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**Summary Minutes of the Board Meeting, 21 October 2011**

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**Present:**

Permanent Secretary (Chair)  
Emyr Roberts  
David Sissling  
Michael Hearty  
Jeff Godfrey  
Clive Bates  
Bernard Galton  
June Milligan  
James Price  
James Turner  
Elan Closs Stephens  
John Howells

**In attendance:**

David Richards  
Natalie Pearson  
Crispin O'Connell (Item 6)

**In attendance via videoconference:**

Caroline Turner (Item 4)  
Huw Onllwyn Jones (Item 4)  
Eirian Dyer (Item 4)  
Arwel Thomas (Item 5)  
Gwyn Thomas (Item 6)

**Secretariat:**

Rita Phillips

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

- 1.1 The Permanent Secretary asked Board members to consider, over the next few months, how the Board could achieve better oversight of large projects and programmes in order to strengthen governance arrangements.
- 1.2 The Board agreed that the note on Delegated Running Costs and financial monitoring should be circulated to Board members and a decision reached prior to the next Board meeting.

*Director General Exception Reports*

- 1.3 The Director General, People, Places and Corporate Services (PPCS), informed Board members that the next meeting of the Workforce Partnership Council would be held on 31 October and it was agreed that the detail of the HR Strategic Framework for Wales should be placed on a future Director Generals (DG) meeting agenda for discussion.

*Remuneration Committee Report*

- 1.4 James Turner, Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Remuneration Committee, gave a brief update on the Remuneration Committee meeting held in September.

*Corporate Governance Committee Report*

- 1.5 Elan Closs Stephens, Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee, updated Board members on the Corporate Governance Committee meeting held on 13 October. It was agreed that all Director Generals should encourage budget holders to complete the Finance Skills for All training by end of April 2012.

*Operations Group*

- 1.6 John Howells, Chair of the Operations Group, gave a brief update on the recent Operations Group meeting which had included discussions on EU funded posts, the attendance dashboard and the Enabling Government Portfolio. Board members noted that the development of policy and delivery processes would be tested at the Leadership Forum.
- 1.7 John Howells continued by updating the Board on the half day session on the role of the Operations Group and decision making. The Permanent Secretary said that the language around change was not as clear as it could be and that change could be categorised into four areas: large change projects, sitting under the Enabling Government Portfolio; continuous improvement as part of the usual course of business; decisions that were made and were non-negotiable; and, learning and development.

**2. Minutes of 30 September and Matters Arising [SDPB(11)055]**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September were agreed as an accurate record and updated actions incorporated.

**3. The People Strategy [SDPB(11)057]**

- 3.1 The Director General, PPCS, introduced the People Strategy which had been revised following discussion at the last Board meeting. It was agreed that:

the Director General, PPCS, should work with the Head of Internal Communications in order to simplify the style and shorten the Strategy; and,

comments on drafting points should be incorporated and reference made to the wider economic and corporate context.

- 3.2 The Board agreed that the engagement process should be taken forward by the Operations Group with a view to signing off the Strategy by the end of the financial year. It was also agreed that a Consultation Plan containing proposals for a mixture of localised and cross-DG area focus groups, including some diagonal cuts, should be brought to a future DG meeting for discussion.

**4. Welsh Language [SDPB(11)058]**

- 4.1 The Deputy Director, Welsh Language, outlined the main purpose of the paper which was to consider improving performance against Welsh language commitments and preparations for the forthcoming Welsh

Language Standards introduced by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

- 4.2 Board members agreed that the organisation already had a good resource of Welsh speakers and that those who were not fluent should be encouraged to use Welsh in the workplace, demonstrating it as a key skill and developing confidence. It was also agreed that consideration should be given to small practical steps which could be taken to normalise and embed the Welsh language throughout the organisation, including among non-Welsh speakers.
- 4.3 The Director General, Education and Skills, added that the Board was expected to demonstrate leadership and commitment to the Welsh language both within the organisation and to external stakeholders. In addition, it was noted that there would be reputational risks if the Welsh Language Standards were not met as the Welsh Language Commissioner intended on reporting publicly on compliance.
- 4.4 Board members agreed that:
- consideration should be given to defining the term “bilingual working” and the long term aspiration for the organisation;
  - on a regular basis, the Board should monitor bilingual workforce planning and recruitment for posts where Welsh language skills were desirable;
  - cost implications for providing internal systems and processes (eg. SAP) bilingually should be explored; and
  - DGs should inform the Deputy Director, Welsh Language, of nominated colleagues to join the Welsh Language Task and Finish Group.

## **5. Risk Management Policy [SDPB(11)059]**

- 5.1 The Board accepted the paper as it stood but agreed that a fuller session on risk management, risk registers and risk appetite should be scheduled prior to the approval of the draft Risk Management Policy.

## **6. MERLIN Contract Expiry and Welsh Government ICT Strategy [SDPB(11)060]**

- 6.1 The Director General, PPCS, introduced the paper, providing an update on the overall approach taken to update the Welsh Government ICT Strategy, the MERLIN Contract Expiry Project Outline Business Case, and interaction with the ICT Strategy for the Welsh Public Sector.
- 6.2 The Chief Information Officer said that there was already good alignment between the Welsh Government ICT Strategy and the ICT Strategy for the Welsh Public Sector, and the Welsh Government had an opportunity to provide leadership to the Public Sector in Wales.

- 6.3 The Deputy Director, Places and Services, informed the Board that his team were working with ICT Leads in each of the DG areas to map ICT programme spend as some had been commissioned corporately and some locally within DG areas. Board members felt that it was important to recognise these links in order to minimise the risk of developing local ICT solutions which had corporate implications.
- 6.4 With regard to the development of the MERLIN Contract Expiry Project, it was felt that the Welsh Government should remain flexible and not rule out options at this stage.
- 6.5 Following discussion, the Board endorsed the recommendations in the paper and, in addition, asked that:

the chart detailing ICT spend, included in the Public Accounts Committee briefing, be circulated to DGs; and

a longer slot be scheduled for Board discussion on the Outline Business Case prior to any decisions being made.

## **7. Any Other Business**

- 7.1 No other business was raised

### **Board Secretariat, October 2011**