



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEETING

Welsh Revenue Authority Board minutes: May 2018

Minutes from the Welsh Revenue Authority Board (WRA) meeting held on 16 May 2018 at 10.30am, Trefforest.

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Contents

Present

Meeting opening

Reports, approval and decisions

Board discussion

Present

Kathryn Bishop - Chair

Jocelyn Davies - Non-Executive

Dyfed Edwards - Non-Executive

Lakshmi Narain - Non-Executive

Martin Warren - Non-Executive

Dyfed Alsop - Chief Executive Officer

Sean Bradley - Chief Legal and Policy Officer

Ymgynghorwyr (advisors)

Andrew Jeffreys - Director, Welsh Treasury

Dave Matthews - Head of Policy

Sam Cairns - Head of Operations

Melissa Quignon-Finch - Head of HR

Jo Ryder - Chief of Staff

Teresa Platt - Chief Finance Officer

Presenting/attending

Head of Digital Services
Debt Management

Secretariat

Ceri Sullivan - Board Secretariat

Meeting opening

1. Welcome and introductions, conflicts of interest and apologies

- Minutes of the last Meeting.
 - Matters Arising.
1. The Chair welcomed Board members and ymgynghorwyr to the meeting. No conflicts of interest were raised.
 2. Apologies were received from David Jones, Becca Godfrey and Catrin Millar.
 3. The Board agreed that the minutes were an accurate account of what was discussed at the last meeting. However, comments were received on minor inaccuracies. The Board discussed and agreed which information need to be redacted from the version for publication.
 4. The actions of the last meeting were discussed and it was agreed that five actions would remain open.
 5. The Chair informed the Board that its Terms of Reference and Standing Orders documentation was due for review. A tracked updated version, along with a new Welsh Revenue Authority (WRA)/Welsh Treasury (WT) joint partnership, accountabilities and relationships diagram would be sent to members for consideration and agreement.

Reports, approval and decisions

2. Chair report

1. The Chair reminded the Board that the Finance Committee had visited the WRA's office the previous week. Members were given a demonstration of the system and an update on progress. The Board were informed that the first of the Chair's quarterly meetings with the Cabinet Secretary, as per the framework document, was scheduled for the following week. In addition, the Chair and Chief Executive would meet with the Permanent Secretary for their joint quarterly meeting with WT in July; this meeting would include a discussion of the WRA's role as part of financial devolution.
2. The Chief Executive and Chief Strategy Officer represented the WRA at the British Isles Tax Forum event that week. The Board were informed that the Chief Executive had presented an item at the event and that the slides would be shared with the Board for information.
3. The Design Authority which was established as a temporary Committee of the Board had met for the final time the previous day. The new People Committee would be chaired by Dyfed Edwards and David Jones would join the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) for the next year.
4. Members were reminded of the Board strategy away-day scheduled for July and of the peer review to be scheduled around the time of Board's one year anniversary. The peer review would feed into future Board development.
5. A discussion took place around the Welsh rate of income tax. It was noted that although it would be collected by HMRC there may be an assumption by the public that the WRA was responsible for its collection and management. The need for contingency planning and communications around this matter was stressed. The Board requested a fuller briefing on this at a later date.
6. The Board were informed that Land Transaction Tax (LTT) statistics would be released the following morning, and that some communication would be

done using the WRA's social media pages.

7. The Chair noted that an extensive amount of recruitment had taken place since the Board last met and extended her thanks to the organisation as a whole for their hard work.

3. Chief Executive report

1. The Chief Executive informed the Board that the Executive Committee (ExCom) had met and discussed its first full month of operational reporting. It was noted that the types of data presented would change over time as the ExCom develop their operational dashboard and that the report only represented data from 1 April to 10 May, so therefore strong conclusions could not be drawn at this stage. The Board were informed that in future, the report would contain one calendar month's data.
2. The Change Portfolio Committee was due to meet for the first time the following week and so the next operational report to the Board would include an update from the Committee.
3. The Board were asked for their views on the information provided and its format. Members agreed that the report provided was a good start and the commentary was useful and descriptive; however, they felt that more trend analysis and graphic representation of hard data would be needed.
4. A discussion took place around the high volume of calls received, including calls received outside of the service desk's available hours. It was suggested that the high volume of calls might be a result of the extensive communications and engagement activity that had taken place leading up to go live, but the Board noted that in future, this would need to be monitored and if necessary the service desk's available hours reviewed. The Board also noted the data about query resolution time, indicating that these calls are dealt with quickly and efficiently.
5. The Board discussed the data indicating that the majority of LTT customers

were based in England. It was noted that this could be because the organisations are registered in England, although the customers themselves are working in Wales. It was agreed to look at this more closely, particularly since the majority of stakeholder engagement and communications is taking place in Wales.

6. The Board considered the statistics about Welsh speakers within the organisation, noting that the percentage proportion had changed largely as a result of the increase in numbers of staff overall – from a third, to a quarter. However, this percentage was proportionate with the number of Welsh speakers in Wales. It was suggested that once the WRA had finalised its Welsh Language strategy, it would be useful to set goals to increase the number of Welsh speakers within the organisation, in support the WG's strategy to create 1 million Welsh speakers in Wales.

4. Report from committees

1. The Chair informed the Board that the Design Authority, a temporary committee of the Board met for the final time the previous day. Its members discussed two substantive items, Programme closure and the closure of the Committee itself.
2. The Chair informed the Board that further information about programme closure would be provided under a substantive item later in the meeting.
3. The Chair summarised the discussion about the closure of the Design Authority, noting that members acknowledged that much had been achieved and that the committee had worked well together, with little time to deliver before 'go live'. During a lessons learned exercise at a previous meeting, the output of which had been shared with the full Board for information, a number of lessons had been identified that could be used by the WRA and/or other WG departments. One of these was about the need for clarity about the oversight roles of such temporary committees, and the occasional uncertainty about which items should go to the Board and which should go to the Design Authority.

4. The Chair informed the Board that the minute of the Design Authority's final meeting would be shared with the Board as a paper to note for the next full Board meeting.

5. Director Welsh Treasury Report

1. The Director, Welsh Treasury (WT) provided an update on recent activity. There was a debate in the Assembly the previous day around Vacant Land Tax. The Board were informed that good joint working had been underway by the WT and WRA on the release of LTT statistics and the Cabinet Secretary had been sufficiently briefed.
2. WT would be publishing a piece of work that Gerald Holthom had recently done around the WG's Social Care Levy.~
3. WT were arranging an event scheduled for July to mark 10 years progress in fiscal devolution.

6. Finance update

Information redacted ([Footnote 1](#)).

Board discussion

7. Programme Closure

1. The Chair informed the Board that she had attended the final Programme Board meeting which took place on the 25 April, and some key items of documentation produced for that meeting had been shared with the Board for their information.
2. As part of the Programme closure activities, a set of lesson identified and

learned analysis had been produced. This was structured in three-tiers at increasing levels of detail, and would be used in various ways. A post-implementation programme review would be carried out in the autumn, the results of which would be shared with the Board for information.

3. The Board extended their thanks to everyone who had contributed to the work of the Programme. Members acknowledged all the hard work that had gone into Programme and the quality of the closure and lessons learned documents, stressing the importance of ensuring that those lessons identified are used in future.

8. ICT Contracts

Information redacted ([Footnote 1](#)).

9. Criminal Powers

Information redacted ([Footnote 1](#)).

10. Any other business

1. It was noted that positive feedback about the legislation had been received from stakeholders and work around external communication messages was progressing rapidly.

11. Forward look

1. The Chair noted that the forward look was a working document, which gives the Board the opportunity to comment on future planned agendas. The Board were content with the proposed items for the following meeting.

12. Meeting review

Information redacted ([Footnote 1](#)).

[1] There are certain circumstances where it is not appropriate to share all of the information contained within the Board minutes, for example, where it contains personal or commercial data or relates to the formulation of government policy etc. or the effective conduct of public affairs. In such circumstances, the information has been redacted and the text is marked clearly that this has been the case.

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