



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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**Summary Minutes of the Board  
Meeting, 25 October 2013**

**AGENDA ITEM: 3**

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**Present:**

Permanent Secretary (Chair)  
Elan Closs Stephens  
James Turner  
Adrian Webb  
David Richards  
John Howells  
Gareth Jones  
Michael Hearty  
June Milligan  
Jeff Godfrey  
David Sissling  
James Price

**In attendance:**

Natalie Pearson  
Ruth Hussey (item 2)  
Caroline Turner (item 4)  
Bethan Webb (item 4)  
Ian Gibson (item 5)  
Lynne Hamilton (item 8)

**Apologies:**

Owen Evans

**Secretariat:**

Emma Alexander  
Catherine Evans

**1. Permanent Secretary's Items [Oral]**

*Permanent Secretary's Items*

- 1.1 The Permanent Secretary gave a brief update on current issues, which included the publication of the draft Budget, the Counsel General's submission of proposals to the Law Commission and Cabinet meetings which were moving and would be held on Mondays in Cathays Park from 4<sup>th</sup> November. The Permanent Secretary drew attention to the paper to note on the National Survey for Wales and the Board agreed that a discussion with statisticians should be scheduled at a future meeting.
- 1.2 The Permanent Secretary discussed with the Board a request from the Trade Union Side (TUS) for engaged observer status at Board meetings. Following a brief discussion, he agreed to give further thought to the request and also discuss with the First Minister.

*Director General (DG) Exception Reports*

- 1.3 The Permanent Secretary invited DGs to share key issues from within their areas with Board colleagues. Issues raised included jobs and growth, plans to handle the anticipated bad weather conditions, NHS Service Change, the measles outbreak in Neath Port Talbot, winter preparedness in the areas of health and transport, the announcement about Hinkley nuclear power station, the Environment Bill White Paper, the Agriculture Wales Bill, changes to the Strategic Centre, the Capability Plan and the People Survey.

*Remuneration Committee*

- 1.4 James Turner, Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Remuneration Committee gave a brief update on the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September. Items discussed had included proposals for the Department for Economy, Science and Transport and an update on Senior Civil Service recruitments.

*Corporate Governance Committee*

- 1.5 Elan Closs Stephens, Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Committee gave a brief update on the October meeting. Items discussed had included the Wales Audit Office's Management Letter and the review of how the Welsh Government's assurance system worked.

*Operations Group*

- 1.6 John Howells, Chair of the Operations Group, gave a brief update on the previous meeting. Items discussed had included headcount, Ministerial correspondence, the close of the Online Information Services Programme—the Group had agreed that a 'controlled model' was needed moving forward and it should link in with the Digital Wales strategy. The Group also supported the dissolution of the Delivering Results Group recognising that the work was now 'business as usual'. However it also agreed that going forward DGs needed to identify where linkages should be made. A discussion would be scheduled at a future Board meeting.

**For decision/discussion**

**2. CMO's Annual Report [Oral]/ Update on Public Health [Board(13)055]**

- 2.1 Ruth Hussey, Chief Medical Officer, delivered a presentation entitled 'Healthier, Happier, Fairer' which gave a short summary of her annual report. She also referred to the Update on Public Health paper which had been submitted.
- 2.2 Areas covered by the report included protecting the nation's health, achieving health and happiness through prevention, creating safe and resilient 21<sup>st</sup> century healthcare services and acting on the relationship between health and wealth.
- 2.3 There had been a big push on vaccination and the challenge was now to maintain that focus. Lifestyle could contribute to poor health as could social inequality therefore tackling poverty was central

to improving the nation's health and the Government as a whole needed to contribute to this.

2.4 The following points were raised in discussion:

- cross-cutting work would be critical to achieving success;
- investment in tackling poverty and public health was key;
- prevention needed to be Government wide focusing on, for example, creating good, secure jobs and affordable housing;
- with an increasingly ageing population, there needed to be a focus on 'ageing well'.

2.5 The Permanent Secretary thanked the Chief Medical Officer for her report and her continuing work in this area and, as far as health in the workplace was concerned, asked her to share any best practice, including from private sector employers.

### **3. Minutes of 27<sup>th</sup> September and Matters Arising [Board(13)052]**

3.1 The Permanent Secretary noted that comments received had been incorporated and the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September were agreed as an accurate record.

### **4. An Update on the Welsh Language Improvement Programme [Board(13)054]**

4.1 Caroline Turner, Deputy Director, Welsh Language and Bethan Webb, Head of the Welsh Language Team, introduced the paper, which asked the Board to note and discuss the Welsh language mapping exercise, which the Board had requested at its April meeting.

4.2 The exercise had shown that the Welsh Government had a firm base of staff with Welsh language skills. Over 990 staff had recorded themselves at levels 4-5 on speaking skills, which meant they were either fluent or could converse in most situations, but fewer staff were at levels 4-5 for written skills.

4.3 There were pockets of Welsh speakers working, for example, in translation and the Welsh Language Team. There were also a higher percentage of Welsh speakers per head in the Llandudno Junction and Aberystwyth offices.

4.4 From November, departments would be charged for translating material from Welsh to English for internal use. This was likely to lead to greater utilisation of staff's Welsh language skills and that, along with the results of the People Survey—which included a question on the use of Welsh in the workplace—would provide further evidence on the distribution of Welsh speakers across the organisation.

4.5 Based on the skills data, and considering the lack of external recruitment, the paper recommended that the Welsh Government focus on improving the skill levels of staff who reported themselves as being at levels 2-3, with a particular focus on business language. It was also

suggested that the internal Welsh text checking service should be promoted to encourage staff to draft in Welsh.

4.6 The new Welsh language standards would focus on the use of Welsh in the workplace. They were currently in draft form but were due to come into effect in 2015. It was important that the Welsh Government prepared for the introduction of the standards and a secondee had been brought in to lead on this work.

4.7 It was noted that the WG had a duty to provide an independent response to the Welsh Language Commissioner on the standards, once published.

4.8 The following points were made in discussion:

- early sight of the draft Welsh language standards was requested, in particular, as the Welsh Government had oversight of the inspectorates, who would need to put preparations in hand;
- the figures relating to the number of Welsh speakers in the organisation was encouraging and the fact that a higher percentage of 20-44 year olds than those aged 45 and over reported being able to write Welsh, might indicate success in Welsh medium education;
- the introduction of different lanyards for Welsh speaking staff had been a success and encouraged staff to converse in Welsh in the workplace;
- DGs should consider if they wanted to do more to manage the distribution of Welsh speakers in their areas;
- greater consideration should be given to denoting certain posts as Welsh language posts.

4.9 The Board accepted the recommendations in the paper outlined in paragraph 6 and the Permanent Secretary thanked Caroline Turner and Bethan Webb for the paper. It was agreed that a further update should be scheduled in the spring.

## **5. Review of Corporate Risks [Board(13)053]**

5.1 Ian Gibson, Head of Corporate Governance Unit, introduced the paper which asked the Board to review the Corporate Risk Register and decide if the proposed new risk around the Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales (RIFW) should be added to the register.

5.2 At its October meeting, the Corporate Governance Committee (CGC) had noted the increased score given to the risk on the Welsh Language, recommended that the risk on the Permanent Secretary's Reviews be retained until the end of the financial year and that further thought be given to reframing the proposed new risk on RIFW, but that it should not be added as currently drafted. The Committee had also requested that the risk on energy be revisited.

5.3 In discussion, the Board agreed that the DG, Sustainable Futures should revisit the energy risk. It also agreed to ask the DG to give further consideration to the wording around the risk on RIFW.

5.4 Elan Closs Stephens, Chair of the CGC, said she would ensure that the Committee looked at the risk register in further detail, including revisiting the managing public money risk, and would report back to the Board in the new year.

5.5 The Permanent Secretary thanked Ian Gibson for the paper.

**6. Financial Management Performance Report [Board(13)056]**

6.1 Lynne Hamilton, Director of Finance and Commercial, introduced the paper which reported on the Welsh Government's 2013-14 forecast outturn and reserves position as at 30 September 2013 (month 6).

6.2 The Board were asked to note and discuss the implications arising from the forecast outturn for 2013-14, the main risks and opportunities identified by departments and the impacts on central reserves.

6.3 The Permanent Secretary said that a further update should be given to the November Board meeting, but he would expect regular updates on the budget position before then.

**7. Any other business**

7.1 No other items of business were raised.

**Board Secretariat, 1 November 2013**