The Welsh Government
Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet
21st February 2019

Present - Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford AM, First Minister (Chair)
Llandudno Junction: Rebecca Evans AM
Vaughan Gething AM
Lesley Griffiths AM
Eluned Morgan AM
Ken Skates AM
Jeremy Miles AM

Carys Evans, Principal Private Secretary to the First Minister
Rebecca Evans AM
Vaughan Gething AM
Lesley Griffiths AM
Eluned Morgan AM
Ken Skates AM
Jeremy Miles AM

Junction: Apologies
Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford AM, First Minister (Chair)
Rebecca Evans AM
Vaughan Gething AM
Lesley Griffiths AM
Eluned Morgan AM
Ken Skates AM
Jeremy Miles AM

Carys Evans, Principal Private Secretary to the First Minister
Jo Salway, Deputy Director Cabinet Office
Toby Mason, Head of Strategic Communications
Dan Butler, Special Adviser
Andrew Johnson, Special Adviser
Gwenllian Roberts, Chief Regional Officer – North (item 2)
Dewi Rowlands, Transport Policy, Planning & Partnerships (item 2)
Andrew Goodall, Director General Health (items 3 & 4)
Sioned Rees, Head of Escalation & Special Measures Support (items 3 & 4)

Present – Kirsty Williams AM
Cardiff: Jane Hutt AM
Julie Morgan AM (item 4)

Shan Morgan, Permanent Secretary
Des Clifford, Director General Office of the First Minister
Peter Greening, Head of Cabinet Division (items 1 & 2)
Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser
Madeleine Brindley, Special Adviser
Clare Jenkins, Special Adviser (items 1, 2 & 4)
Tom Woodward, Special Adviser
Christopher W Morgan, Cabinet Secretariat (minutes)
Damian Roche, Cabinet Secretariat
Jo-Anne Daniels Director Communities & Tackling Poverty (item 4)
Owain Lloyd, Deputy Director, Childcare, Play and Early Years Division (item 4)

Apologies Julie James AM

The First Minister welcomed everyone to the Cabinet meeting, the first to be held by
video link between North and South Wales / Croesawodd y Prif Weinidog bawb i gyfarfod y Cabinet, y cyntaf i’w gynnau drwy gysyllt fideo rhwng Gogledd a De Cymru.
Item 1: Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

1.1 Cymeradwyodd y Cabinet gofnodion y 4 Chwefror / Cabinet approved the minutes of 4 February.

Item 2: Matters relating to Economy and Transport in North Wales

2.1 The Minister for Economy and Transport introduced the paper, which provided an update on matters relating to his portfolio in North Wales.

2.2 North Wales currently faced very real economic challenges, with the pausing of Wylfa Newydd and other job losses on Ynys Môn, set against the threats posed by lack of clarity from the UK Government on Brexit as highlighted by major manufacturers in the region, such as Airbus. This demonstrated the need for the Government to accelerate regional leadership and planning.

2.3 However, compared to Wales as a whole, GVA per head in 2017 was higher in North Wales. Gross disposable household income in North Wales in 2016 was higher than the overall Welsh figure and the employment rate in North Wales was higher than both the Welsh and UK rates; whereas, the rate of unemployment was the lowest.

2.4 The paper outlined progress in relation to scoping options for Regional Indicative Budgets within the Economy and Transport portfolio. In response to the Wylfa Newydd announcement, this work would be extended to establish a consolidated Pan-Welsh Government view on investment in North Wales, which would help the Government to collectively consider how the investment could deliver the greatest benefit for the region.

2.5 Cabinet welcomed the paper and agreed that it was important to expedite the process of delivering a regional economic plan for North Wales.

2.6 Cabinet approved the paper.

Item 3: Matters relating to Health in North Wales CAB(18-19)31

3.1 The Minister for Health and Social Services introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to note the current challenges and opportunities relating to health in North Wales. The paper highlighted the progress Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board had made in the initial areas of concern identified when it was placed in special measures in June 2015 and where focus was now needed to drive further improvement.

3.2 The paper highlighted the progress made in key areas, since the Health Board had been placed in special measures, especially maternity services, which had been de-escalated in early 2018 and more recently GP out-of-hours services that had been de-escalated earlier that week.
3.3 There was a reasonable level of confidence that improvements in both the quality and safety of mental health services were now being made and had been accelerated since the publication of the Ockenden and HASCAS reports. Recent unannounced visits from HIW to both inpatient and community teams had confirmed this. There was also evidence of further focus, under the new Executive Director of Primary Care and Community Services, to drive progress in primary care and build on some of the good practice within the Health Board on providing care closer to home.

3.4 Performance concerns mainly focused on unscheduled care and planned care waiting times. The Board’s performance on the four and 12 hour targets were currently the poorest in Wales. The NHS performance data for January, published earlier that day, highlighted that the four-hour performance was 66.9% and the number of people who spent over 12 hours in an emergency department was 1,989, which was clearly unacceptable.

3.5 The Board had launched 90-day cycle improvement plans in unscheduled care which had shown some encouraging progress and had brought about greater levels of collaborative working with partners. This progress would need to be maintained with staff and partners to deliver further progress, which would need to be sustainable. In planned care the paper outlined the key concerns relating to referral to treatment waiting times and diagnostics and the additional resources and specific support being provided.

3.6 Under the special measures arrangements, the Government had provided a delivery unit and financial support to stabilise and drive forward improvements. This had amounted to over £80 million since 2015. The investment in the current year had provided support to strengthen the management structure across the three acute sites to ensure that capacity and capability was in place to drive progress in performance, planned and unscheduled care.

3.7 It was recognised that to deliver sustainable improvements there would be a need for a transformation and reconfiguration of services. Recent history had highlighted how difficult implementing changes in health services had been in the region but the Health Board would need to be supported to deliver transformational change in order to meet the required clinical standards, aid recruitment and deliver improved outcomes and best practice.

3.8 The paper also set out the importance of partnership working in driving improvement, including how the proposals under the Transformation Fund would integrate services in the priority areas of mental health, learning disability, children and young people and community support. It also noted the importance of delivering on the prevention and care closer to home agendas.

3.9 Cabinet welcomed the progress report and noted that further improvements to health services in North Wales were expected as a result of recent changes to the management board.
3.10 It was recognised that access to GPs had been a particular issue, which had placed added pressures on Accident and Emergency services but this was expected to improve in the coming years given that all the GP training posts in the region had been filled. It was agreed that a note on the Prestatyn GP model would be shared with Ministers.

3.11 The economic impact and opportunities the health and social care sector in the region provided was recognised, as it employed around 46,000 people and would have an important role in the development of a future economic strategy for the region.

3.12 Cabinet noted the paper.

**Item 4: Quality & Governance in Health and Care (Wales) Bill**

4.1 The Minister for Health and Social Services introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to agree the near final provisions within the Quality and Governance in Health and Care (Wales) Bill, prior to its introduction. The Bill intended to strengthen and enforce the idea of quality as the underlying key driver of decision making in relation to health and social services.

4.2 Cabinet approved the paper.