

Jane Hutt AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Busnes y Llywodraeth
Minister for Finance and Government Business



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

William Graham AM
Chair of Enterprise & Business Committee

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15 December 2015

Dear William,

EU Funding Ambassadors Review of the EU Policy and Funding Opportunities for Wales 2014-2020

I am writing to inform you of publication of the EU Funding Ambassadors' Interim Report "Europe Matters to Wales: EU Policy and Funding Opportunities 2014-2020" and the associated EU Policy and Funding Programmes Grid.

I appointed the panel of EU Funding Ambassadors (Dr Hywel Ceri Jones, Dr Grahame Guilford and Gaynor Richards MBE) on 3 December 2014 to help promote and maximise opportunities presented by directly managed EU funding programmes. The appointments were made in direct response to the Enterprise and Business Committee's report on EU funding opportunities 2014-2020, published in July 2014, which highlighted the need to engage in and promote further the EU's directly managed programmes in Wales.

The interim report, which is now available at <http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/eu-programmes/?lang=en> sets out the Ambassadors' initial considerations and recommendations some of which they will have discussed with the Committee when they met with you on 23 September. The Ambassadors intend to explore some of these areas further during the remainder of their appointment with the view of submitting a final report to me next Spring. It is very clear that any efforts to maximise EU programmes and resources requires the active participation of all sectors across Wales and I have also specifically asked the Ambassadors to look into, and to comment on, the roles and requirements of partners and what Government can do to assist them in further accessing EU opportunities.

I am extremely grateful to all three Ambassadors for the work and engagement that they have undertaken, which has included discussions with a number of Ministers and officials together with numerous other stakeholders both within and outside Wales. I am also grateful to the Enterprise and Business Committee for its engagement to help inform and facilitate the Ambassadors' work. I will be considering both the Ambassadors' initial and final recommendations with colleagues over the coming weeks and will be pleased to update Members of the Committee in due course.

I would also like to take this opportunity to briefly update you on the progress of the 2014–2020 European Structural Funds programmes. It has been one year since the programmes were agreed by the European Commission, and during this time we have invested £425 million of EU funds, representing nearly a quarter of the total EU funds allocation to Wales. This achievement demonstrates the Welsh Government's commitment to hit the ground running with the delivery of the programmes, and has been made possible by the excellent partnership working that has taken place across Wales, and the innovative proposals that have come forward from Welsh Government and the public, private and Third sectors.

These vital investments for the Welsh economy and labour market were celebrated at a stakeholder event I attended earlier this month in Swansea, and are included in a video footage available to view via the Welsh Government's YouTube page (<https://youtu.be/d3flyXuZiUk>).

At the event, I was also pleased to announce the winners and finalists of the first ever EU funds Publicity Awards in Wales, which recognise those organisations which have gone one step further in communicating the benefits of vital EU funds on growth and jobs across Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane".

Jane Hutt AC / AM

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