




Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Cabinet meeting: 18 September 2023

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on 18 September 2023.

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## Present

- Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford MS (Chair)
- Rebecca Evans MS
- Vaughan Gething MS
- Lesley Griffiths MS
- Jane Hutt MS
- Julie James MS
- Jeremy Miles MS
- Eluned Morgan MS
- Mick Antoniw MS
  
- Hannah Blythyn MS
- Dawn Bowden MS
- Julie Morgan MS
- Lynne Neagle MS
- Lee Waters MS

## Officials

- Andrew Goodall, Permanent Secretary
- Des Clifford, Director Office of the First Minister
- Rebecca Dunn, Head of Cabinet Division
- Toby Mason, Head of Strategic Communications
- Rory Powell, Head of First Minister's Office
- Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser

- Madeleine Brindley, Special Adviser
- Alex Bevan, Special Adviser
- Daniel Butler, Special Adviser
- Ian Butler, Special Adviser
- Kate Edmunds, Special Adviser
- Sara Faye, Special Adviser
- Sam Hadley, Special Adviser
- David Hooson, Special Adviser
- Clare Jenkins, Special Adviser
- Owen John, Special Adviser
- Phillipa Marsden, Special Adviser
- Tom Woodward, Special Adviser
- Christopher W Morgan, Head of Cabinet Secretariat (minutes)
- Damian Roche, Cabinet Secretariat
- Catrin Sully, Cabinet Office
- Kathryn Hallett, First Minister's Office
- Helena Bird, Permanent Secretary's Office
- Diane Dunning, Legal Services
- Tracey Burke, Director General Climate Change & Rural Affairs
- Jo-anne Daniels, Director General, Education Social Justice & Welsh Language
- Reg Kilpatrick, Director General, Covid Recovery and Local Government
- Judith Paget, Director General, Health and Social Services and NHS Chief Executive
- Tim Moss, Chief Operating Officer
- Andrew Slade, Director General, Economy, Treasury and Constitution
- Gawain Evans, Director of Finance

- Sharon Bounds, Deputy Director Financial Controls
- Andrew Jeffreys, Director Welsh Treasury
- Emma Watkins, Deputy Director Budget and Government Business

## **Item 1: Minutes of previous meetings**

1.1 Cymeradwydd y Cabinet gofnodion y 11 Medi / Cabinet approved the minutes of 11 September.

## **Item 2: First Minister's items**

### **Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill**

2.1 The First Minister informed Cabinet that the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill had been published earlier that day. The legislation was a significant Programme for Government and Co-operation Agreement commitment that aimed to create a modern Senedd, better able to represent people in Wales, with increased capacity to scrutinise, make laws, and hold the government to account.

### **Tata Steel announcement**

2.2 The First Minister referred to the recent joint announcement by Tata Steel

and the UK government to invest in state-of-the-art electric arc furnace steelmaking at the Port Talbot site, with a capital investment of £1.25 billion including a grant from the UK government of up to £500 million. The transformation would include a restructure of the existing Tata Steel UK business followed by an investment in the electric arc technology, which would reduce the Port Talbot site's direct emissions by 50 million tonnes of carbon over a decade and secure long term steel production.

2.3 However, it was disappointing that the Welsh Government had been excluded from the discussions and frustrating that there had not been earlier agreement on the deal, which could have resulted in a longer and fairer transition, particularly for the workforce.

2.4 The Minister for Economy had visited the Port Talbot site earlier that day and had met with Trade Unions and there would be a further meeting that week. There was a great deal of concern about the impact on the jobs in Port Talbot, the order book, and implications for Tata's downstream facilities in Wales. There was also the potential impact on the supply chain and wider economy. Notwithstanding the implications for the local community, there would be a need to consider the impact on wider manufacturing in Wales and the ports.

## **Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete**

2.5 The Minister for Education and Welsh Language informed Cabinet that 2 further schools had identified reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in their buildings, bringing the total up to 4 such schools in Wales. Stage 1 of the RAAC identification process was drawing to a close, with the receipt of reports

from all local authorities in Wales, and no further schools had been detected as having RAAC. Stage 2 of the process was underway, where officials were scrutinising the returns to identify any further survey work required. This was expected to be completed by December.

2.6 In terms of other education establishments, so far, only one Further Education college had identified RAAC, in one building within the Cardiff and Vale estate, and Cardiff and Bangor Universities had taken action to cordon off buildings affected on their estates. Work was continuing in both sectors to identify any other buildings affected by RAAC.

## **New default 20mph speed limit**

2.7 Cabinet noted the new default 20mph speed limit on most residential roads in Wales had come into force on Sunday.

## **Item 3: Senedd business**

3.1 Cabinet considered the Plenary Grid and noted that voting time was currently scheduled to be at 6pm on Tuesday and 5:55pm on Wednesday.

3.2 Ministers noted the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill would be introduced into the Senedd the following day, this would be followed by an Oral Statement on the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Bill on Tuesday 3rd October. The later Bill included a provision for automatic voter registration, which

was important given that recent research by the Electoral Commission indicated almost 400,000 people across Wales were either incorrectly registered to vote or missing completely from the electoral roll.

## **Item 4: In Year Savings Plan and Update on Financial Position (23-24)04**

4.1 The Minister for Finance and Local Government introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to confirm changes to MEG budgets for 2023-2024 and to action the savings identified in each portfolio.

4.2 The level of savings required to mitigate the financial pressure in 2023-2024 had been identified. This had been a complex exercise completed in a challenging timeframe over the summer recess. It would not have been possible without the collaborative and flexible approach deployed by ministers and their officials.

4.3 However, the substantial risks in delivering a balanced budget remained.

4.4 The minister intended to make an oral statement to the Senedd communicating the high-level changes to budgets and key impacts. The date and format of that statement was under consideration. The minister closed by thanking Cabinet colleagues for completing the complex exercise in a challenging timeframe over the summer recess.

4.5 Cabinet welcomed the paper and the work that had been undertaken to



establish the required level of savings, while considering the cumulative impact of reducing budgets and identifying options, which would be least likely to have a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable in society.

4.6 Cabinet approved the paper.

Cabinet Secretariat  
September 2023

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