
Minutes of the Board Meeting, 17 July 2020 – TEAMS Meeting

Present:

Shan Morgan
Meena Upadhyaya
Ellen Donovan
Jeff Farrar
Gareth Lynn
Andrew Goodall
Tracey Burke
Andrew Slade
Des Clifford
Peter Kennedy
Natalie Pearson
Gawain Evans
David Richards
Andrew Jeffreys
Helen Lentle
Charlotte Cosserat

Secretariat:

Charmain Watts

Apologies:

None

1. Welcome

- 1.1 The Permanent Secretary welcomed all attendees to the third remote meeting of the Welsh Government Board and welcomed feedback from the Shadow Board Member on the new way of working remotely.
- 1.2 The Board agreed the minutes from the last meeting and welcomed the board action plan which allows members to monitor progress of actions.

2. Current Issues

Annual Accounts

- 2.1 Gawain Evans provided an update on the annual accounts and the new timeframe around signing the accounts and dates for the Public Accounts Committee sessions.

Covid-19 update

- 2.2 The Board discussed the current situation with the pandemic and the possibility of a second peak in winter. They further discussed the plans to manage this alongside other pressures such as Brexit and the delivery of the programme for Government.
- 2.3 The Board also discussed the possibility of a public inquiry which the First Minister has welcomed. The Permanent Secretary once again highlighted the importance of formally recording decisions along with the assumptions they are based on and how any identified risks will be managed. The Board agreed this was crucial for future scrutiny.
- 2.4 Andrew Goodall updated the Board on the latest developments on Covid-19 and the current position in Wales, discussion focused on:
 - Transmission of virus in Wales,
 - Critical care,
 - Mortality rate in Wales,
 - Track, Trace and Protect,
 - Personal protective equipment,
 - Protocol around local lockdown,
 - Plans around longer term pandemic and immediate lessons learnt.

3. Director General Updates

3.1 The Director Generals (DGs) provided an update on key areas of work within their areas, Andrew Slade gave an update on Economy, Skills and Natural Resources (ESNR), Des Clifford on the Office of the First Minister (OFM) and Tracey Burke covered Education and Public Services (EPS)

- Andrew's update focused on current key areas of work and the importance of prioritising to be able to deliver around Covid-19, Brexit and the Programme for Government Commitments. Andrew's update also focused on restart around the transport industry, our economic response and Brexit work within ESNR.
- Des' update focused on the work around the Recovery Strategy, 21 day review cycle and ease of lockdown. Des also updated the Board on Social Partnership and the Brexit work, he explained the importance of planning for major changes that will take effect on 1 January 2021 whether or not a trade deal is agreed.
- Tracey's update focused on work around education and planning for re-opening of schools in September, childcare offer, homelessness, housing, work with Local Authorities and the ECC(W) response. Tracey advised that some business as usual work was also still being taken forward alongside all of the key priority work she had just provided an update on.
- The Permanent Secretary thanked the DGs and their teams for all of their hard work throughout the year.

4. Finance Update

4.1 Gawain Evans provided an update on provisional unaudited outturn figures set against departmental budget allocations reflected in the Second Supplementary Budget 2019-20 which focused on:

- Revenue forecast
- Capital forecast
- Position of current reserves

- 4.2** Andrew Jeffreys provided an update which focused on funding allocated to support the response to Covid-19 and consequential funding received from spending in England, key points from the Chancellor's summer statement and on-going work to plan for next year's budget.

The Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) asked some questions around governance for financial decisions and sought further information.

5. Communication Update

- 5.1** The Permanent Secretary referred to the communication dashboard and summarised the key pieces of work around communication, this included:

- Regular films by the Permanent Secretary and DGs, including a film for Welsh speakers,
- Engagement sessions with Senior Civils Servant,
- Engagement sessions with all staff allowing them to ask questions to the Permanent Secretary and DGs.

- 5.2** The Permanent Secretary also advised that the Welsh language strategy had been launched, a range of training packages were available to staff.

6. Key priorities and resources

- 6.1** The NEDs requested this agenda item to seek assurance on how the organisation is balancing the demands of Covid-19, Brexit and the delivery of the programme for Government, along with ensuring the resilience and well-being of staff.

- 6.2** The Permanent Secretary updated the Board on plans for resourcing and referred to the continuity plan which is a subset of the programme for government as set out in the Welsh Government Annual Report 2019. It has a specific purpose; to identify discrete, visible and achievable activities that the Welsh Government will maintain to deliver towards its priorities throughout a period of crisis.

- 6.3** The Board further discussed the resourcing plans and the continuity plan. The Permanent Secretary thanked the NEDs for their contribution and valued their challenge around what we are doing and why.

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LATEST POSITION
None		