



Summary Minutes of the Board Meeting, 23 May 2014

Present:

Permanent Secretary (Chair)
James Turner
David Richards
Gareth Jones
Michael Hearty
June Milligan
Jeff Godfrey
James Price
Elan Closs Stephens
Adrian Webb
John Howells

In attendance:

Natalie Pearson
Lynne Hamilton (item 3)
Gary Davies (item 4)

Apologies:

Owen Evans

Secretariat:

Catherine Evans
Wayne Woodhall

1. Permanent Secretary's Items [Oral]

1.1 *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 Permanent Secretary's Reviews' closure report which had been submitted to the Permanent Secretary for comment, a review of the Legislative Programme Board's function, Supreme Court hearings, RIFW, council tax, work around local government elements of the Williams Commission recommendations and the launch of the Hate Crime Framework which coincided with Equality and Diversity Week (12th-16th May).

1.2 *Senior Civil Service (SCS) Remuneration Committee*

James Turner, Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Remuneration Committee gave a brief update on the meeting held on 2nd May. Items discussed had included a paper on benchmarking related to SCS headcounts and ratios. The HR Director would speak to DGs individually about departmental figures. The Committee had a further conversation about generalist/specialist SCS posts and a discussion around 9-box grid markings.

1.3 *Operations Group*

John Howells, Chair of the Operations Group, gave a brief update on the meeting held on 14th May. Items discussed included Welsh Language Standards and bilingual working, driving for work and the need for staff to ensure they had the appropriate business insurance. Operations Group had agreed that the onus should be on the individual to ensure they had the correct documentation in place and a communications campaign would be undertaken to remind staff of their responsibility in this area. The Group had also received a report on the Essentials Update; an ICT tool which it recommended should be used on a 6 month trial basis. The tool would make staff aware of minor changes to corporate policy by requiring them to confirm they had read the relevant guidance when logging on to their computers.

1.4 The Permanent Secretary said that any updates communicated via this tool should be concise and well written. Natalie Pearson said that the tool would only be used as part of a wider communications campaign on a particular issue and never more frequently than once a month.

1.5 *Corporate Governance Committee*

Elan Closs Stephens, Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee, gave an update on the meeting held on 20th May. The Committee had dealt with both regular items and end year business. The Auditor General for Wales, Huw Vaughan Thomas, had addressed the Committee and said that he planned to work towards shorter studies for a more “real time” audit approach. He would be happy to attend the Committee on an annual basis. Other items discussed included an update on the review of Corporate Governance, the draft Internal Audit Plan for 2014-15, remodelling of the Central Services Workstream, the Risk Management Policy and Framework, the draft Internal Audit Annual Assurance Report and the draft Corporate Governance Committee Annual Report which would be circulated to members out of Committee for comment prior to its submission to the July Board meeting.

For decision

2. Minutes of 2nd May and Matters Arising [Board(14)021]

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd May were agreed as an accurate record.

For discussion

3 End Year Finance Report [Board(14)022]; Budget Forecasting [Board(14)023]

3.1 Lynne Hamilton, Director of Finance and Commercial, introduced the Provisional Outturn Report for 2013-14. She said that the first draft of the Welsh Government accounts had been completed in line with the agreed timetable and was now subject to scrutiny by the Wales Audit Office. Figures presented in the report were therefore provisional.

- 3.2 Following a brief discussion, the Board noted the contents of the report and the Permanent Secretary thanked Lynne for the paper.

Budget Forecasting [Board(14)023]

- 3.3 Lynne Hamilton introduced the 'Financial Management Forecasting Review' paper, which reported on the forecasting of 2013-14 year end outturn carried out by departments as part of the monthly financial management process.
- 3.4 The Board had requested a report on departmental forecasting and in order to gain a better understanding of forecasting during the year, the report had been deferred until a more accurate picture of the final outturn was available. The figures used in the report were the most recent provisional outturn figures represented in draft one of the accounts and were subject to audit. Lynne said that the paper had been drafted following wide ranging discussions with Operations Teams and Heads of Finance.
- 3.5 Following discussion, the Board agreed that this was the start of a debate and a further discussion should be scheduled at a future meeting. It was also agreed that Lynne should provide verbal feedback to the Heads of Finance on the Board discussion.

4. NATO Summit [Oral]

- 4.1 Gary Davies, Head of European and External Affairs Division, gave a brief overview of the forthcoming NATO Summit and the Welsh Government's involvement. The Summit was an excellent opportunity to showcase Wales. It would be delivered on behalf of NATO by the UK Government. The Welsh Government had an important role to play, for example, in terms of transport links and the provision of health services. It would also have a role to play in terms of resilience.
- 4.2 The Board agreed that it would be important to consider any messages that needed to be communicated to staff in advance of the Summit. John Howells noted that the Operations Group would be considering some of these issues at its June meeting.
- 4.3 The Permanent Secretary thanked Gary for the update. It was agreed that he should be kept informed and a further update to the Board should be scheduled before the summer recess.

5. Any other Business

- 5.1 No other items of business were raised.

Board Secretariat, 29 May 2014