

Minutes of the Board Meeting, 23 April 2021

Present:		In attendance:
Shan Morgan Meena Upadhyaya Ellen Donovan Gareth Lynn Jeff Farrar Andrew Goodall Andrew Slade Tracey Burke Reg Kilpatrick Peter Kennedy Andrew Jeffrey Natalie Pearson David Richards Helen Lentle Robin Bradfield Charlotte Cosserat Piers Bisson Matthew Denham-Jones		Simon Jones Secretariat: Charmain Watts
Apologies: Des Clifford Gawain Evans		

1. Welcome

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- 1.1 The Permanent Secretary welcomed all attendees to the meeting and provided an update on preparations for the Senedd Elections this year.
- 1.2 The board agreed the minutes from the last meeting.

2. Director General updates, including Covid 19

- 2.1 Andrew Goodall updated the Welsh Government Board on the latest developments on Covid-19 and the current position in Wales, discussion focused on current Covid 19 rates in Wales, vaccination numbers, critical care activities and NHS waiting lists.
- 2.2 Ellen Donovan asked about future planning for the potential of further pandemics. Andrew referred to the health and care services pandemic recovery plan which had been circulated to board members. Andrew explained that the plan will focus on longer term actions, Andrew also offered to share the future model with NEDs off line.
- 2.3 Meena Upadhyaya asked what plans are in place to mitigate long waiting lists. Andrew explained that the National Clinic Framework published in March included a series of actions addressing this issue by building on changing services, technology and digital platforms.

ACTION 1: Include a future agenda item on the recovery programme focusing on harm and waiting lists.

- 2.4 Reg Kilpatrick updated the board on the current alert level and advised that outdoor hospitality will open from Monday with very strong messaging regarding rules and regulations. He also informed board of future plans and timeline of further easing of restrictions.
- 2.5 Andrew Slade's update focused on current key areas of work, including: unlocking tourist attractions, events and hospitality following the ease on restrictions, economic impacts on businesses and retailers due to the pandemic and EU exit. He also advised that there was a vast amount of work on going around climate change due to the Welsh Government's commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

ACTION 2: Include an item on a future agenda on climate change.

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- 2.6 Tracey Burke's update to the board focused on homelessness and education. Tracey advised the board of the work around re-opening of schools and the introduction of a testing policy for teachers and learners from year 7. Tracey explained that a vast amount of work was being undertaken to understand harms to children and young people as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions, a programme is being implemented which build on bringing stability and progression to children and young people.
- 2.7 Piers Bisson's update focused on the work for the upcoming elections, preparations for supporting a new Government, work around the next Senedd term, communications, international relations, and WEFO.

3. Health and Safety (H&S) Risks

- 3.1 Andrew Slade and Simon Jones provided an overview of the risks that Ministers and officials are exposed to which are associated with the Highway Asset.
- 3.2 Simon explained that the Welsh Ministers are the Highway Authority for the Strategic Road Network. As such, they have statutory duties towards its condition. The board discussed the seriousness of this work and discussed funding. The Permanent Secretary proposed that we continue to implement a risk based programme to manage this work, and further discussions were required urgently with Ministers to explore the issues with funding.

ACTION 3: Continue with the implementation a risk based programme to manage the maintenance of the motorway and trunk road network across Wales.

ACTION 4: Include an update on health and safety risks as a regular item on board.

- 3.3 Gareth Lynn, who is the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Chair voiced his concerns and explained that it was vitality important that all possible avenues have been exhausted to ensure that Ministers are acutely aware of their responsibilities. Gareth suggested that training is

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offered to Ministers on corporate manslaughter and he offered to write a letter as ARAC chair to be included in the briefing for incoming Ministers. (please see additional note for the record from Gareth Lynn within Board minutes iShare link)

- 3.4 Andrew explained that there are three categories of H&S risk for Welsh Government itself: Welsh Government responsibilities to our staff, Welsh Government responsibilities to users of Welsh Government directly-managed assets and services and Welsh Government responsibilities in respect of issues that are judged to be large and/or multi-agency that they are in effect owned by Welsh Government for Wales. The board agreed that all 3 of these risks should be included on the Corporate Risk Register.

ACTION 5: Consider capturing the three risk categories highlighted by Andrew Slade on the Corporate Risk Register.

- 3.5 The board discussed further the risk of an inquiry and/or corporate manslaughter issues that could in principle arise under all three areas, members agreed the following actions to ensure Ministers are fully informed.

ACTION 6: Briefing package for incoming First Minister and Ministers responsible for transport to include information on statutory duties on the maintenance of the motorway and trunk road network across Wales, along with a letter from the chair of ARAC.

ACTION 7: Offer corporate manslaughter training for all incoming Ministers.

ACTION 8: Ensure that all risks associated with the condition of the motorway and trunk road asset discussed at the board, and the severity of those risks, are escalated and brought to the attention of incoming Ministers.

ACTION 9: Ensure that the process for escalating risks to Ministers is clear, and explore the implementation of a Ministerial risk register (to include contextual areas of work).

4. Finance Update

- 4.1 Mathew Denham Jones reported on the Welsh Government's 2020-21 forecast outturn and reserves position as at 15 April 2021. He also updated members on plans for 2021-22.

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The update focused on:

- Revenue forecast
- Capital forecast
- Impact on reserves

4.2 Matthew explained for the current year, the intention is to have a high level forecast update, including any budget pressures, agreed by the Executive Committee ready for the incoming Government. This will allow for early discussions on pressures, including pandemic response and recovery, decisions on allocations from reserves and preparation for a supplementary budget.

5. Keeping Welsh Government Safe – an update on transition planning arrangements

5.1 Peter Kennedy provided information on the workforce planning arrangements that are underway to respond to changes in alert levels in Wales.

5.2 Peter explained that as part of our transition to Alert Level 3, we will move from 5% to 20% attendance at our four main office hubs and the further four offices that are currently open for restricted opening hours. Work is currently underway to prepare more offices for reopening aligned to the change in alert level.

5.3 Natalie Pearson explained that extensive measures are in place to help Keep Welsh Government safe. These include a workplace risk assessment, hygiene protocols, social distancing, Building Charters and Divisional Charters. The NEDs welcomed these thorough steps taken to ensure the safety of staff in the offices. Peter explained that this work had been done in collaboration with TUS colleagues. The Permanent Secretary echoed this and thanked TUS for their advice and support, she further advised that TUS helped re-assure staff which was extremely valuable throughout this difficult period.

5.4 Peter asked board for their initial views on the approach to introducing asymptomatic lateral flow testing across Welsh Government offices. The board endorsed the approach that would encourage staff to take a Covid test before going into offices.

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Actions arising at board meeting

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LATEST POSITION
ACTION 1: Include a future agenda item on the recovery programme focusing on harm and waiting lists.	Secretariat	In hand. Scheduled for next board meeting
ACTION 2: Include an item on a future agenda on climate change.	Secretariat	In hand. Scheduled for next board meeting
ACTION 3: Continue with the implementation of a risk based programme to manage the maintenance of the motorway and trunk road network across Wales.	Simon Jones	On-going
ACTION 4: Include an update on health and safety risks as a regular item on board.	Secretariat	On the forward look
ACTION 5: Consider capturing the three risk categories highlighted by Andrew Slade on the Corporate Risk Register.	Clare Colette	On-going
ACTION 6: Briefing package for incoming First Minister and Ministers responsible for transport to include information on statutory duties on the maintenance of the motorway and trunk road network across Wales, along with a letter from the chair of ARAC.	Simon Jones / Gareth Lynn	On-going
ACTION 7: Offer corporate manslaughter training for all incoming Ministers.	Natalie Pearson / H&S team	On-going
ACTION 8: Ensure that all risks associated with the condition of the motorway and trunk road asset discussed at the board, and the severity of those risks, are escalated and brought to the attention of incoming Ministers	Simon Jones / Shan Morgan	On-going

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ACTION 9: Ensure that the process for escalating risks to Ministers is clear, and explore the implementation of a Ministerial risk register (to include contextual areas of work).	Clare Colette / Will Whiteley	On-going
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