

Gwebinar Thursday 13th August

Steffan

Thanks everybody for joining us, it is a pleasure to have so many people with us this afternoon to listen to this webinar. This is the eighteenth webinar we have organised since the start of lockdown. It is amazing how much time has lapsed and how busy everybody has been.

I am very pleased to say that we have three fantastic panellists this afternoon. We have Jeremy Miles a member of the Senedd, representing the Neath constituency. He is Counsel General and Minister for European Transition also leading the Welsh Government's work on re-building after Covid-19.

We also have Delyth Jewell member of the Senedd for South Wales East for Plaid Cymru. She is Plaid Cymru's Shadow Minister for Public Service Transformation and the Future and also the Local Government Association Coordinator.

Thirdly we have Sam Kurtz who is a Conservative councillor in Pembrokeshire, he represents the Scloddau ward.

Thank you very much to our three panellists.

Things that you need to be aware of this afternoon. I won't be responding to any messages coming through on chat, if you would like to ask a question the area to do that is through the Q&A. At the bottom of the screen there is a box with Q&A, I will keep an eye on that so please keep sending questions you might have for our panellists, there will be around 30 minutes for us to discuss at the end. You can send the questions in as we go along and I will be able to deal with some of those with the panellists after their speeches.

Finally the only other thing I have to say is about the Bevan Foundation, for those of you who may not be familiar with us. We are a charity and think tank and we look for solutions to inequality and poverty across the who of Wales. We try to look for new innovative ideas to bring some of those challenges facing Wales to an end. If you would like to hear more about us please go to our website after the Webinar.

I will now firstly go to Jeremy to share some of his ideas with us as to what we are facing for the future post Covid-19. Thank you.

Jeremy Miles

Thank you Steffan.

May I begin by paying thanks for the opportunity to be able to contribute to this discussion this afternoon. It's always a pleasure to be involved with Bevan Foundation events - I spent some very happy years as one of its trustees so it's always a pleasure to contribute to this important discussion that you're having about the future of Wales.

It's clear of course that Wales after Covid will be a very different place to the pre Covid Wales. This clearly has been a period the likes of which have never been seen before during our lifetime. In terms of the impact on the health of the people of Wales - the most direct impact perhaps - we immediately focused on public health protection - that was our first priority as a Welsh Government, from the very outset. That remains our first priority of course: making sure that the people of Wales were safe and that we could protect them the best we could against the virus.

I myself believe that what we have achieved with partners in the NHS and the care sector and local government and so forth has been absolutely amazing really. But it's been the response of the people of Wales, I would say, to the requirements of the new regulations and guidelines on how to lead our lives - I think that response really showed the priority given to community demand. And that's the kind of thing that we here in Wales are so proud of in our nation.

But the impact of the crisis of course is far more far-reaching than just the here and now, and the impact on health. We can anticipate seeing a substantial increase in unemployment - just yesterday we heard that the United Kingdom had fallen into the worst recession ever, since records began to be kept. So far we've succeeded in preventing the worst of job losses by offering a business support package the likes of which has never been seen before - an offer of that kind would be beyond imagination prior to this period. But it's an indicator of what governments can do at least in a crisis and in emergency: we've seen a policy of offering shelter for everybody who is homeless and the ability to build hospitals as a matter of urgency.

So one of the challenges for the future, for us as a nation and us as a Welsh Government and broader, is really to learn from the best of that for the future and for the rebuilding that is required. I use the term rebuilding because that recognises the fact that there's a need to change things as we come out of the period that we are currently in. It's not simply a question of turning the clock back to how things were before. Because this Covid period has increased the demand for solutions to a number of the long-term challenges that we already knew about: the climate emergency and requirements in terms of the decarbonization of industry; the lack of equality in the economy and a lack of well paid jobs (and of course the Foundation has done an awful lot of work in that regard and in that area); the need for opportunities to develop the economy beyond the growth of urban areas, and the need for new skills in a country which still bears the scars of long-gone industry. We have groups of people in our society - young people, women, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people - who really carried more of the burden of Covid than the rest, so we need to pay particular attention to how we respond to that in the period ahead.

The First Minister has asked me to lead on a piece of long-term work looking at how we can respond to Coronavirus, which permits us to address some of the challenges that I talked about and to make sure that we can respond as a government in a coordinated and common manner.

Over 2,000 responses have come in from people across Wales to the website that we've launched, and so as part of the national conversation we're going to be responding to them. We have been holding a series of round table sessions with people to glean their creative ideas around the challenges that the future poses.

What that means is that we need to prioritise our response – we cannot do - and we cannot afford to do - everything that we are eager to do. We're not looking for quick wins. We're looking for innovative, progressive solutions that can help us to cope with these challenges.

We've already seen some of the things that indicate what we have ahead of us. In terms of investment in the bus system, we need to make sure that we have an opportunity in the future to have more control over public transport. And the investment in social housing - the emphasis on homes has been very apparent during this period - and the recent investment in the skills offer. The ability to provide skills for an economy, which is in a period of change as our economy is.

We already had the climate crisis and huge inequality. The public has clearly expressed that things need to change; this opportunity needs to be taken to do that.

In terms of how we deal with this as a government, the emphasis is on social justice, economic justice and environmental justice as well. Some of these things are major structural challenges, some of these things are challenges – or opportunities - in terms of behaviour. We've learned for example during the Covid period that some people are able to work better at home and that brings positive environmental outcomes. There is a challenge around how we can tap into those opportunities in the future.

There are some specific elements that we are very aware of: the impact on the Welsh language, of the emphasis that has been placed on some of our communities because of their reliance on some of the sectors that are feeling the pressure. We hear that coastal towns have faced pressures economically during this period. We've also seen developments in people's understanding in Wales of the devolution settlement and this principle of working on the basis of four nations within the United Kingdom. So we need more of that not less of that – so we have an opportunity here to build on that.

To conclude then. From our stance as a government, the principles which we bring are the principles on which we have been working from the very outset - social justice, economic justice and environmental justice and an emphasis, of course, if I may say, on the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. That has really put a slant on it for us that shows we must ensure that support is given to young people during this period. They will be carrying the burden of unemployment with them if we don't ensure now that they have opportunities to experience of the world of work early on.

There are some huge challenges ahead of us but I am hopeful in terms of the future of Wales that we can respond to them if we work together in the way that we have done during this crisis thus far. We have a responsibility to look for opportunities as well - we've seen examples of that during this period. We, as a government and as a nation, must seek to look at those elements as well as responding to the challenges that we have ahead of us.

I'll be very happy to have a further discussion at once and any questions Steffan in due course.

Steffan

Thank you very much Jeremy, and as Jeremy said please do remember to put your questions into the Q&A box because this is a fantastic opportunity to share some of your ideas and to hear the views our panellists have, and thank you very much to Jeremy. We will go immediately over now to Delyth Jewell.

Delyth Jewell

Thank you Steffan and thank you to the Bevan Foundation for organising this meeting and also to everybody who is here taking part.

It's really important that this discussion today should stimulate things to happen and not simply be about talking. It's about actions, because there's a clear feeling among so many people now that we have an opportunity now to change things in light of Covid-19. It's an opportunity that we will not have for a very long time. The virus and the response to it have broadened inequality, we've already witnessed that. The risks that people face are disproportionate. For some groups, poverty has played a role as a determinant in this crisis.

Now mine and Jeremy's analyses may be very similar in terms of some of the things we need to change in society, and I'm sure that we will have a further opportunity to discuss some of it in due course. But where we might disagree to an extent, perhaps, is how far we need to go to resolve these problems. In my party, we wish to see independence and strongly feel that it is only through independence that we really will be able to transform the way our society is structured. This is not a distant point for the future; it is really based on today's reality, and radical change today is needed.

Of course, both of our analyses as to why these problems have happened in the first place may be different, but we have far more in common than we have that divides us. I feel strongly that we need to build a new Wales which is for everybody.

One of the most horrendous things which has happened during the pandemic is the way in which older people have been treated. The Older People's Commissioner for Wales has called for an investigation and an inquiry by the Equality and Human Rights Commission because older people's rights had really been breached during this pandemic, partially because of what happened in care homes but also because many older people suffered because of loneliness and social isolation - they suffered terribly during the lockdown. So, we as a society have to improve the relationship we have between generations.

Another thing we have to change is poverty. There's no excuse for the fact that almost a quarter of Wales' population is living in poverty and this may be one of the areas where I think there may be some disagreement on the panel. The pandemic has shown that poverty means that people face a higher risk. People in the most disadvantaged parts of Wales will be far more likely to die from the virus in the first place or catch the virus - areas such as the valleys where I live and where I represent. We need to eradicate poverty and I know that the Welsh Government agrees on that. But we shouldn't be just

managing this, we have to do this urgently. We've got to reduce the inequality in the lives of people of Wales, from education, health and including work.

Which brings me on to my final point: to reinforce why we need to create a Wales where there is a welcome for all. People have voiced some serious and understandable concerns that people with disabilities have faced greater problems with the lockdown. And they are now finding it more difficult to return to the new normal. For example, it's more difficult for people to lip read if people are wearing masks. We've heard that people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities have also faced a higher risk, and just this week we were all horrified – well, I hope we were all horrified anyway - not only by the photos we saw of immigrants trying to get into Britain to seek shelter and asylum, but that shouldn't be what was horrifying. It was the response of the press and the response of the Conservatives in Westminster and too many people - almost half people who replied to opinion polls - said that they had no sympathy at all for these desperate people who had come to try and seek shelter and asylum here.

The Covid-19 crisis is one which continues, but the other crises facing the world have not gone away. Brexit is on the horizon, there continues to be terror in the world, there is global poverty and there are people who need our support. It is immigrants who uphold our public services; they are keeping us safe. There is a duty upon us to show more compassion and kindness - it's a Wales for all. Thank you.

Steffan

We will go over next to Sam

Sam Kurtz

Thank you very much Steffan and thank you very much also to the Bevan Foundation for the invitation for joining you this afternoon. It is also a pleasure to join Jeremy and Delyth, two members of the Senedd in Wales. I respect very much the work they do in the Senedd in Cardiff.

As I sat down to prepare for this afternoon and write a few notes about what I as a Conservative in West Wales and what I have drawn out in the last few months around Covid in our country, I wrote down three points and had a feeling around the three 'd's' in Welsh; devolution, industries and the future.

For the first time in twenty years of devolution in Wales, the majority of people now know exactly that we've got Welsh Government here in Cardiff in the Senedd and the powers that they have extend into our lives in all parts of Wales. Covid-19 has brought a spotlight onto this for the first time and they think that that's a really good and important thing, and I think that from this what the Senedd stands for - and what politics in Wales is about - can develop and move forward and can come to resolve some of the problems that are unique to Wales.

I think the focus on the past few months has been on the industry that we have in Wales and has been hit very hard around Covid-19. Tourism here in West Wales - the tourism

industry - is vitally important and I think for some reason, historically, emphasis hasn't been on how important this industry is for us as a country here in Wales. I know as a young person through undertaking work, I worked myself as a young person in the tourism industry, and I think the focus now is showing how important tourism is and how important Wales' warm welcome is for us as a country and for us as an economy and for the jobs that we have in the industry.

The development that people now are able to work from home, as we are all doing - I think we've all signed into this webinar from our homes - that has changed the way industry and work and jobs are going to look in the future, and that brings me onto my last point which is the future.

What exactly will it look like in 5, 10- and 20-years' time because of Covid-19 that has hit us over the past few months? I want to see a Wales that places emphasis on education and opportunity for young people. I want to see a Wales which is open to people from outside, to tourists, to the industries that we have. I want to see a Wales that develops new industry, not one that looks just at the historic input. One that's forward looking for the future see how we can do things better. For example, in Pembrokeshire Bay we're looking at things like green industry around creating electricity and so forth. I want to see our country as a flag bearer for the fact that there is something else we can do - not simply looking back at history but looking forward to the future. Major projects I want to see, there being an investment on new things, and I think that that's going to bring jobs. It'll bring education and will bring people to live in Wales who want to be here and who want to be members of our communities and strengthen our country and our nation.

So, I'm looking forward to our conversation this afternoon, to hearing questions from everybody and I'm very grateful to you for the opportunity to join you here this afternoon.

Steffan

Great, thank you Sam. So, we've got some questions starting to filter through already so thank you very much. Please do remember to send them through the Q&A box rather than through the chat box if you can; it's easier for me to follow what's going on in one space.

We've got a number of questions already, but I think before we move on to look at those, one question which sprung up in my mind as we went through our discussion: The three of you talked about some specific groups that have been hit hard by the coronavirus and also in terms of the economic impact of people from the ethnic minority groups, young people, women, and people in poverty. So, what specific ideas do you think would have to be focused on over the coming months to try to improve the situation of some of those groups? I'll come to you Delyth first for your response.

Delyth Jewell

Thank you Steffan. We, as a party, have been calling for an inquiry into the racism that exists within Wales. Unfortunately, this is not something that only exists in Wales; it is something which really is global. But we have got to be aware that it's also happening in Wales. We need to have an inquiry, but I think it's important that we don't just call for new strategies or inquiries. It's clear that whatever the inquiry may find is going to be important in terms of facilitating what we change. We also need to change things from day to day. We need to look at the impact this crisis has had on people from these different communities and look at what we can do in a practical way to help them now, but we do need to long-term as well.

I talked about poverty and the fact that almost quarter of population in Wales is living in poverty, something like one in three children in Wales grows up in poverty. This is just a situation which is absolutely horrendous. We knew that it was horrendous already but I think the past few months have shown us what the knock-on effect of that is. So, what I would like to see is a reduction in poverty. Plaid has a scheme of providing funding for most disadvantaged homes where people live in absolute poverty. I would also like to make sure that in order to help put people who perhaps are on the margins of society, there's a need for us to look at the lessons we've learned over the past few months around what is important to us in society.

We've all been praising our care workers and health workers on the street. We should be offering the same conditions and pay for our care workers as we do for people who work in the health service. We should have a national health and care sector - they should both be the same. I would want to see that happening very, very quickly. We have to do radical things and we actually have to get these changes now, because there's a real danger that if we wait for next for the next election perhaps the opportunity will have passed us by. Clearly there will be some things that I may say from a party stance - that's what we would want to do next year. But the Welsh Government needs to do some things now.

Some of the things that they've already done have been good, but more is needed.

Steffan

Thank you, Delyth. We will come to you next Sam please.

Sam Kurtz

Thank you very much. I agree with some of what Delyth said. I think around young people, and that's very topical today because of the A-level results and I remember mine full well. I don't think it's important everybody goes to university. There needs to be attention on some people who are not academic - while clever enough - to do other jobs in our country. The whole emphasis on people going on to university is not as important as I think it was. I think that is a real thing. I think looking at student loan debt

that really hit young people and some people can go into jobs and represent our communities with jobs. That stuff really important.

In Westminster the kick-start scheme is really important scheme to make sure that young people who've come from disadvantaged families, they can have an opportunity to do the best they can. We need to look not to do something too radical, because we may go too far the other way. We can look to do something that introduces something that really works, not try to get an inquiry or research and investigations into everything. Perhaps the outcomes and the results that we see will sit on some shelf somewhere and gather dust. We have to get things to happen, not just look into things for the sake of it. We actually have to have change come from it.

In the work that I do, I make sure that they (young people) have opportunities. We had an okay day today in Pembrokeshire around A-level results. But I think that we have to look at the way people are going to come into jobs and make sure that there are houses available to local people as well. I'm sure there's an opportunity for them to create lives for themselves in the area that they've grown up in if they want to. They have to be given an opportunity, and it's a challenge as well to make sure that people are pushed forward to be the best they can be.

Steffan

Thank you, Sam. We'll turn to you next Jeremy. I think before I come to you though, somebody has sent a question in which is tied into the discussion we're currently having. Somebody was asking a question specifically to you Jeremy about something the First Minister said last week about how we can rebuild, and that there should be some practical ideas. This person asked how you and the Welsh government would assess the ideas that have come in thus far, whether they are practical ideas or those that require a bit more work.

Jeremy Miles

Well, there are two questions here aren't there? I'll deal with the first question, then the second. I'll deal with them in that order if that's okay. The question of what you'd like to see happening to support people who have carried the greatest burden perhaps, is one that has lots of possibilities. The exact kind of thing that we've been discussing so far and also been acting upon. If you look at people in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, there has been a review - which is now reported - with recommendations, and the First Minister has already received and accepted some of those recommendations and is currently taking action on them.

If people have not had opportunity to read Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna's report on this I do recommend that they do that. It is really an eye opener; it shouldn't be, but the impact in reading it is astounding. There are some very specific steps highlighted in it dealing with some very practical things like data collection, inequality and social issues. The recommendations are very powerful. The First Minister has already accepted some of those and is already acting on them. There is more to do in light of that.

In terms of young people, there is a likelihood they may not be able to get jobs or might lose their jobs. That is higher than any other cohort in our society and present. The risk for young people is that they will carry that with them throughout the world of work. Inequality like that can really have a knock-on effect later on in the world of work. You have already seen a package for higher education and a package for skills. That is absolutely fundamental. What we can do for most young people at the moment is to make sure they remain in educational training if they can. The workforce predictions and forecasts are not great so, if they can stay on in education, then doing that is the best thing in the short term. Also tied into that question of skills for young people, we have to be clear about the opportunities that arise in the future, making sure that we train people not only for the opportunities that exist today but in light of what is coming. Plus, what opportunities will come in the future, digital skills, skills in sustainable sectors and so forth. So, it is a real high priority. We also know that women are far more likely to be working in sectors that have been locked down. There is specific support for those sectors. There is support for the arts sector that support a high proportion of young people, and it is important that the sector role and impact on opportunities is dealt with.

In terms of the wider question, what we intend to do with our impact assessments, this gets to the nub of the question. We all have ideas. We've been sharing them for years, at the moment we have to be very disciplined looking at what is practical, what is going to have the impact on people's opportunities and public services. The 2,000 suggestions that have come in, we are going through the process of looking at them to see if there are consistent themes emerging. It is about looking at things realistically. I think we have all looked at the recent period and told ourselves that people are familiar with not travelling or using their cars as much and the environmental impact on that is positive. So, we would be foolish to take it for granted that people are certainly going to continue in that way. If we look at things clearly, we can intervene and make specific policy decisions to support this change of behaviour.

We've seen an investment in active travel for cycling and walking; we should tap into this change in public awareness and do things in practical ways. Some of these changes are behavioural in light of Covid – working from home etc., and there are things to be learned from that. But in my view, major challenges that have been highlighted by Covid, like inequality, which have implications for Welsh Government, UK government also have to take action through taxation that people are supported for the coming period. We at Welsh Government have taken a practical slant in this regard, understanding what the impact is and how we can intervene. We've looked at the policy basis of what the UK government have put in place, what has worked, and if it hasn't worked for the people of Wales, we've used the resources that have come to us to rectify that. Though the process of assessing impact is something which happens consistently and is happening consistently.

If I could just say in concluding, we've been very clear in our assessment as to how we come out of the Covid period. That we look with the inequality stance and equally at the steps we take and assess the steps we take against those type of criteria. Those are things which are at the heart of what we do.

Steffan

We've got another question in, Jeremy and Sam have possibly answered this already, so I'll give you an opportunity Delyth. Talking about young people, the future and work - and we've heard some ideas already - what would you like to see as the Plaid Cymru stance of supporting young people during this difficult period?

Delyth

There are so many things that I possibly should have said in my previous response. As PC, we would like to see a scheme that would guarantee there is support for those aged between 18-24. Also, we would also want to do things for people older than that. We would want to provide a £5,000 payment for people older who are out of work for re-skilling. For young people as Sam and Jeremy have referred to, this is going to be at the forefront of our minds. Young people and older people, their lives have been turned upside down by this crisis. Young people who thought maybe they would have gone away to university in September, they have lost out on so many experiences.

I agree with what Jeremy has said; we should do everything we can to retain young people in education or find a way to retrain them. Clearly the jobs market is not looking promising. I'd also want there to be a job guarantee scheme in those age groups. More broadly, we need to look at mental health and the crisis that is developing with young people with mental health issues because of the isolation, loneliness. Major life experiences that they have lost out on. I think that is going to have quite a long-term knock-on effect. We need to be normalising talking about this.

Steffan

Great, thank you very much. That leads us on to another couple of questions we've had on the same theme. PC wants to see independence, and a couple of people have asked how realistically Wales can succeed with some of the things Jeremy has talked about apart from the United Kingdom.

Jeremy

Well the question is, we as the Welsh Government are setting out the type of government we want to see in light of Covid, and people in Wales on the whole haven't got to the stance that it is independence that is the best way of ensuring they get the best Wales they want.

Those are the views of the people of Wales on the whole. My personal view is that we need to look at what has happened in the context of Covid and the Welsh government's ability to take very different steps than those taken by the UK Government. That is a clear indication that there is a strong foundation on which to move the devolution settlement along.

We've had in Wales a broader understanding of the public of the ability of the government to work in a number of different ways, reflecting different priorities and different circumstances. It is a really good thing, but it also sets down a challenge for us and all governments across the UK that the settlement as it stands doesn't deliver that. What I'd like to see in light of further powers in Wales, I believe the experience of the recent few months has strengthened the argument for devolving the justice system. That demand is clear. The use we've made of the different regulations in the recent period and how that impacts on policing and so forth, it has shown how fragile the settlement is. I personally think that the idea of a government of four nations takes us beyond an idea of devolution; I support that. That is a far stronger way of looking at the constitutional settlement we should have in the UK.

Sam

I agree with Jeremy. The devolution of policing, this historic period which we've had, has placed the focus on whether this is the right thing to think about. When England came out of lockdown and Wales still had the 5-mile rule, the police were in a difficult position. There were two governments but the issue had not been devolved to Cardiff. This is something to think about for the future.

As 390,000 who have been supported by the furlough scheme, 100,000 supported through self-employed income support scheme, I see all countries in UK are all important and there is a part for all to play in the future. Jeremy was right to say when things come out of Westminster, in terms of schemes of support, it is up to the devolved governments if they are going to work. To tailor it to make sure it works. I think that is showing how devolution works well; it's not one size fits all. I think there is an opportunity ahead of us, the voice of independence has been strengthened. So has the voice of ending devolution.

For me, devolution is here to stay. It is a good thing and important for Wales. All countries working together is the best thing for Wales, and for Britain as a complete package.

Jeremy

I don't believe it is the function of the Welsh Government to tailor what the UK Government does for Wales. The function of the Welsh Government is to make the decisions for the people of Wales regardless of what happens elsewhere.

Steffan

A question tied into that, clearly Brexit is ongoing. A few have asked about the Shared Prosperity Fund and the latest.

Jeremy

On that question, what we as the Welsh Government are calling for post-Brexit, the argument is strengthened by our experience of Covid as well as the emphasis on jobs and the growth of the economy. We've also had an emphasis on strong communities and health and equalities because we think that is a clearer focus after the Covid period.

In terms of where we are at, we are working with parties across the economy and different sectors to design an alternative system for Wales and the future. That is absolutely dependent on the UK Government agreeing on its promise to ensure the Welsh Government have the opportunity to implement that system and make decisions on behalf of the people of Wales, and also that there is not a penny less coming to Wales than we had hitherto.

As you know, we have been calling for this for a very long time. The offers are not yet clear. I should say we have had very positive discussions, at least tone-wise, with the Secretary of State for Wales, but that has not yet born fruit and we won't hear more until the autumn. I argue that is far too late; we are losing the talent and resources that we have by letting things go on late in the day. The sooner we get that commitment the better.

Delyth

I wanted to respond quickly to what was said about independence. I think it is interesting; it is to be welcomed that Sam also agrees for the need for further devolution, clearly Ron Davies said it was a process not an event. What is the end of that process?

I'd like to repeat one point: Independence, for me, isn't a distant point if we want something in principle. We would want independence to have the power to help people's lives in Wales. With all the problems the union has, we need to be radical.

With Brexit, there is a second crisis facing us because there is the possibility of there being a no-deal at the very point of expecting there to be a second wave of Covid. This is a crisis for our health service and the need to safeguard our communities. There was so much money that used to come from the EU for the most disadvantaged areas so I hope the Welsh Government will ensure that we don't get a penny less. I don't feel terribly confident about that because of how little UK Government has said about this. It is another reason why this union is not working.

Sam

In terms of the Shared Prosperity Fund, personally I'm not too concerned where the choices are made, but we have to get rid of waste. We have to get that money to create things to take action and make a difference; there has to be a result out of this. Personally, I'm not concerned if they are made in Cardiff, local councils or Westminster.

In terms of Brexit, I am a Welshman first and a conservative second. I voted to stay in the EU, and now we've left we are where we are. We have to deal with the future and deal best we can. That is going to be difficult. Everyone saying things are going to be hunky dory; I don't think that people believe that. There will be hard work ahead of us. It is a challenge and an opportunity to do things differently and work better. That's what the feeling was around most people around the EU vote; people felt their local voice was not being heard. That was the problem. This is an opportunity that local people's voices are heard and there is an improvement for people.