



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Welsh Revenue Authority Board minutes: 23 February 2022

Minutes from the Welsh Revenue Authority (WRA) Board meeting held on 23 February 2022.

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# Present

## Members

- Kathryn Bishop, Chair
- Dyfed Edwards, Deputy Chair
- Mary Champion, Non-Executive
- Jocelyn Davies, Non-Executive
- Rheon Tomos, Non-Executive
- Jim Scopes, Non-Executive
- Dyfed Alsop, Chief Executive/Accounting Officer
- Sam Cairns, Chief Operations Officer
- Melissa Quignon-Finch, Chief People and Communications Officer
- Karen Athanatos, Staff Elected Member

## Ymgynghorwyr (Advisers)

- Anna Adams, Deputy Director, Tax Strategy and Intergovernmental Relations, Welsh Treasury

## Opening

### 1. Welcome and introductions, conflicts of interest and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone. Jim Scopes was attending his first WRA meeting as a non-executive member. Sam Cairns and Rob Jones had sent their apologies.

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2. No new conflicts of interest were reported.

## 2. Minutes of the last meeting

In relation to the previous Minutes, a request was made that at a future meeting an update be given on Welsh Language Standards and WRA preparations to be named under the legislation. A note would be made in the Board forward look.

## 3. Matters arising

No other matters arising from the previous Minutes were raised.

## Discussion

### 4. Land and Property Data Project

1. Richard Pope and Anthony Pritchard gave a catch-up presentation on the data project. We were in week 6 of 12 of the discovery phase, currently working on Land Transaction Tax, before considering the Tourism Levy next.
2. The Minister was aware of the approach and was content. The approach, not traditional for the civil service, involved working in the open, with an open-ended process that would evolve, rather than the more typical fixed end-phase points matching a legislative timetable, for recognisable points of announcement and celebration. Three services were combined in one: registration, calculation support, payment.
3. **Redacted.**
4. **Redacted.**
5. The nature of the registration-calculation-support model was discussed. It was a useful model for explaining the segments and junctions of the service

package, which connected officials and customers. It would be referenced in the corporate plan.

6. Assurance was given that discussion was ongoing about the potential end results of the 12-week study, and likely subsequent next steps for ensuring ongoing commitment and resource.

## 5. Corporate plan

1. The Minister and staff had been consulted, as part of an iterative approach. Ministerial engagement on certain choices had been necessary. The final draft would come to the Board, before going to the Minister by the end of March, and subsequently be laid before the Senedd. Due attention would be given to timetables. It was noted that the interested audience for the 2022 to 2025 corporate plan would be wider than for the previous CP.
2. Staff engagement had been productive, and outputs would appear in the CP, sometimes verbatim. This valuable input resonated with staff, and was a reminder to all of the importance of retaining authentic expression.

## 6. Accommodation

Redacted.

## Reports

### 7. The Chair

1. The Board Effectiveness Survey would be run by the end of February. Board members and regular attenders would be invited to input. The same questions as before would be asked, to provide year-on-year comparison.

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The Effectiveness Survey would be provided as evidence in support of the Chair's personal appraisal, and colleagues would be invited to input. Board appraisals would be run in April and May.

2. The Chair mentioned that the data project Show and Tell had been enjoyable, and that it was interesting to note how the project had allowed useful connections to be made and maintained.

## 8. Chief Executive Officer/Accounting Officer

1. The CE/AO presented his report in an experimental format. Both Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and Service Delivery Leadership Group (SDLG) reports, following this, would speak for part of the CE/AO report. This plan was well received.
2. **Redacted.**
3. **Redacted.**
4. The introduction of quarterly reporting patterns was noted and welcomed.

## 9. Update: The Digital Economy Act

WRA would be listed as an organisation that may be a named organisation should WRA wish to benefit, ultimately, from the provisions of the Act. The Board was content.

## 10. Service Delivery Leadership Group

1. Measures and performance were explained, with attention drawn to outliers, and assurance given on investigation and outliers in refund processes.
2. Debt performance was strong, and performance was now illustrated with improved metrics. Risk performance was also strong, with notable risk reduction through customer engagement. In order to reduce risk further,

system changes may be required, to enable more detailed customer engagement.

3. **Redacted.**

## 11. Chief Finance Officer

1. The CFO Report focussed on the governance of Finance and Risk.
2. The SDLG concept was working well, providing a fuller picture of performance than previously seen.
3. The Corporate Risk Register was now in a new format, and had been well received. The Board spent a lot of time on Risk, but under other headings. The CFO expressed a risk aware approach as aiming to 'live the Orange Book within the organisation'. Likelihoods had increased across all risks.
4. **Redacted.**
5. **Redacted.**
6. ARAC had supported the linking of the risk appetite statement to the development of risk policy.
7. In procurement, a fruitful recruitment campaign had yielded an excellent candidate. ARAC recognised the good work done in procurement, and would continue to support work to improve WRA performance over time.
8. The Annual Report and Accounts audit were on track. It was important to lay our accounts before the Senedd before recess. This may affect ARAC and Board timetables and activities. The improved debt reporting, and processes behind it, would significantly enhance our position with the Auditor and customers, and in terms of internal governance. The underspend and its potential reallocation were discussed.
9. The CEO commented that as Accounting Officer, it was helpful to have SDLG, ARAC and CFO assurance. The further context of the RAS was also important, it flowed from Ministerial requirements about how the WRA should operate, and was a good fit for WRA organisational culture.

## 12. Chair Introduction to the afternoon session

The Chair welcomed the Board to the afternoon session.

## 13. Welsh Treasury

Redacted.

## 14. Board Committees - ARAC

Redacted.

## Closing

## 15. Forward look

1. The Revised Board Schedule for 2022 to 2023 was agreed, and diary markers would be circulated.
2. The Board Conversation format would be developed in the coming months. Notes of the Conversations may be helpful, and papers in advance where appropriate. One function of Board Conversations was to improve performance at Board Meetings.
3. Tîm Arwain priorities would guide agenda setting for Board Conversations. A 'What's the latest?' section in formal Board meetings may be useful. The Chair would review the Board diary to ensure statutory business was covered in the coming meetings.



## 16. Any other business

There was no further business.

## 17. Meeting review

1. Karen Athanatos reviewed the meeting. The agenda had been very full but topical and important. The data project update had been valuable as it was a fast moving area, and linked to the next agenda. The chat function had been well used. The item on accommodation, although it had over-run, deserved the time spent on it as it was important. Graphics helped to convey messages, and were particularly helpful in the SDLG item.
2. To improve – the internet connection had clearly impacted on the meeting at the start, and an in-person meeting in the next months would be good if possible.

## 18. Next meeting

A Board conversation on 23 March.

## Redacted information

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 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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