

## **Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on 29 March 2017**

### **Present:**

- Rt. Hon. Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister (Chair)
- Mark Drakeford AM
- Vaughan Gething AM
- Jane Hutt AM
- Carl Sargeant AM
- Ken Skates AM
- Kirsty Williams AM
- Mick Antoniw AM
  
- Alun Davies AM
- Rebecca Evans AM
- Julie James AM
  
- Peter Greening, Head of Cabinet Division
- Jo Salway, Head of Cabinet Office
- Toby Mason, Head of Strategic Communications
- Matt Greenough, Special Adviser
- Madeleine Brindley, Special Adviser
- David Costa, Special Adviser
- Andrew Johnson, Special Adviser
- Huw Price, Special Adviser
- Alex Rawlin, Special Adviser
- Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser
- Gareth Williams, Special Adviser
- Tom Woodward, Special Adviser
- Christopher W Morgan, Cabinet, Plenary and Committee Secretariat (minutes)
- Damian Roche, Cabinet, Plenary and Committee Secretariat

### **Apologies:**

- Lesley Griffiths AM

## **Item 1: The Triggering of Article 50.**

1.1 The First Minister advised Cabinet that he had called the meeting to discuss the Prime Minister's letter triggering Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which declared formally the United Kingdom's intention to leave the European Union. The UK's Permanent Representative to the EU had hand delivered the letter to the President of the European Council earlier that day.

1.2 The letter, which had not been shared with the Welsh Government in advance, highlighted that a strong and successful EU was in Britain's interest and the United Kingdom remained committed partners and allies to its friends on the continent.

1.3 The letter also stated that when it came to the return of powers to the United Kingdom the UK Government would consult fully on which powers should reside in Westminster and those that should be devolved. While this did not reflect the Welsh Government's view of the constitutional position, it was the expectation of the UK Government that the outcome of that process would be a significant increase in the decision-making power of each administration.

1.4 The Secretary of State for Exiting the EU had written to the Welsh Government earlier that day recognising the importance of EU markets to Wales and the need to pursue the greatest possible tariff and barrier-free trade with European neighbours. The UK Government stated it had taken into account the Welsh Government's six priorities in formulating its negotiating position. Cabinet recognised that despite the flaws in the internal UK negotiating process, there was common ground between the UK and Welsh Governments, such as in relation to access to the Single Market.

1.5 The Great European Repeal Bill White Paper, which had been shared in draft with the Welsh Government, did not adequately address the issue of where the powers, currently held by Brussels, would reside once the UK had withdrawn from the EU. There was reference to common frameworks but it was unclear how the UK Government would approach the LCM process and whether it would be possible for the Welsh Government to table LCMs in the Assembly.

1.6 Cabinet was concerned that, without a prior agreement with the UK Government, powers over devolved policy areas would be taken by Westminster. There were also concerns that the UK Government would not be representing the views of the UK but its focus would be on implications for England only.

1.7 It was agreed that the Government should table a motion for debate in the Assembly the following Tuesday to seek consensus on the response to the UK Government's Great European Bill White Paper.

**Cabinet, Plenary and Committee Secretariat  
March 2017**