



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Cabinet meeting: 6 February 2023

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on 6 February 2023.

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Present

- Lesley Griffiths MS (Chair)
- Rebecca Evans MS
- Vaughan Gething MS
- Jane Hutt MS
- Julie James MS
- Jeremy Miles MS
- Eluned Morgan MS
- Mick Antoniw MS

- Hannah Blythyn MS
- Dawn Bowden MS
- Lynne Neagle MS
- Julie Morgan MS
- Lee Waters MS

Apologies

- Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford MS

Officials

- Andrew Goodall, Permanent Secretary
- Des Clifford, Director Office of the First Minister
- Rebecca Dunn, Head of Cabinet Division
- Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser
- Alex Bevan, Special Adviser
- Daniel Butler, Special Adviser
- Ian Butler, Special Adviser

- David Davies, Special Adviser
- Kate Edmunds, Special Adviser
- Sara Faye, Special Adviser
- Sam Hadley, Special Adviser
- Clare Jenkins, Special Adviser
- Owen John, Special Adviser
- Phillipa Marsden, Special Adviser
- Mitch Theaker, Special Adviser
- Tom Woodward, Special Adviser
- Christopher W Morgan, Head of Cabinet Secretariat (minutes)
- Damian Roche, Cabinet Secretariat
- Catrin Sully, Cabinet Office
- Tracey Burke, Director General Climate Change & Rural Affairs
- Jo-Anne Daniels, Director General Education, Social Justice and Welsh Language
- Reg Kilpatrick, Director General, COVID-19 recovery and Local Government
- Tim Moss, Chief Operating Officer
- Judith Paget, Director General Health and Social Services
- Andrew Slade, Director General, Economy, Treasury and Constitution
- Helen Lentle, Director Legal Services
- Heather Davidson, Head of Net Zero Skills Policy (item 3)
- Stephen Rowan, Deputy Director National and International Connectivity (item 4)
- Nicolas Turner, Head of Taxi & Private Hire Vehicles (item 4)
- Gawain Evans, Director Finance (item 5)
- Sharon Bounds, Deputy Director Financial Controls (item 5)

Item 1: Minutes of the previous meetings

1.1 Cymeradwydd y Cabinet gofnodion y 30 Ionawr / Cabinet approved the minutes of 30 January.

Item 2: Senedd business

2.1 Cabinet considered the Plenary grid and noted that the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales and Trefnydd would again be responding to First Minister's questions that week. Voting time would be around 6:15pm on Tuesday and approximately 6:25pm on Wednesday.

Item 3: Wales Net Zero Skills Action Plan CAB(22-23)40

3.1 The Minister for Economy introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to agree the Net Zero Skills Action Plan.

3.2 As part of Net Zero Wales, the government was committed to publishing a Wales Net Zero Action Plan. Over the past few months, work had continued across Government and with external stakeholders to understand the net zero skills landscape across Wales, which included the challenges, barriers and actions required.

3.3 This engagement highlighted a strong and growing call for action on net zero skills and one that required a collaborative approach across the whole economy.

3.4 The Net Zero Skills Plan set out 36 actions across seven themes to deliver key aims and address some of the challenges.

3.5 The Plan provided a high-level summary of the current landscape across the 8 emission sectors. The plan highlighted some of the good work already going on across all sectors in Wales, including within the food and drink sector, agriculture, and construction.

3.6 There was a need to build a skilled and diverse workforce in a rapidly changing economy, while helping to create quality jobs, and supporting people upskill in existing sectors. It was important to utilise people's existing skills and qualifications to help them transition to new roles or sectors effectively and work with industry, key partners, and Trade Unions to explore opportunities for new and innovative approaches to growing the future workforce.

3.7 There was a need to strengthen the skills system to deliver the right qualifications to meet the rapidly growing net zero skills demand from across all sectors. As such, £2 million had been invested to pilot a green Personal Learning Account to support employed people upskill or re-skill in net zero skills with construction, energy, manufacturing and engineering. In addition, it was important to promote opportunities for children and young people to help them understand the world of work and develop net zero skills.

3.8 Cabinet welcomed the paper, and specifically the commitment to consider the evidence, insight gathered and recommendations of the Mainstreaming Equality and Just Transition project along with the recognition of the need to develop appropriate actions or undertake further research or consultation based on the outcome of these findings.

3.9 Ministers agreed it was vital to build on the success of the community employability programmes, while continuing to deliver intensive support to priority groups in their communities. These priority groups were the Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, migrants, disabled people, those with a learning disability, women, lone parents, carers, young people and older workers.

3.10 Cabinet approved the paper and noted that the Action Plan would be published at the end of February.

Item 4: Taxi Licensing Reform – White Paper

CAB(22-23)45

4.1 The Deputy Minister for Climate Change introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to note proposals to reform taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licencing in Wales.

4.2 There were a number of long-standing issues that needed to be addressed to ensure that taxis and PHVs in Wales were safer, fairer and greener. These included inconsistent standards for drivers, operators and vehicles, an inability for local authorities to carry out enforcement activity against drivers licensed elsewhere but operating within their area, and limited information sharing that hampered implementation.

4.3 The white paper proposed to address these issues while delivering the Programme for Government commitment to legislate to modernise the taxi and PHV.

4.4 The introduction of national minimum standards would mean the same checks would be carried out on all drivers and operators across Wales. As such, there would be a consistent approach to disclosure and barring, overseas criminal records checks and medicals. There would be the same approach to testing vehicles, age limits, emissions policy, and specific requirements.

4.5 In addition, there would be better sharing of information across local authorities, with enforcement officers able to take action against any driver, vehicle or operator, rather than those licensed in their area. Penalty points and fixed penalty notices would be introduced across Wales, there would be clearer definitions of taxis and PHVs and cross border issues would need to be addressed. The Bill would also include a power to set a date by which all vehicles must be zero emission.

4.6 Cabinet welcomed the paper, particularly the requirement that applicants for

a licence would be required to successfully obtain a regulated qualification, which would include key subjects such as, children and adult safeguarding, violence against women, domestic abuse, sexual violence, trafficking, and disability awareness.

4.7 Cabinet approved the paper and noted that the white paper would be published in week commencing 6th March.

Item 5: Second Supplementary Budget 2022-23

5.1 The Minister for Finance and Local Government introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to agree the Second Supplementary Budget of 2022-23.

5.2 The Second Supplementary Budget regularised the final adjustments to budget allocations before the end of the financial year and set the limits, against which, outturn positions would be measured.

5.3 The level of available revenue resources had increased by £357m since the First Supplementary Budget.

5.4 Since the First Supplementary Budget, a total of £343.9 million of revenue allocations, £9.96 million of general capital and £2.3 million of financial transaction capital allocations had been approved from reserves. £170 million was allocated to the HSS MEG to support the exceptional energy costs arising in 2022-23 and to support COVID-19 measures. Of this, £21.1 million reflected reprioritisation of underspends from other MEGS, which had been agreed by Cabinet in September.

5.5 To support the humanitarian response to the war in Ukraine, a further £91.664 million, in addition to the initial £20 million, had been allocated, this had been offset by £74.4m from the UK government.

5.6 As a result of the overall changes unallocated reserves would stand at £156 million. This figure assumed the full drawdown of £125 million from the Wales Reserve.

5.7 Given the ongoing public sector pay negotiations, almost all of the remaining unallocated reserves would be assigned to the Health and Social Services MEG and the Education and Welsh Language MEG, £120 million and £32 million, to support a potential settlement for NHS Wales staff and teachers. This assumed the same offer was made to both professions.

5.8 If a settlement could not be reached, there was sufficient headroom in the Wales Reserve for the resulting underspend to be carried forward for use in future years. Noting through the 2023-24 budget process the Wales Reserve drawdown would operate as part of the fiscal strategy.

5.9 Cabinet welcomed the paper and thanked the Minister for Finance and Local Government for the ongoing support during the discussions with the Health and Teaching Trade Unions.

5.10 Cabinet approved the paper, subject to comments made by ministers and noted that the Second Supplementary Budget would be published on 14th February, with the debate scheduled for 14th March.

Item 6: Any other business

NHS Pay negotiations

6.1 The Minister for Health and Social Services informed Cabinet that the majority of the Health Trade Unions had suspended the proposed industrial action, while their Members considered the latest pay offer from the Welsh Government, with only Unite continuing to strike. Unite had also announced

additional days of industrial action on 20, 21 and 22 February.

6.2 The revised pay offer comprised of an additional 3%, of which 1.5% was consolidated, in addition to the Pay Review Body recommendations and the lump sum already offered by the Welsh Government. The enhanced offer would be backdated to April 2022. This award would be met from across government spending reductions for 22-23 and the consolidated element going forward from 2023-24 will need to be met through achieving efficiency savings from reducing agency spend.

6.3 Negotiations were also continuing on a number of non-pay commitments to enhance staff well-being.

Cabinet Secretariat
February 2023

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