



Summary Minutes of the Board Meeting, 20 July 2012

Present:

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

In attendance:

Natalie Pearson
Craig Greenland (Item 3)
Martin Sollis (Item 5)

Apologies:

Permanent Secretary
Jeff Godfrey

Secretariat:

Emma Alexander
Martyn Gunter

1. Chair's Items [Oral]

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, including David Richards, Director, Governance, in his role as Principal Accounting Officer and commended the collective leadership role of the Director Generals.
- 1.2 The Chair informed Board members that, due to the timing of the meeting, the monthly Finance Report would be circulated to them out of committee.

Director General (DG) Exception Reports

- 1.3 The Chair invited DGs to share key issues from within their areas with Board colleagues. Issues raised included recruitment processes, NHS Service Change, financial reform, Higher Education configuration, the Single Environmental Body, building regulations, rail electrification, Next Generation Broadband, the City Regions Task and Finish Group report and the DGs' meeting with Sir Bob Kerslake which had taken place earlier in the week.

Operations Group

- 1.4 John Howells, Chair of the Operations Group, briefly gave an update on the July meeting where discussions had taken place on the Major Project Unit plans, SAP (the Finance IT System), the 9-Box Grid and the ICT Strategy.

Legislation

- 1.5 Michael Hearty, DG, Strategic Planning, Finance & Performance (SPF&P) informed Board members that the next meeting of the Legislative Programme Board would take place in September but that he and Marion Stapleton, Head of the First Minister's Delivery Unit would be meeting with DGs on a one-to-one basis during summer. He reminded DGs of the expectation that they would attend meetings of the Programme Board in person.

For decision

2. Minutes of 29 June and Matters Arising [Board(12)038]

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June were agreed as an accurate record.
- 2.2 The Chair informed the Board that under the terms of the Welsh Government's Publication Scheme, the Minutes of the July meeting would be published before the next Board meeting, so asked members to ensure that they raised any issues with the Secretariat on receipt of the draft minutes.

3. Equality and Diversity – Workforce Representation Diversity Targets [Board(12)039]

- 3.1 Bernard Galton, DG, People, Place & Corporate Services (PPCS) and Craig Greenland, Equality Adviser, PPCS introduced a paper on the diversity mix of the Welsh Government civil service. The Board were asked to review existing workforce representation targets for the Executive Band and Senior Civil Service and agree appropriate targets for the next 12 months.
- 3.2 The Board welcomed the paper and in discussion agreed that:
 - the paper was the beginning of a wider discussion and that it was important that the Board continued to consider this high level, cross cutting issue;
 - the existing interim and overall targets should be retained;
 - further work should be undertaken to develop an action plan and stronger supporting narrative on what the organisation was doing to meet the targets. This should be considered by Operations Group in the Autumn and subsequently by the Board; and
 - Bernard Galton would engage with Natalie Pearson, Head of Engagement & Innovation, PPCS on linkages with the actions arising from the targeted engagement within Fit for the Future and also appropriate communications with staff.

4. Corporate Governance Committee Annual Report 2011-12 [Board(12)040]

- 4.1 In her role as Chair of Corporate Governance Committee (CGC), Elan Closs Stephens presented the Annual Report of the Corporate Governance Committee which covered the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.
- 4.2 Elan informed the Board that the CGC felt able to offer a substantial assurance opinion based on its work over the reporting year and noted the positive engagement with the Wales Audit Office (WAO) during that period. She also informed the Board that the WAO had suggested that the CGC need only review its performance formally on a bi-annual basis, which she took as a vote of confidence in the work of the Committee.
- 4.3 Board members welcomed the report and agreed the proposed revised Terms of Reference. In discussion, the Board also agreed that:
- the Chair would consider ways of further improving joined up working between Departmental CGCs;
 - consideration would be given to how best to raise awareness amongst staff of the work of CGCs;
 - a future Board level discussion would be arranged to consider future work themes for the CGC; and
 - consideration should be given to CGC members attending part of a Board awayday, in early 2013, to provide an opportunity for discussion of any areas of concern and potential areas for joining up.

5. Welsh Government Annual Accounts 2011-12 [Board(12)041]

- 5.1 Martin Sollis, Director, Finance & Procurement introduced a paper which provided an update on the year end accounts process and sought the Board's support for the disclosures and sign off arrangements. He shared with the Board the broad content of the draft ISA 260 document and drew attention to the disclosures contained within the Accounts.
- 5.2 The Board welcomed the paper and in discussion:
- noted that the accounts process had once again improved and that the accounts were on track to be signed off earlier than last year (for the third year in a row);
 - acknowledged the assurance role of the CGC;
 - noted that they, and the CGC, had had the opportunity to review and discuss the draft Governance Statement at their June meetings;
 - welcomed that a positive update had been received from the WAO;
 - reviewed the disclosures made and confirmed the statements made; and
 - discussed the remaining process for signing the accounts by the Principal Accounting Officer.

5.3 The Board confirmed it was content that due process had been followed and was able to provide formal assurance and recommend that the Accounts should be signed the following week, subject to any minor amendments identified by the Finance team.

6. Fit for the Future (Oral)

6.1 Natalie Pearson provided Board members with an update on the arrangements for the Fit for the Future Live event. She circulated a draft event brochure for Board members' information, confirmed that event briefs had been circulated to DGs earlier that day and asked that if DGs wished to feed through any final amendments to the Action Plan, they should do so by Monday 23 July.

6.2 Natalie also informed the Board that the Fit for the Future Narrative would be updated three times a year through the Leadership Brief.

6.3 The Board welcomed the update and thanked Natalie and her team for their efforts on the Fit for the Future Live and Fast Stream events. The Chair wished the Board well for the event.

7. Any other business

7.1 No other business was raised.

Board Secretariat, 25 July 2012