
Minutes of the Board Meeting, 24 April 2020 – Skype Meeting

Present:

Shan Morgan
Ellen Donovan
Jeff Farrar
Gareth Lynn
Andrew Goodall
Tracey Burke
Andrew Slade
Des Clifford
Peter Kennedy
Natalie Pearson
Gawain Evans
David Richards
Andrew Jeffrey
Helen Lentle
Charlie Thomas

Secretariat:

Charmain Watts

Apologies:

None

1. Welcome

- 1.1 The Permanent Secretary welcomed all attendees to the Welsh Government Board.

2. Current Issues/Covid-19

- 2.1 Andrew Goodall updated the Board on the latest developments on Covid-19 and the current position in Wales, the Board noted that the NHS staff had stepped up in carrying out extraordinary actions in extraordinary times.
- 2.2 The Permanent Secretary updated the Board on the governance arrangements and structure around the Covid-19 work and advised that the majority of Welsh Government staff are working from home, with the exception of key workers.
- 2.3 Gawain Evans updated the Board on the new timeline of the accounts, the revised plan will move the sign off of the Welsh Government's consolidated annual report 2019-20 to later in the year.
- 2.4 David Richards provided an update on the conclusion of the inquiry of the death of Carl Sargeant. He advised that following the mediation exercise by Brendan Barber, and with the agreement of the interested parties, the independent inquiry had been stopped and the Welsh Government will also pay the outstanding legal costs of the family

3. Director General Updates

- 3.1 The Director Generals provided an updated on key areas of work within their areas, Tracey Burke covered Education and Public Sector, Andrew Slade gave an update on Economy Skills and Natural Resources and Des Clifford on the Office of the First Minister. Discussions focused on 4 key phases:
 1. Emergency response
 2. Temporary normal
 3. Restart /Recover
 4. New model

3.2 The Board discussed the structure for the Welsh Government's work on the transition from crisis response to recovery, discussion focussed on the following elements:

- Planning scenarios for the outbreak progression
- Lessons from past crises
- Exit strategy for social distancing
- Policies to support economic recovery
- Unwinding interventions
- Future challenges and opportunities
- Welsh Government ways of working

3.3 Discussion focussed on the decision making process and the Permanent Secretary advised that she had informed all staff that any decisions were to be formally recorded along with the assumptions around those decisions. The Board agreed this was crucial for future scrutiny.

4. Finance Report

4.1 Andrew Jeffreys and Gawain Evans provided an update on current financial and budget issues and fed back from the meeting with the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd which took place on Wednesday.

4.2 Andrew Jeffreys presented the Finance Dashboard and discussion focused on:

- Consequential position,
- Reallocation of budgets being presented at the Star Chamber next week,
- Realignment of WEFO Budgets.

4.3 Gawain provided an update on the first supplementary budget and informed ExCo that due to the financial consequences of COVID-19 the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd has committed to bringing forward the first supplementary budget from its usual publication date in mid-June.

5. Communication Update

- 5.1 Natalie Pearson provided an update on internal communication and presented a one page dashboard on the latest statistics for news, the Learning Lab and intranet hits.
- 5.2 The Board discussed the importance of communication and engagement, to ensure the well-being of staff. Natalie advised that regular briefs were being issued along with films, podcasts and guidance packs. The Director Generals were also taking forward various channels of communication within their own areas.

6. AOB

- 6.1 The Non-Executive Directors raised the important issue of Care Homes and the availability of testing. Andrew Goodall confirmed the latest position and developments. The Non-Executive Directors also raised the issue of preparation for Test, Track and Trace. A discussion then followed around learning rapid lessons from PPE, testing and the wider issue of procurement in preparation for the next steps.
- 6.2 The Non-Executive Directors offered additional assistance with anything that the Welsh Government required assurance on. The Permanent Secretary thanked the Non-Executive Directors, Board members welcomed this offer.

Actions arising at Board meeting

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LATEST POSITION
NONE		