



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Cabinet meeting: 23 October 2023

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on 23 October 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
- Helen Lentle, Director 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
- Tim Moss, Chief Operating Officer
- Judtih Paget, Director General Health and Social Services
- Andrew Slade, Director General, Economy, Treasury and Constitution
- Rhian Edwards, Deputy Director, Further Education & Apprenticeships (item 4)
- Chris Hare, Head of Apprenticeship Policy (item 4)
- Amelia John, Director, Communities and Tackling Poverty (item 5)
- Lorna Hall, Deputy Director Equalities and Human Rights (item 5)
- John Luxton, Specialist Policy Adviser (item 5)
- Frank Atherton, Chief Medical Officer (item 6)
- Cathy Weatherup, CMO's office (item 6)

Item 1: Minutes of the previous meeting

1.1 Cymeradwydd y Cabinet gofnodion y 16 Hydref / Cabinet approved the minutes of 16 October.

Item 2: First Minister's items

Senedd Cymru (Electoral Candidate Lists) Bill

2.1 The First Minister informed Cabinet that the Ministerial Pre-Introduction Assessment panel met earlier that day to discuss the Senedd Cymru (Electoral Candidate Lists) Bill, where it was agreed the Bill should proceed to determination. The Deputy Minister for Social Partnership would be leading on the Bill.

2.2 The Deputy Minister informed Cabinet that the Bill would build on the Senedd Cymru Bill and introduce integrated statutory gender quotas to the electoral system from 2026. This was in line with the recommendations of the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform. The provisions would require at least 50% of the candidates on a political party's list to be women. In addition, parties would need to place women in the first position on at least half of their lists, and they must place a woman following every candidate who is not a woman.

2.3 The Bill would also provide a definition of the term 'woman' for the purposes of the legislation.

2.4 Ministers noted the Bill would be passed to the Llywydd for determination on 3rd November.

Ireland Wales Ministerial Forum

2.5 The First Minister provided Cabinet with feedback from the Ireland Wales Ministerial Forum, which had taken place in North Wales the previous week. The First Minister had been accompanied by the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales and Trefnydd, Minister for Economy and Minister for Climate Change, with the Tánaiste and Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science representing the Irish Government.

2.6 It had been a positive series of engagements and reflected the strengthening relationship between both governments. Agenda items included the promotion of indigenous languages, education and skills collaboration and renewable energy developments.

Item 3: Senedd business

3.1 Cabinet considered the Plenary Grid and noted that voting time was scheduled for 5:25pm on Tuesday and around 6:25pm on Wednesday.

Item 4: Policy Statement on Apprenticeships

4.1 The Minister for Economy introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to consider a draft of the Policy Statement on Apprenticeships.

4.2 This statement presented a strategic framework for the future of the apprenticeships programme that focused on addressing the challenges that individuals and employers were facing due to the impact of Brexit, the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

4.3 The last Apprenticeship Policy Plan was published in 2017 but given the economic and social challenges since then, there was a need to implement a new strategy that could drive recovery.

4.4 Over the next 2 decades the core competencies of a wide range of jobs would need to be more directly relevant to the needs of a low carbon economy. Given that the majority of the 2050 workforce was already in employment, the primary challenge was likely to be one of continual change, including updating and refocusing skills.

4.5 There was a need to re-position skills within the low carbon agenda alongside the government's response to other structural challenges impacting on the labour market, such as digitalisation and automation. There was an opportunity to improve the skills of people in vulnerable sectors of employment and support those in declining sectors to help them develop new skills to enable access to opportunities in emerging sectors.

4.6 More broadly, the government was working towards a more cohesive skills system for post-16 learning in Wales, that would strengthen and better align the delivery of training. The Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER), which was due to start operating in April 2024, would plan for a more integrated post-16 sector.

4.7 The long-term ambition was for an education and skills system that incentivised and facilitated collaboration between providers across the post-16 sector.

4.8 The Policy Statement set out 3 objectives and related actions, all of which aligned with the refreshed Economic Mission.

4.9 Under the first objective, the aim was to strengthen the apprenticeship offer in strategically important sectors, to build resilience to the changing economic environment. The second would be to fill the skills gaps and boost productivity.

Whereas the third would aim to tackle economic inequality while improving labour market outcomes for disadvantaged groups, with the primary aim of improving the labour market outcomes for disabled people, Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people, women and those with low skills.

4.10 Each objective would be outlined in the government's statement of priorities, which would form the basis for the CTER's strategic plan. The commission would report annually on progress to ministers.

4.11 Cabinet welcomed the paper, and the specific proposals to improve the labour market outcomes for disadvantaged groups, including those with learning disabilities.

4.12 Cabinet approved the paper and noted that the policy statement would be published in December.

Item 5: Consultation on the Strategic Equality Action Plan 2024-2028

5.1 The Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to approve the **consultation on the Strategic Equality Action Plan (SEAP) 2024-2028**.

5.2 The Welsh Government was legally required publish Equality Objectives every 4 years and to review its Strategic Equality Plan and had adopted the practice of publishing a new Strategic Equality Plan every 4 years since 2012.

5.3 It was reported that equality, as a cross-cutting theme, was reflected within the Programme for Government in both the well-being objectives and the commitments. This included the well-being objective to celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms.

5.4 The consultation set out aims, objectives and principles which would underpin the government's approach, with the long-term aim to create a Wales based on equity, non-discrimination, and inclusion. In addition, it would reflect the Government's commitment to the implementation of the Socio-economic Duty, aimed at improving the strategic decision-making of public bodies to better support those who were socio-economically disadvantaged.

5.5 There were also 7 Equality Objectives focusing on continuing and further embedding equality and human rights into the work of the Welsh Government and providing beneficial and tangible impacts and outcomes for the people of Wales.

5.6 Cabinet welcomed the paper and acknowledged that work on the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan had been a significant step forward in achieving the goal of zero tolerance of all racial inequality.

5.7 Cabinet approved the paper and noted that the consultation was due to be launched on 6th November.

Item 6: Chief Medical Officer for Wales' Annual Report 2023

6.1 The Minister for Health and Social Services introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to note the Chief Medical Officer's (CMOs) Annual Report for 2023.

6.2 Previous CMO reports had provided the opportunity to reflect on where Wales stood with regard to health and well-being of the population, as well as examining the challenges in public health and in the provision of health care. Recent reports had taken a society-wide look at some difficult issues, which included the impact of the pandemic.

6.3 The 2023 report considered the impact of commercial determinants on health and the levers available to the Welsh Government to tackle and mitigate impact. The CMO was invited to present the key findings from his latest report.

6.4 Dr Atherton highlighted that his reports had included both a survey of public health and a detailed analysis of one or more specific public health issues. Each of the previous reports could be considered to be a stand-alone report or part of a themed series around 'our health'. The previous reports were headed: Rebalancing Healthcare; Gambling with our Health; Valuing our Health; Protecting our Health; and Restoring our Health.

6.5 This year's report, 'Shaping our Health', provided an update on the health of the nation and the resilience of the health and care system but the main focus was on the strategies and approaches used by the private sector to promote products and choices that were detrimental to health.

6.6 This included recommendations on expanding smoke free spaces, regulating e-cigarettes, considering taxation on certain food and drinks to help tackle obesity and action to prevent and minimise alcohol related harms. There was also a suggestion that there should be a specialist gambling treatment services for Wales.

6.7 The report also considered the impact of Climate Change and the cost-of-living crisis on public health.

6.8 Cabinet welcomed the report and recognised that the challenge was encouraging and persuading the population to take better care of themselves and consider more healthier choices.

6.9 Cabinet noted the paper and acknowledged this would be Dr Atherton's final report as CMO, as he was due to demit from office in 2024, and put on record its thanks for his service to the Welsh Government, particularly during the pandemic.

Cabinet Secretariat
October 2023

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