



William Graham AM
Chair of Enterprise & Business Committee

William.Graham@assembly.wales

17 March 2016

Dear William,

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

I am writing to inform you that I am today publishing the EU Funding Ambassadors' final report "Europe Matters to Wales: EU Policy and Funding Opportunities 2014-2020".

This final report, which is available at <http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/eu-programmes/?lang=en>, builds upon the proposals contained in the Ambassadors interim report on which I wrote to you on 15 December. It is clear from the responses received to the interim report that the Ambassadors proposals are widely supported by partners and stakeholders and I am pleased to see these further developed in their final report.

In light of the earlier recommendations contained in the Ambassadors' interim report I am also pleased to announce that we have already taken action to establish a senior officials EU Policy Group.

I am extremely grateful to all three Ambassadors for the time and effort that they have devoted to their roles and for the positive impact they have had in engaging with partners and stakeholders and raising the awareness and profile of EU funding opportunities in Wales. I am also grateful to the Enterprise and Business Committee for its engagement to help inform and facilitate the Ambassadors' work.

This work has been extremely valuable in itself but they have also set out in their final report a number of key recommendations which they believe will leave us much better placed to derive maximum benefit from the synergies between Welsh Government and EU policy priorities for the remainder of the 2014-2020 programming period. These are supplemented by a number of thematic proposals and observations.

The Ambassadors have emphasised the importance of identifying and focusing on key strategic priorities that are of importance to Wales and targeting efforts and resources in pursuit of these as opposed to simply chasing funding opportunities. They have proposed the introduction of a priority driven, strategically focused integrated management and delivery structure involving Government and partners to help achieve those goals.

The Ambassadors have placed great emphasis on the need for prioritisation and have suggested that there are likely to be significant opportunities in areas such as Smart Cities, Life Science and Healthcare, the impact of an ageing population and disaffection amongst young people, particularly where this might be addressed by early years interventions.

It is essential that we continue to build upon the support that we receive from the EU Structural Funds, the Rural Development Programme and the Common Agricultural Policy, worth over £500m annually, to further target and access other EU funding opportunities and to increase their profile in Wales. I'm sure that these proposals will help us to do that and will help to strengthen the partnership arrangements needed to deliver that goal and help the Welsh Government in championing European funding.

I warmly welcome the report, and while it will be for a new Welsh Government to consider implementation of the recommendations and to determine future organisational and delivery arrangements, I am pleased to endorse the thrust of the proposals contained in it.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

Jane Hutt AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Busnes y Llywodraeth
Minister for Finance and Government Business