*]—in 2005?

[191] **Janice Gregory:** Yes. I think that it was the strategy that was published in 2005. Forgive me for not having the information at my fingertips. The Social Justice and Regeneration Committee did a review of domestic abuse.

[192] **Peter Black:** I was no longer a member of the committee by then.

[193] **Janice Gregory:** No, you probably were not. There is a load of stuff there that we can get our teeth into, and it will be a really good inquiry to see where we are, where we are going and whether we have any issues.

[194] **Peter Black:** The strategy is important, but we have to see what is happening on the ground, and what impact that is having, and what the problems are.

[195] **Janice Gregory:** Yes. We can review who was on the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee at the time, when we went out to visit different groups. However, if you have anyone who you would like to invite to give evidence, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can set something up.

[196] **Mark Isherwood:** Will this include children, as well as domestic abuse in general?

[197] **Janice Gregory:** Yes, it will include the whole gamut. Again, if anyone has any ideas, please e-mail us, and we can include them. Is everyone happy with that? I see that you are. That is great.

[198] Is everyone happy with the minutes of the last meeting? I see that you are. Our next

meeting will be on 5 March, when we will agree the terms of reference and the programme for our next inquiry, as well as our summer term forward work programme. Thank you all. I declare the meeting closed.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 10.18 a.m.
The meeting ended at 10.18 a.m.