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## Minutes of the Board Meeting, 15 July 2016

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### **Present:**

Permanent Secretary (Chair)  
Gillian Baranski  
Chris Dawson  
Gawain Evans  
Owen Evans  
Sioned Evans  
Jeff Godfrey  
Andrew Goodall  
Peter Kennedy  
Natalie Pearson  
David Richards  
Elan Closs Stephens  
James Turner  
Adrian Webb

### **In attendance:**

Andrew Slade (Item 1)  
Elaine DeBono (Item 1)  
Jeff Thomas (Item 1)  
Sharon Cross (Item 4)

### **Apologies:**

Ann Keane  
Toby Mason  
James Price

### **Secretariat:**

Emma Alexander  
Sarita Marshall

## **Governance & Performance**

### **1. Monitoring Delivery Progress – Rural Payments**

- 1.1 Andrew Slade, Director Agriculture, Food and Marine gave a presentation on Common Agricultural Policy Land Based Scheme Delivery in Wales. Andrew reminded the Board of the background to the CAP and the history of the Rural Payments Wales team.
- 1.2 The presentation highlighted the improved efficiency that had been seen from multi-skilled teams, the leading payment performance, stakeholder involvement, the move to online applications and some of the risks and opportunities moving forward.
- 1.3 The Board congratulated Andrew and his team on their achievements, thanked them for an interesting presentation and recognised the potential learning for other parts of the organisation.

## **2. Finance Report - 2016-17 Forecast Outturn and Reserves [Board(16)047]**

- 2.1 Gawain Evans, Finance Director, introduced the paper which set out the current year forecast outturn information and an update on the Welsh Government reserves position following approval of the First Supplementary Budget 2016-17.
- 2.2 Andrew Goodall, Director General, Health & Social Services and Chief Executive NHS Wales provided a brief update on the position of Local Health Boards and said that conversations were continuing regarding forecast positions.

### **Corporate**

## **3. End of Year Assurance [Board(16)048 to 051]**

- 3.1 Gawain Evans confirmed that work was continuing to finalise the End Year Accounts for 2015-16. He told the Board that work had been undertaken to simplify and streamline the Accounts, in line with HM Treasury guidance. He said that the Wales Audit Office were due to complete their audit work by the end of the day and he was optimistic that there would be no material issues and the Accounts would therefore be unqualified.
- 3.2 The Board agreed that consideration should be given to separate communication of Part 1 of the Accounts which provided an overview of the Welsh Government.
- 3.3 The Board agreed their draft Annual Report for 2015-16 but agreed that further thought should be given to how the understanding of the role and work of the Board across the organisation could be improved.
- 3.4 The Board noted and agreed the Annual Reports for the Sub-Committees, subject to some minor changes to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) Report. They agreed that it would be important to continue to keep under review the fact that OFMCO issues were covered by the Welsh Government ARC rather than a separate committee for the Group. Board members also noted the invaluable work of the Operations Committee.

## **4. People Survey Action Plan [Board(16)053]**

- 4.1 Natalie Pearson, Head of Engagement & Innovation and Sharon Cross, Corporate Research, introduced the paper which proposed action to support managers on leadership and managing change, and sought the Board's approval on the approach to interim research before the next survey and the communication of next steps.
- 4.2 The following points were made in the subsequent discussion:

- Some form of interim ‘temperature check’ on particular issues could be beneficial but it would be important to avoid survey fatigue amongst staff;
- ‘walking the floor’ could be a useful way to gain feedback on issues concerning staff;
- Any interventions to support senior managers in developing greater capability in leadership and managing change should be supportive and not seen as addressing failure;
- Removing the neutral response box may provide a clearer view on the scale of some issues;
- Heads of Group needed to be engaged in determining appropriate action on Learning & Development for individuals in their area;
- Other organisations were undertaking work on analytics that could be of interest;
- Further analysis of the free comments in key areas would be helpful.

4.3 The Permanent Secretary concluded that the following actions should be put in hand, linking to the Leadership and Capability workstream of Preparing for the Future:

- a Focus Group, including non-Executive members of the Board, should consider how more focussed surveys might look and whether any particular issues would benefit from further investigation e.g. reducing complexity and the techniques that could be used;
- a re-described process should be developed for Learning and Development, including how Heads of Group would take this forward with individuals on a tailored basis in their areas;
- communications to staff should be prepared highlighting the proposed focus on Leadership and Managing Change as well as demonstrating the improvement work already underway on ICT;
- a further Board conversation should be arranged for the September meeting.

## **Regular Items**

### **5. Draft Minutes of 24 June and Matters Arising [Board(16)054]**

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June were agreed as an accurate record.

**6. Permanent Secretary's Items and Committee Updates[Oral]**  
• **Exception reports [Oral]**

*Permanent Secretary's Items*

- 7.1 The Permanent Secretary reported briefly on his meetings with the new Cabinet and drew the Board's attention to the First Minister's statement on Priorities for Government. He also noted that meetings of the new Liaison Committees had taken place and that he had attended an Institute for Government seminar on the Implications of the UK's Exit from the EU.

*Exception Reports*

- 7.2 The Permanent Secretary invited Board members to share key issues from within their areas as well as Committee updates. These included updates on the Wales Bill; the First Minister's Statement on the Legislative Programme; Welsh Language Standards; NHS performance; Summer School; Estyn Annual Report; preparatory work for the Stonewall Index; Cash Management performance; Mentoring; Cabinet Office Development Centre for Commercial Capability; and Sickness Absence.
- 7.3 Sioned Evans reported that the Operations Committee had not met in July but had considered papers out of committee.
- 7.4 The Board agreed they were content with the proposed Terms of Reference for the Audit and Risk Committee, subject to the order of paragraphs 3(i) and 3(ii) being switched.

**8. Any Other Business**

- 8.1 The Permanent Secretary noted that the first paperless Board meeting had gone well and thanked the Board Secretariat for their work in implementing the approach.

**Board Secretariat, 19 July 2016**