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## Summary Minutes of the Board Meeting, 29 June 2012

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### Present:

Permanent Secretary (Chair)  
David Sissling  
Emyr Roberts  
Bernard Galton  
James Price  
Michael Hearty  
June Milligan  
Gareth Jones  
James Turner  
Adrian Webb  
Elan Closs Stephens  
David Richards

### In attendance:

Natalie Pearson  
Caroline Turner (Item 2)  
Huw Onllwyn Jones (Item 2)  
Martin Sollis (Item 3)  
Arwel Thomas (Item 4)  
Catrin Small (Translator, Item 2)

### Apologies:

Jeff Godfrey  
John Howells

### Secretariat:

Emma Alexander  
Martyn Gunter

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

1.1 On behalf of the Board, Elan Closs Stephens, Non-Executive Director, thanked the Permanent Secretary for her leadership and guidance during her time at the Welsh Government. She highlighted the changes the Permanent Secretary had implemented to enhance Governance arrangements within the organisation, the developed levels of engagement with staff, her oversight of the organisation's change journey and the collegiate and supportive way of working she had developed.

1.2 The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May [Board(12)032] were agreed as an accurate record.

### *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 the Single Environmental Body and Board members' contributions to the Summer School event being held in Lampeter. The Board welcomed the results circulated by David Sissling, DG, Health, Social Services & Children (HSS&C) which detailed his Department's 2011/12 end year performance against tier 1 priorities (all Wales).

*Operations Group*

- 1.4 In the absence of John Howells, Chair of the Operations Group, Michael Hearty, DG, Strategic Planning, Finance and Performance (SPF&P) and Natalie Pearson, Deputy Director, Engagement & Innovation gave an update on the June meeting. Discussions had taken place on improving the tracking of Government Business, Records Management, the Grants Management Project, the New Civil Service Competency Framework, the Fit for the Future Toolkit & Mandatory Training and the outcome of a workforce data gathering exercise from April 2012.

*Corporate Governance Committee*

- 1.5 Elan Closs Stephens, Chair of the Welsh Government Corporate Governance Committee, gave an update on the meeting held earlier in the week. Items discussed had included the Committee's Annual Report, the Governance Statement, the Internal Audit Annual Report and grants management.

*Governance*

- 1.6 David Richards, Director, Governance provided a brief update on governance issues.

*Legislation*

- 1.7 Michael Hearty updated the Board on the first meeting of the Legislative Programme Board which had taken place on 26 June. Michael informed the Board that the Programme Board would report regularly to the First Minister and to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis. In discussion Board members agreed that it was important that DGs should give priority to attending Programme Board meetings and that Legislation would be a standing item at future Board meetings.

**2. Welsh Language Task and Finish Group Report [Board(12)033]**

- 2.1 Emyr Roberts, DG, Education & Skills (DfES) introduced a paper which asked the Board to approve the Welsh Language Task and Finish Group's final report and recommendations on the internal use of Welsh within the organisation. He thanked members of the Group for their contribution. He recognised the paper contained a substantial number of recommendations but said that these were a mix of immediate and longer term actions.
- 2.2 The Board welcomed the paper and acknowledged the importance of the report. They discussed the breadth of the recommendations contained in the report, the need for more information on potential costs and timescales, articulating linkages with the Delivering Results Principles and Programme for Government, Welsh language skill levels in the organisation and leadership.
- 2.3 The Board agreed that:  
they were broadly content with the main themes presented by the Group but suggested they needed to be set within the context of the leadership role of senior staff;

the reference to the translation of SAP based systems should be removed as the Board had previously agreed this would not be taken forward;

a stronger narrative would be developed including clarifying a broader vision for the organisation's role in respect of the language and maintaining engagement of both Welsh and English speaking staff;

work on affordability and opportunity costs would be developed;

work on pace and timescales would be taken forward;

testing would be undertaken in DG areas in advance of an action plan being prepared. DGs would discuss whether the proposals resonated with their teams and identify what they could practically do within their own area to articulate and/or accelerate work;

the Task and Finish Group should be asked, in parallel, to identify the early important activities that were moving in the right direction;

consideration should be given to whether there would be elements that could be advanced using non-recurrent savings that were available in the current year;

an action plan, facilitated by Emyr Roberts, but with shared responsibility and input by DGs, would be prepared for consideration by the Board in October.

**3. Provisional Year End Outturn [Board(12)034]**

- 3.1 Michael Hearty, DG, SPF&P and Martin Sollis, Director, Finance & Procurement introduced a paper which asked the Board to note the provisional year end outturn figures for 2011-12 (in terms of the Welsh Government DEL position and the Ambit position) to be reported in the annual accounts.
- 3.2 Martin informed the Board that the Wales Audit Office (WAO) were due to complete their audit of the draft annual accounts shortly. Martin also updated the Board on the next steps leading up to the annual accounts 2011-12 being signed. The Board welcomed the paper, acknowledging the positive outturn figures and noting the fact that the figures were broadly similar to the forecast outturn provided at the mid-year point.
- 3.3 The Board agreed that DGs should pass on the thanks of the Board to finance officials within their area.

**4. Draft Governance Statement 2011-12 [Board(12)035]**

- 4.1 Arwel Thomas, Head of Corporate Governance and Assurance introduced a paper which asked the Board to consider and approve the latest draft of the Governance Statement to be included in the Welsh Government's annual accounts 2011-12, for signature in due course by the Permanent Secretary.
- 4.2 Arwel informed the Board of a number of amendments to the draft that had been suggested by the WAO and set out some of the comments made by the Welsh Government Corporate Governance Committee (CGC) at their June meeting. In discussion the Board agreed that:

as requested by the WAO and CGC, a reference to The Works should be included in the draft.

the reference to new budgetary arrangements (under the Enabling Government Portfolio: Improving Financial Management Programme) should be clarified, possibly with reference to 'overall ambit';

the introduction should cover reference to the change in culture in the organisation which had encouraged issues to be exposed, including reference to Whistleblowing;

any further specific comments should be sent to Arwel by the middle of the w/c 2 July; and

a revised draft would be sent to the WAO during the w/c 2 July.

**5. Senior Civil Service Remuneration Committee: Annual Report 2011-2012 [Board(12)036]**

5.1 James Turner, Non-Executive Director presented the Annual Report of the Senior Civil Service Remuneration Committee which covered the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.

5.2 The Board welcomed the paper and agreed the revised Terms of Reference contained within it. The Permanent Secretary thanked James for his ongoing work and leadership as Chair of the Committee.

**6. Any other business**

6.1 No other business was raised.

**Board Secretariat, 6 July 2012**