



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Minutes of the Board Meeting, 23 March 2018

Present:

Permanent Secretary (Chair)
Andrew Goodall
Tracey Burke
Andrew Slade
Des Clifford
David Richards
Gawain Evans
Peter Kennedy
Natalie Pearson
Elan Closs Stephens
Ann Keane
Ellen Donovan
Jeff Farrar
James Turner
Gillian Baranski
Lynne Schofield

In attendance:

Jo Salway (Item 1)
Piers Bisson (Item 3)
Peter Ryland (Item 3)
Steven Marshall (Item 4)
Helen Morris (Item 4)
Paul McDonagh (Item 5)

Apologies:

Jeff Godfrey

Secretariat:

Catherine Ashford
Sarita Marshall

Welsh Government Performance

The Permanent Secretary welcomed new Non Executive Directors – Ellen Donovan and Jeff Farrar - to their first Welsh Government Board meeting.

1. Prosperity for All – Update [Oral]

- 1.1 Jo Salway, Head of Cabinet Office, reported on the first meeting of the *Prosperity for All* Directors Group. For new Non Executive Directors present, Jo recapped the structure and role of the Group. Jo reported there was a great deal of energy at the first meeting of the Group. The key action was setting up 'challenge sessions' for each of the five priority areas.
- 1.2 Jo Salway reported on the first of the challenge sessions that had taken place earlier this week – on Early Years. The discussion was very positive and reflected a will to work together and learn from each other and to make the best use of scarce resources.
- 1.3 The Permanent Secretary echoed Jo's summary of the Directors Group meeting and Early Years challenge session, and thanked Jo for putting the new structures in place.

- 1.4 Jo Salway drew Board members' attention to the First Minister's recent letter to Cabinet, setting out the new role for the Leader of the House, Julie James, in relation to *Prosperity for All* and Cabinet Office. Jo Salway also informed the Board that a 'stocktake' paper on *Taking Wales Forward* and *Prosperity for All* would go to Cabinet in May. This would also cover public sector reform and the Legislative Programme.
- 1.5 In relation to Early Years, Ann Keane raised the issue of protocols sometimes being a barrier to effective data sharing between organisations. It was agreed to return to this point during the GDPR item later on the agenda.
- 1.6 David Richards suggested the opportunity to bring external stakeholders and partners into the new *Prosperity for All* governance structures.
- 1.7 Andrew Goodall reflected that while there was clarity for the cross-cutting themes, an oversight mechanism for progress on the work not included in the five priority areas was still required. Andrew noted that prioritisation work is due to be discussed at the Business Group and Senior Team. He emphasised the importance of finalising this work to facilitate redeployment to priorities.
- 1.8 Jo Salway reported that the CPMS business planning system was being restructured to reflect the Wellbeing Objectives and *Prosperity for All*.

Action: update on 'stocktake' work to come to April Board (Jo Salway/ Secretariat)

Action: Meeting between Permanent Secretary and Jo Salway to discuss WBFG accountability table (Jo Salway/ Secretariat)

2 Finance Report [Board (18)012]

- 2.1 Gawain Evans updated Board on the 2017-18 forecast out turn and reserves position.
- 2.2 Tracey Burke reported that she is looking closely at the timing of Local Government funding, in particular funding provided later in the financial year.
- 2.3 Jeff Farrar asked what a 'safe' level of reserve would look like for the Welsh Government. It was agreed that a broader look ahead to the next few financial years should be considered at a future Board meeting.

Action: Item on finance forward look to come a to future Board (Gawain Evans /Secretariat)

- 2.4 Gawain reported the Welsh Government's continued success in cash management and what this represented in rebate to the organisation. Board members congratulated the Central Finance Team on their performance.

Corporate

3 EU Transition & EU Structural Funds Update [Board(18)003]

- 3.1 Des Clifford reported that the National Assembly for Wales had passed the Law Derived from the European Union (Wales) Bill and Royal Assent has been received. Des congratulated the team involved for the huge amount of work over the last seven-eight months, and in particular the close working between policy teams, legal services and the political community. Nevertheless, Des Clifford confirmed work is ongoing to resolve the differences between the Welsh Government and the UK Government on the UK Withdrawal Bill – Piers Bisson reported progress on this work.
- 3.2 Des Clifford noted that an EU Council was due to take place later that day at which an agreement on transition arrangements and guidelines for future negotiation was expected.
- 3.3 Des Clifford updated the Board on resourcing challenges and the work already in hand on legal services, agriculture policy, and negotiation. Piers Bisson drew the Board's attention to the recent EU Cabinet Sub-Committee paper on preparedness. Peter Kennedy asked Remuneration Committee members present to keep EU resourcing pressures in mind at future meetings and the Permanent Secretary referred the Board back to the prioritisation exercise discussed earlier in the meeting in this context.
- 3.4 Piers Bisson reported the EU Cabinet Sub Committee had also considered a paper on Brexit related legislation and agreed a pragmatic approach to UK legislation.
- 3.5 Jeff Farrar congratulated the team on their grip of issues in highly uncertain times. The Permanent Secretary echoed this, highlighting the team's outstanding work. Des Clifford emphasised in particular the contribution of Legal Services.
- 3.6 Des Clifford reported on his recent visit to China accompanying the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport.
- 3.7 Peter Ryland updated the Board on current EU programmes including the impact of exchange rate changes and the benefits and challenges posed by a transition period. Peter Ryland provided an update on the Treasury 'Shared Prosperity Fund'.
- 3.8 Ellen Donovan asked about the implications for planning with 2020 in mind. Andrew Slade provided information on implications for systems development as an example. It was agreed that a wider paper on

implications for policy areas and resources should come to a future Board meeting.

Action: Andrew Slade/ Peter Ryland/ Secretariat

- 3.9 The Permanent Secretary congratulated the WEFO team on their work during a period of continued uncertainty.

4 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) [Board (18) 014]

- 4.1 Steven Marshall provided an overview of GDPR including the main implications and areas of concern for the Welsh Government and the work in hand to prepare. Steven introduced Helen Morris, Head of Internal Audit, who had been appointed as the Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer.
- 4.2 Helen Morris echoed Steven Marshall's views on preparedness. Helen Morris raised an issue in relation to project management resource and the organisation's approach to allocating it. It was agreed the resource issue would be taken away for resolution.

Action: Steven Marshall/ Peter Kennedy

- 4.3 Gillian Baranski asked the Board to note staff welfare in the context of GDPR and the stress caused when a data breach is referred to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Tracy Burke reported pressure currently being felt by Information Asset Owners (IAOs) preparing for GDPR to come into effect. Steve Marshall confirmed a support package for IAOs is being developed.
- 4.4 Natalie Pearson updated the Board on internal communications work in hand, building on the huge amount of 'face to face' work already completed by Steve Marshall and the project team. The campaign would saturate channels and take into account best practice in other organisations.
- 4.5 Peter Kennedy asked the Board to note the importance of senior leadership. Jeff Farrar and David Richards asked the Board to consider GDPR as an opportunity to improve and the Permanent Secretary agreed GDPR must be seen as an opportunity to modernise.
- 4.6 Ann Keane and Helen Morris noted the importance of well organised data sharing between organisations for the improvement of public services. Helen Morris confirmed she would be holding workshops with the Welsh Government's Sponsored Body Data Protection Officers.

5 Business Continuity [Board(18)015]

- 5.1 Paul McDonagh provided an update on the recent Business Continuity ICT exercise.

- 5.2 Paul McDonagh asked the Board to note that approximately half of Welsh Government staff were signed up to the emergency text service. The Board agreed that staff with a Welsh Government issued mobile phone and remote workers should be required to sign up to the emergency text service.

Action: Peter Kennedy/ Paul McDonagh

- 5.3 Paul McDonagh raised the issue of suitable work for staff in non-business critical areas when disruptions to business were extended. The Board agreed it was important for consistency to be applied across departments and for teams to have staged plans that would take this scenario into account.
- 5.4 As Audit and Risk Committee Chair, Elan Closs Stephens welcomed the exercise and emphasised the importance of keeping sight of business continuity on the corporate risk register.
- 5.5 In relation to the recent severe weather, Andrew Goodall noted the Welsh Government had been able to discharge its oversight role. He also noted it would be important to learn the lessons from this real-life test of Business Continuity plans. Lynne Schofield reported issues with logging onto ICT systems remotely. Natalie Pearson reported good feedback from staff on emergency communications and explained the process for office closures. Peter Kennedy confirmed that the Senior Team would be considering lessons learned from the severe weather.

Action: An update on communications channels available to staff in an emergency to be issued (Natalie Pearson)

Regular Items

6. Permanent Secretary's Items & Exception Reports [Oral]

- 6.1 The Permanent Secretary provided an update on current investigations. The Permanent Secretary thanked colleagues for their support in this work and beyond.
- 6.2 Andrew Goodall asked the Board to note this had been a very difficult winter period for the NHS, with the busiest December, January and February on record. Taking a rounded, whole-system approach to the performance data, Andrew Goodall confirmed that services had been sustained through this period. The Permanent Secretary congratulated colleagues on their response, including evening and weekend working.
- 6.3 Andrew Goodall asked the Board to note the health Directorate was part way through a twelve week 'co-production' process with the NHS on the parliamentary review.
- 6.4 Peter Kennedy asked the Board to note that further activity from Trade Unions on public sector pay was expected, in response to NHS related changes in England.

7. Sub-Committee Updates [Oral]

- 7.1 Elan Closs Stephens, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, provided a summary of items considered at the February meeting. Elan also reported back from the Public Leaders Forum, which took place the previous week, following a recommendation from the recent Sponsored Bodies Review. The Permanent Secretary paid tribute to the review report, completed by Julia Douch, and echoed Elan's view that the first meeting for the Forum was positive and productive.
- 7.2 James Turner, Chair of the Senior Civil Service (SCS) Remuneration Committee, reported on the last meeting, where Andrew Slade provided the Committee with his early reflections as Director General for Economy, Skills and Natural Resources.
- 7.3 David Richards, Chair of the Legislative Programme Board, gave an update on the legislative programme.

Permanent Secretary's Private Office, 23 March 2018

Actions arising at Board meeting, 26 January 2018

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LATEST POSITION
Prosperity for All		
Update on the stocktake work to come to April Board	Jo Salway/ Secretariat	Complete. Item scheduled for next Board meeting.
Jo Salway and Permanent Secretary to meet to discuss Wellbeing for Future Generations Accountability table	Jo Salway/ Secretariat	
Finance		
'Forward-look' paper to come to a future Board meeting	Gawain Evans/ Secretariat	Complete. Item scheduled for July Board meeting.
EU transition		
'Planning implications' paper to come to a future Board meeting	Andrew Slade/ Peter Ryland/ Secretariat	Complete. Item Scheduled for June Board meeting.
GDPR		
Project resources issues to be addressed	Steve Marshall/ Peter Kennedy	
GDPR		
Staff with WG iphones and remote workers to be enrolled on the emergency text message service	Peter Kennedy/ Paul McDonagh	
Business Continuity		
An update on communications channels available to staff to be issued	Natalie Pearson	