



Summary Minutes of the Board Meeting, 26 September 2014

Present:

Permanent Secretary (Chair)
Gareth Jones
Michael Hearty
June Milligan
James Price
Owen Evans
Andrew Goodall
James Turner
Elan Closs Stephens
Adrian Webb
Peter Kennedy
David Richards (part meeting)

In attendance:

Natalie Pearson
Hugh Rawlings (item 3)
Lynne Hamilton (item 4)
Paul Sullivan (item 5)

Apologies:

Jeff Godfrey

Secretariat:

Emma Alexander
Catherine Evans

1. Permanent Secretary's Items [Oral]

- 1.1 The Permanent Secretary said that the recent NATO Summit had been a success and asked that thanks be conveyed to staff who had been involved in the planning and behind the scenes operations. Since the Board's last meeting, there had been a Cabinet reshuffle and he thanked all those involved in the subsequent reorganisation of departments. He also noted the outcome of the Scottish Referendum which would be discussed in more detail later in the agenda.
- 1.2 The Permanent Secretary said that he would like to encourage staff to receive a flu vaccination. It was agreed that a separate conversation would be held with the Chief Medical Officer about the possibility of some of the senior management team receiving vaccinations on site.
- 1.3 The Permanent Secretary said he had attended the Public Accounts Committee the previous Monday to answer questions in relation to the Welsh Government's accounts.
- 1.4 *Director General (DG) Exception Reports*

The Permanent Secretary invited DGs to share key issues from within their areas with Board colleagues. Issues raised included the creation of the Department for Natural Resources (which replaced Sustainable Futures), GCSE results, the launch of categorisation of schools (to replace banding), publication of the White paper on collection and management of devolved taxes in Wales; Murco Oil Refinery, Cardiff Airport, the M4, the Minister for Public Services' recent statement, NHS targets, the launch of the Wound Innovation Centre and hospital spot checks. Following the work around the recent NATO Summit, it was agreed that a presentation on security issues should be scheduled at a future Board meeting.

1.5 *SCS Remuneration Committee*

James Turner, Non-Executive Director and Chair of the SCS Remuneration Committee gave a brief update on the meeting held on 18th July. In addition to the usual updates, the Committee had discussed a 'workforce strategy' paper for the SCS. Natalie Pearson said that an event would take place on 9th October to look at SCS roles and responsibilities and she would provide feedback in due course.

1.6 *Operations Group*

Peter Kennedy, HR Director and Chair of the Operations Group, said that at the meeting held on 9th September, the Group had discussed the progression arrangements from Team Support (TS) to Management Band 3, which currently involved the use of assessment centres. As this method was not used as part of the progression arrangements for any other management band, the Group recommended that assessment centres be removed to ensure parity and equity across the board.

The Board agreed that a discussion was needed as soon as possible at either a Board or DGs meeting to decide on the way forward. It was also agreed that communications should be drawn up to staff to say that this issue was being looked at and more information on the way forward would be issued as soon as possible.

For decision

2. Draft Minutes of 18th July and Matters Arising [Board(14)040]

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 18th July were agreed as an accurate record.

For discussion

3. Update on Silk II/Williams/Local Government Mergers Programme [Oral]

- 3.1 Hugh Rawlings, Director, Constitutional Affairs, gave a presentation entitled 'Devolution, Democracy & Delivery', which provided an update on the work to take forward the Williams' Commission and Silk Commission's recommendations.

- 3.2 He said that the Welsh Government had been taking forward three processes in tandem;
- powers to achieve its aspirations for Wales;
 - improving public services for people in Wales; and
 - the Reforming Local Government White Paper.
- 3.3 In terms of the key elements of the overall reform agenda;
- Silk 1 was focused on the financial aspects, such as new tax and borrowing powers, a Welsh Treasury function etc.
 - Silk 2 was focused on the devolution settlement for Wales, which in the light of the result of the Scottish Referendum, would now be looked at as part of the wider UK constitutional reform; and
 - whilst there were seven main headings of activity arising from the Williams Commission Report, the focus had been mainly on reforming local government.
- 3.4 June Milligan, Director General, Local Government & Communities, noted that consultation on the Local Government White Paper would conclude on 1st October. Work was progressing in all areas and appropriate project structures were in place.
- 3.5 Following a brief discussion, the Permanent Secretary thanked Hugh Rawlings for the update.

4. Financial Management Performance Period 5 Report [Board(14)041]

- 4.1 Lynne Hamilton introduced the report on the Welsh Government's 2014-15 forecast outturn and reserves position as at 31 August 2014 (month 5).
- 4.2 Following a brief discussion about the implications arising from the forecast outturn, the Permanent Secretary thanked Lynne for the report.

5. Catering Arrangements [Board(14)042]

- 5.1 Paul Sullivan, Head of Facilities Management, introduced the paper which provided information on the structure of the Welsh Government's catering contract. A recent press release from the Welsh Conservatives and associated media coverage had criticised the cost to the tax payer of subsidised meals in Welsh Government catered facilities.
- 5.2 Paul said that the catering contractor was required to satisfy a complex and challenging set of criteria including support of local food and food producers and ensuring that a full range of Fair Trade beverages, biscuits and snacks were available.
- 5.3 He also said that nil cost catering contracts only amounted to about 5% of the catering market and many other organisations subsidised their catering facilities.

5.4 In discussion, the Board agreed that it was important to support the Welsh food industry and encourage local sourcing and the Board should have another discussion once the further work was complete.

6. Any other Business

6.1 Under any other business, the Permanent Secretary drew attention to the papers to note; 'Upholding and Promoting the Civil Service Code – An Annual Review' and 'Foreign Exchange Risk'. It was agreed that a discussion should be scheduled at a future Board meeting on the foreign exchange risk.

6.2 No other items of business were raised.

Board Secretariat, 30 September 2014