



Carl Sargeant AM
Minister for Local Government and Communities
Welsh Government
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

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Dear Minister

As you will be aware, WCVA and WLGA have worked together during recent years to encourage engagement and partnership between local government and the third sector.

Most recently, we have considered relationships between the third sector and local government within the context of the current public expenditure climate.

We are pleased that local authorities have not taken a 'slash and burn' approach to their funding for service provision by the third sector and funding levels are generally in line with councils' overall settlements. Although some third sector organisations have seen above average reductions, this is often comparable to the varied level of investment in council services as a result of local needs and service priorities. We both hope that this more measured approach has set the direction for local authority support for the sector for the coming period.

We know, however, that the current financial position will be further challenged by other pressures on public services, particularly associated with demographic change, increased demand and higher expectations.

Public bodies are therefore rightly seeking to maximise savings through smarter and joint procurement or collaborative commissioning and service delivery arrangements but it is important that this approach does not squeeze out more innovative and sustainable solutions, in particular those involving the local third sector.

Local authorities and the third sector will need to cooperate to make the best use of resources and provide the best services locally. This could mean encouraging an increase in co-delivery of public services in Wales, where activities and services are designed and delivered by a wide range of actors - bringing together the third sector and the public sector, with the citizen and the community at the centre. Investing in community capacity and initiatives could grow mutual support that complements, and reduces demands on, other services.

We therefore look forward to the new Welsh Government developing policies that strengthen partnerships between the third sector and the public sector in order to achieve the best mix of public services to meet people's needs. This includes recognition of the distinctive roles that different partners can make, and placing equal value on their services, and their workforce. We recognise that the current financial situation is putting pressure on jobs, and we both want to avoid compulsory redundancies in any sector. We equally recognise that we need to work together to consider new models that improve services, and that we must embrace positively changes to traditional models and methods of delivery if they lead to better services and better value, in the short and long term.

We would welcome an early joint meeting to look at how this agenda could be taken forward together.

Yours faithfully



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Chief Executive, WCVA



Steve Thomas CBE
Chief Executive, WLGA

Copies to: Local Authority Chief Executives and Chief Officers of County Voluntary Councils

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