



**Summary Minutes of the Board
Meeting, 20 June 2014**

AGENDA ITEM: 2

Present:

Permanent Secretary (Chair)
Gareth Jones
Michael Hearty
June Milligan
Jeff Godfrey
James Price
Owen Evans
Andrew Goodall
James Turner
Elan Closs Stephens
Adrian Webb
John Howells

In attendance:

Natalie Pearson
Lynne Hamilton (item 1)
Ian Gibson (item 4)
Peter Kennedy (items 5 and 7)
Caren Fullerton (item 6)
Julie Carne (item 7)

Apologies:

David Richards

Secretariat:

Emma Alexander
Catherine Evans

1. Update on Financial Position [Oral]

- 1.1 Lynne Hamilton, Director of Finance & Commercial gave an oral update on the Financial Position and said that it was largely unchanged from that reported to the May Board meeting.
- 1.2 The Wales Audit Office was considering the first draft of the Accounts and so far no significant issues had been raised.
- 1.3 Following discussion, the Permanent Secretary thanked Lynne for the update and noted that the draft year-end accounts would come to the July Board meeting.

2. Permanent Secretary's Items [Oral]

- 2.1 The Permanent Secretary congratulated James Turner on his re-appointment as a Non-Executive Director to the Welsh Government (WG) Board following an open competition.
- 2.2 He welcomed Andrew Goodall, Director General, Health & Social Services and Chief Executive of the NHS in Wales to his first Board meeting since he had taken up post.

- 2.3 The Permanent Secretary also noted that this was John Howells' last meeting in his capacity as Chair of the Operations Group as Peter Kennedy would be taking up the role from July. The Permanent Secretary thanked John for his work and the valuable contribution he had made to Board meetings.
- 2.4 *Director General (DG) Exception Reports*
The Permanent Secretary invited DGs to share key issues from within their areas with Board colleagues. Issues raised included Silk, the Common Agricultural Policy, RIFW, the Public Health Bill, the recent Nuffield Report, Jobs Growth Wales, Schools Challenge Cymru, the PISA conference, fire strikes, the NATO Summit, Civil Service Live, the Wales Bill, Appoint (the planned upgrade to the online recruitment management system), Legislative Competence Issues and Bills, the Welsh Government's three successful bids to the Law Commission, nominations for the WG awards and the 2nd master class on speech writing held with Simon Lancaster. It was agreed that copies of Simon Lancaster's seminar should be circulated for information.
- 2.5 It was also agreed that DGs should encourage their staff to attend the lunchtime session with June Milligan on 1st July which was an opportunity to discuss and reflect on comments raised by staff during Equality and Diversity week.
- 2.6 *Operations Group*
John Howells, Chair of the Operations Group, gave a brief update on the meeting held on 11th June. Items discussed included emails/information management and options for introducing mailbox limits. The Group had discussed the NATO Summit in terms of the practical implications for staff and would have a further discussion at an extraordinary meeting of the Group the following week. In addition, Operations Group had discussed and agreed a new approach to mandatory and Welsh language training. They had also discussed Appoint and a minute had been sent to the Permanent Secretary to say that the Group were content with the proposals.

For decision

3. Draft Minutes of 23rd May and Matters Arising [Board(14)026]

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May were agreed as an accurate record.

4 Draft Governance Statement 2013-14 [Board(14)027]

- 4.1 Ian Gibson, Head of Corporate Governance Unit, introduced the paper which provided the Board with the latest draft of the Governance Statement to be included in the Welsh Government's annual accounts for 2013-14.
- 4.2 He highlighted the following points:

- The Corporate Governance Committee had looked at the draft Governance Statement at its May meeting and was supportive of the content. The Committee had suggested some minor drafting changes and these had been incorporated;
 - It was a 'live' document right up until the signing of the accounts and would be updated until then;
 - The statement had been drafted in accordance with guidance issued by HM Treasury.
- 4.3 Following discussion, it was agreed that Ian should take on board the comments raised. The Permanent Secretary noted that the draft Governance Statement had not raised any new issues and thanked Ian for the paper.

For discussion

5. Updating our Capability Plan [Board(14)028]

- 5.1 Peter Kennedy, HR Director, introduced the paper, which asked the Board to agree and support the proposed approach to update the Capability Plan, namely to engage with the business to review the capabilities that the organisation required to meet future Ministerial priorities.
- 5.2 He highlighted the following points:
- The UK Government had recently updated their Capability Plan and were considering setting targets for some training courses to ensure, for example, that at least 75% of the SCS had undertaken training on a particular area;
 - There was a need to revisit the WG's Capability Plan within the context of constrained budgets, ensure the organisation was investing in the right skills and consider whether it would be useful to set targets;
 - The corporate budget for learning and development had significantly decreased and it was important to reset priorities to ensure investment in the right areas.
- 5.3 The following points were raised in discussion:
- The Board agreed that training priorities should be refreshed;
 - Any refresh should ensure that essential 'training courses' were effective and provided value for money;
 - It was important that the Plan met present and future business needs;
 - A more strategic and targeted approach was needed to review processes, look at what posts were needed and what skills were needed in those posts;
 - It would be helpful to know when a more in-depth review of the Plan would take place;

- Communications should be drawn up to remind staff that it was their responsibility to identify their personal training needs and to challenge managers if the training needs were not met;
 - In addition to the corporate training courses available, money was spent on training in different portfolio areas according to DG priorities;
 - Priority 2 contained a number of issues which may benefit from being worked through in more detail;
 - Operations Group had a role in taking forward this work and responding to the challenge;
 - DGs should be responsible for continuing to drive out complexity in their own areas;
 - It would be important to reset the organisation's priorities to allow them to be appropriately resourced.
- 5.4 The Board agreed the proposed approach and said that a medium-term plan was needed. It also agreed that further consideration should be given to ways of reducing complexity in the organisation.
- 5.5 It was agreed that a further discussion on the Capability Plan should be scheduled at Board in due course.

6. ICT/Digital Presentation [Oral]

- 6.1 Caren Fullerton, Deputy Director, Expert Services and Business Management, gave an oral presentation entitled 'Digital in Welsh Government' and asked the Board to agree the Action Plan.
- 6.2 Following discussion, the Board agreed the Digital Action Plan and commented that the actions seemed sensible and pragmatic. The Permanent Secretary thanked Caren for the presentation.

7. Proposals for a Compassionate Leave Policy [Board(14)029]

- 7.1 Peter Kennedy, HR Director and Julie Carne, Head of HR Policy Development, introduced the paper which provided the Board with an opportunity to consider a draft policy on compassionate leave following consideration by the Operations Group.
- 7.2 Following discussion, the Permanent Secretary said that the Board could not agree the draft policy without further research being carried out regarding possible implications of introducing such a policy and whether other organisations/employers had something similar in place. In the meantime, guidance for line managers should be drawn up highlighting the flexible arrangements in place which could be used to draw up ad hoc arrangements for staff with caring responsibilities.

8. Any other Business

- 8.1 Under any other business, the Permanent Secretary drew attention to the Management Information Annual Report which had been tabled as

a paper to note. He said that it would merit further consideration at the following meeting.

Board Secretariat, 24 June 2014