



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEETING

Welsh Revenue Authority Board minutes: December 2019

Minutes from the Welsh Revenue Authority Board (WRA) meeting held on 18 December 2019 at Treforest.

First published: 2 July 2020

Last updated: 2 July 2020

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Present

Members

- Kathryn Bishop, Chair
- Dyfed Edwards, Deputy Chair
- Jocelyn Davies, Non-Executive
- Lakshmi Narain, Non-Executive
- Dyfed Alsop, Chief Executive Officer
- Sean Bradley, Chief Legal and Policy Officer
- Sam Cairns, Chief Operations Officer
- Lucy Robinson, Customer Insight and Strategy

Ymgynghorwyr (advisors)

- Joanna Ryder, Chief of Staff
- Melissa Quignon-Finch, Head of HR
- Kate Innes, Interim Finance Officer

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- Jim Scopes, Interim Chief Strategy Officer
- Catrin Durie, Head of Communications
- Anna Adams , Deputy Director of Tax Strategy, Policy and Engagement - Welsh Treasury

Secretariat

- Ceri Sullivan, Board Secretariat

Meeting opening

1. Welcome and introductions, conflicts of interest and apologies, minutes of the last meeting, matters arising

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting, Kate Innes Interim Chief Finance Officer joined the Board for the first time as an Ymgynghorwr.
2. Jocelyn Davies raised a new conflict of interest: she had recently agreed to chair a commission being set up by Plaid Cymru to examine the constitutional pathway to independence for Wales.
3. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate account of what was discussed, and members also agreed the redacted minute for publication.
4. Apologies were received from David Jones and Andrew Jeffreys; Anna Adams would deputise and present the Director, Welsh Treasury report.
5. It was noted that the Board would not be quorate for decision making given the number of Non-Executive members present, so as a solution Sam Cairns agreed to stand down from any decisions.
6. The Chair noted the decision of the last meeting and provided an update on outstanding actions; it was agreed that three actions would remain open.

7. There were no matters arising.

Reports, approval and decisions

2. Chair's report

1. The Chair provided an update on recent activity. A Partnership Group meeting with the Permanent Secretary had taken place the previous week, during which the group discussed WRA performance measures, WG Budget; an issue with customers and agents filing with the wrong tax authority and design work undertaken by WRA and Welsh Treasury.
2. Members were reminded that the Board Effectiveness workshop and Criminal Powers briefing session would take place on the 16 January in Cardiff. Members were reminded to complete the Insights survey and Board Effectiveness Survey in preparation for the day.

3. CEO Report

1. The CEO provided an overview of recent activity and celebrations. Members were informed that the Tîm Arwain had recently received its quarterly report on complaints. Two complaints were received in the last quarter, the first related to a numerical error in a revenue collections letter and the second related to the language used in a letter to an agent. Both complaints had been resolved and learning had been taken from these issues.
2. A number of celebrations were shared as part of the CEO report, one of which was that the WRA now held Land Registry data. The CEO noted that this was a huge asset and milestone for the organisation.
3. Some headline results of the people survey were shared with the Board, with the full results being available in the new year. It was suggested that it would be useful to consider this year's results alongside those from 2018-19. The headline results would be shared with members following the meeting.

4. The performance indicators dashboard was presented, and the Board noted that some work had been done to update the key statistics page to assist the team in preparing future briefings. The next step would be to pull together the data that would provide greater detail behind each key statistic.
5. Some changes had been made to improve the way the Tax Risk data is presented, with for example an additional field added to the feedback section to allow users to see a summary of the feedback received. It was suggested that a further field be added to indicate how the feedback was used/ responded to. Work was underway to determine how other sources of feedback, such as feedback from face-to-face meetings could be recorded and incorporated.
6. The Board noted that with time the further development of the CRM system would lead to further improvements.
7. A question was raised about the correlation between recycling rates and Land Disposal Tax (LDT) collected, and the Board was informed that there was not yet enough data to make a helpful correlation.

4. Financial performance

Information redacted ([Footnote 1](#)).

5. Report from committees

Information redacted ([Footnote 1](#)).

6. Report from Director, Welsh Treasury

Information redacted ([Footnote 1](#)).

Board discussion

7. Business planning “Questions for 2020”

1. The Board was presented with a list of themes, under which there were a number of scenarios which could affect WRA business planning for 2020-21 and beyond. These included: political, economical, social, technological, environmental and legal changes. A wide-ranging discussion took place and members were asked to consider and suggest scenarios to be added under each theme.
2. A revised version including the suggested additions raised would be circulated following the meeting.

8. Board succession planning

1. The Chair announced that all mid-year review meetings had taken place but there was no formal conclusion to report yet on succession planning. Members were reminded that Non-Executive appointments were a Ministerial decision and any new roles would be advertised early in 2020.

9. NRW delegation

1. The item was presented to the Board in November for preliminary discussion, and a recommendation was now being made to continue with the delegation to NRW.
2. The Minister had been briefed earlier that month on the intention to continue with the delegation, and she indicated that she was happy with this recommendation.
3. The team had met with the NRW Executive Team earlier that week to discuss the matter and they were content to proceed.

4. The Board agreed the recommendation to continue the delegation.
5. The next step would include amending the existing MoU, which would then be agreed and signed by the WRA and NRW CEO's.

10. Tax risk

Information redacted (Footnote 1).

11. CRM

1. The Board was informed that the customer relationship management system (CRM) was now live. It was proposed that a further item come back in the summer to cover project closure and benefits. Members were content with the proposal but asked to be notified of any issues that occur in the interim.

12. Strategic communications principles

1. A set of proposed strategic communications principles had been circulated for consideration and agreement. The Board did not have sufficient time to discuss and agree this at the meeting, and it was therefore suggested that this be taken offline and that members discuss and agree virtually.

13. Welsh Government consultation on Socio-Economic Duty

1. The Board was informed that the Welsh Government Ministers had committed to commence Part 1, Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010 known as the socio-economic duty. This is part of a range of measures to demonstrate and reaffirm the Welsh Government's commitment to the principles of advancing Equality and Human Rights in Wales. Welsh Government would be consulting on their proposals and seeking views on which public bodies in Wales the duty should apply to and how the duty

might then be delivered.

2. The WRA is listed as a body to which the duty might be applied and had been asked to offer views on the Welsh Government's proposals/ The Board noted that this would be additional to the public sector equality duty.
3. The Board was asked to agree formally that the WRA would welcome the Socio-Economic duty being applied from April 2020; that WRA considerations feed through into Welsh Government proposals for future guidance on the matter; and, that officials draft a response to the consultation.
4. The Board was content with the recommendations

Meeting closing

14. Key messages

1. It was proposed that going forward the key messages would be shared with the Chair and CEO following the meeting, to be cleared before publication internally. Members were content with this approach.

15. Any other business

1. A discussion took place around the WRA position in relation to the Welsh Language Standards; members were informed that a further update would be provided in due course.
2. The CEO informed the Board of positive feedback that was recently received from the Permanent Secretary.

16. Forward look

1. Members were reminded that this was a working document that would be continuously updated.

17. Meeting review

Information redacted ([Footnote 1](#)).

[1] There are certain circumstances where it is not appropriate to share all of the information contained within the Board minutes, for example, where it contains personal or commercial data or relates to the formulation of government policy etc. or the effective conduct of public affairs. In such circumstances, the information has been redacted and the text is marked clearly that this has been the case.

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