



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEETING

Agricultural Advisory Panel Meeting: 31 January 2020

Summary of the minutes of the meeting held at the Welsh Government Pavilion, Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells.

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Present

Chair - Lionel Walford

Panel Members – Steve Hughson (Independent), Peter Rees (Independent), Ivan Monckton (Unite), Daryl Williams (Unite), Darren Williams (FUW), Will Prichard (NFU Cymru)

Legal Adviser - Helen Snow (Geldards)

Welsh Government - Ryan Davies (Panel Manager), Sian Hughes

Secretariat – Dan Ricketts

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

Sian Hughes from Welsh Government will be attending meetings from now in

place of Spencer Conlon.

Agenda Item 2 – Chair’s Update

There are two main items on the agenda today both of which will require decisions one way or another.

Agenda Item 3 – Approval of Minutes of the Last Meeting and Action Points No changes

No changes to the record were made and the minutes were approved. Updates were given on action points:

ADAS have suggested undertaking a rerun of the telephone survey that took place in 2016 in order to obtain baseline Labour Market data. There is a concern as to whether this will provide robust data as there was a low response rate the first time this was done. It could be combined with an online survey as well to try and elicit a better response rate.

Impact Assessments were undertaken each year and as there have only been minimal changes to the Order each year since the Panel took over from the defunct Agricultural Wages Board. To date the assessments have been based on 2012 data (collected by DEFRA) which has been adjusted in line with inflation, trends in employment etc. She also said the advice on Impact Assessments is that they should be proportionate to the Policy and they assess the likely impact rather than the exact impact. As an indication of the scope of the policy, the Welsh Government gets less than twenty enquiries each year regarding the Order. Based on this, and other information, the approach taken to date has been considered to be proportionate. However, the modernisation work is quite a fundamental change to the Order.

Grave concerns were raised about how this could be undertaken without robust data. The Chair stated he had a meeting with Mark Alexander (WG) and he

would raise this subject then. He suggested the Minister was apprised of the Panel's concerns. Following the meeting Lionel will report back to the Panel as to how this can be taken forward.

The Panel were given an update with statistics on how long it took to complete an Apprenticeship - Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 - whether successful or not. The vast majority were completed within two years.

There was not a set cross-border policy from Welsh Government – for example Basic Payment Scheme is different to Cross Compliance. The Order covers any agricultural worker working in Wales irrespective of where the main holding is based.

The Panel agreed unanimously that the wording of the Order remains as is.

Agenda Item 4 – Agricultural Wages Order 2020

Unite stated a differential needed to be maintained as a grading structure without differentials is not a grading structure. However, due to the work on modernising the Order Unite could accept this for one year only but would be looking for a clear commitment of intent from the Panel about restoring and maintaining a differential in the new grading structure and looking at a reviewed pay spine that sits alongside the new structure.

PROPOSAL FROM UNITE:

The minimum wage rates are uplifted to the National Minimum Wage / National Living Wage rates for 2020 with a clear commitment from the Panel that the differentials will need to be reviewed and/or reinstated as part of the current piece of work being undertaken regarding the future grade structure.

The Panel agreed unanimously with this proposal.

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