



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Cabinet Sub-Committee for North Wales meeting: 26 January 2023

Minutes of the Cabinet Sub-Committee for North Wales meeting on 26 January 2023. (Hybrid meeting: Teams/Welsh Government Offices, Llandudno Junction)

First published: 16 March 2023

Last updated: 16 March 2023

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-for-north-wales-meeting-26-january-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Contents

Present

Introduction

Health in North Wales

Transport update

Visitor levy update

Economic update

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-for-north-wales-meeting-26-january-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Present

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

Leaders of North Wales local authorities

- Cllr Charlie McCoubrey, Conwy
- Cllr Jason McLellan, Denbighshire
- Cllr Llinos Medi, Anglesey (part meeting)
- Cllr Mark Pritchard, Wrexham
- Cllr Ian Roberts, Flintshire
- Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn, Gwynedd

Other external attendees

- Lord Terry Burns, Chair North Wales Transport Commission
- Chris Llewelyn, Chief Executive, WLGA

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-for-north-wales-meeting-26-january-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Welsh Government officials

- Andrew Goodall, Permanent Secretary
- Rebecca Dunn, Head of Cabinet Division
- Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser
- Clare Jenkins, Special Adviser
- Alex Bevan, Special Adviser
- Kate Edmunds, Special Adviser
- Sam Hadley, Special Adviser
- Owen John, Special Adviser
- Phillippa Mawdsley, Special Adviser
- Judith Paget, Director General, HSC
- Reg Kilpatrick, Director General, Covid Recovery Local Government
- Tracey Burke, Director General, CCRA
- Claire McDonald, Economic Policy
- Catrin Sully, Head of Cabinet Office
- Elin Gwynedd, Deputy Director North Wales
- Olivia Shorrocks, Head of Major Conditions, NHS Wales (item 2)
- Lea Beckerleg, North Wales Transport Commission lead official (item 3)
- Anna Adams, Deputy Director Tax Strategy and Intergovernmental Relations (item 4)
- Christopher W Morgan, Head of Cabinet Secretariat
- Damian Roche, Cabinet Secretariat
- Tomos Roberts, Cabinet Division
- Thomas Dowding, Cabinet Division
- Bryn Richards, Head of Regional Planning – North Wales
- Heledd Cressey, Senior Regional Planning Officer – North Wales

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-for-north-wales-meeting-26-january-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Apologies

- Julie James MS
- Julie Morgan MS

Item 1: Introduction and welcome

1.1 The Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales and Trefnydd welcomed all to the meeting and explained there is now a forward work plan based on the issues ministers, leaders, and others have raised. For the next meeting there will be a focus on Education as well as maximising the opportunities to work with Ireland and the north of England. She noted the intention to invite the Mayors of Liverpool and Manchester and the Irish Consul to discuss partnership working and strengthening links.

1.2 In relation to housing, a summit is due to take place shortly relating to phosphorus pollution and its impact on housing and development. An update would be provided to the committee following that meeting.

Item 2: Health in North Wales – Update from Minister for Health & Social Services

2.1 The Minister for Health and Social Services provided an update and overview on health in North Wales.

2.2 The current context for Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board was that it was in Targeted Intervention status, and concerns were evident about the challenges faced by the region.

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-for-north-wales-meeting-26-january-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

2.3 Notwithstanding that, it was clear the board had responded positively to the challenges posed by industrial action and winter pressures, but there remained an issue with delayed transfers of care. Too many people were waiting in Accident and Emergency departments, waiting times for planned care needed to be addressed and activity levels were not yet back to pre-covid levels. There were many instances of services across the region struggling to cope with increased demand.

2.4 It was reported that robust discussions had taken place with the health board and clear priorities for delivery had been set by the Welsh Government, which included developing a closer relationship between the NHS and local authorities to tackle delayed transfers of care. In addition, access to general practice, dentistry, optometry and pharmacy needed to improve.

2.5 Urgent and emergency care should focus on the effective management of people with urgent care needs in the community around the clock and help more people to safely access alternatives to hospital-based care.

2.6 Improvements to planned care and recovery were necessary and a focus on cancer delivery and reducing the backlog of patients waiting over 62 days for their treatment on the cancer pathway. Mental health and child and adolescent mental health service improvements were needed across all age services and equity and parity between physical and mental health services made more visible.

2.7 These priorities would help address the immediate pressures and build a sustainable health and care service over the next year.

2.8 Another focus for the Welsh Government was ensuring the message was relayed that each and every individual could help the NHS by looking after their own health and wellbeing and taking steps to stay well. Working together to engage every person in North Wales to create a healthier population, reduce pressure on acute NHS services and improve outcomes in the longer term was a

key goal.

2.9 The committee then heard a presentation that covered the most topical health issues in North Wales, including plans for executive recruitment to the Board; development of the North Wales Dental Academy and North Wales Medical School, both of which would transform services in the area.

2.10 Work was ongoing to create a National Nuclear Medicine Laboratory, which would supply medical radioisotopes for the diagnosis and treatment of diseases such as cancer and would be a global centre of excellence in nuclear medicine, with the creation of highly skilled jobs.

2.11 Discharge guidance had been provided to health boards in December, which was designed to support them to maximise their hospital capacity settings through safe, timely discharge, working in partnership with local authorities, the Third Sector and families to reduce the numbers of patients who no longer needed to be in hospital.

2.12 It was noted that Wales had an average 270 beds per 100,000 population, whereas England had approximately 170 beds per 100,000, that said, addressing the transfers issue was paramount to relieve pressure and all partners were encouraged to work together to address the issue.

2.13 A number of other matters including winter pressures, impacts of industrial action, Covid-19 and other respiratory viruses and planned and primary care were covered, and the committee welcomed the updates.

2.14 In relation to capital expenditure for new hospital projects, it was noted the position was extremely difficult following the UK government fiscal statement, allied to this was the detailed planning for the wider hospital estate over the next 10 years.

2.15 The committee welcomed the introduction of the 111 – Press 2 service,

which was a significant transformation in access to mental health support, with direct access to wellbeing practitioners around the clock from March onwards.

2.16 The committee noted the major developments and the challenges still faced by the region and agreed to work together to deliver continuous improvement across the North Wales region.

Item 3: Transport update from Deputy Minister for Climate Change and update on Roads Review from Lord Burns

3.1 The committee began by welcoming the launch earlier that day of the new Class 197 train fleet at Llandudno Junction railway station.

3.2 The Deputy Minister for Climate Change set the context for the Roads Review, before handing over to Lord Burns, Chair of the North Wales Transport Commission to set out the Progress Statement published that day on the work of the commission.

3.3 The report brought together a large volume of data and evidence gathered by the commission over the first phase of its work, which had allowed it to identify issues and opportunities.

3.4 It was reported that private vehicles were by far the most dominant mode of transport for journeys within the region, with most journeys being local in nature and under 15 kilometres.

3.5 In addition, it was clear that journeys primarily flowed to and from North Wales into the North West of England, which amounted to the largest cross-border flow across Wales. There were also significant private vehicle flows along the A55 corridor, particularly between Llandudno and Chester. Therefore,

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-for-north-wales-meeting-26-january-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

effective cross border connections via all modes were crucial to North Wales.

3.6 The commission noted that the A55 / A494 route was attractive and fast for private vehicles between population centres into and across the region. This route did not suffer from severe and regular congestions, unlike the stretch of the M4 considered by the South East Wales Transport Commission. This presented a challenge to achieving greater use of sustainable transport options.

3.7 In terms of rail, services were limited in reach to specific corridors within the region, and focused primarily upon the coastal strip, borderlands and Chester. Towns away from the coastal strip, Borderlands and Chester–Shrewsbury corridors often have limited or no public transport connections, often with comparatively long journey times compared to the private car. There were also barriers to increasing passenger services on constrained sections of railway such as single track or freight paths.

3.8 The evidence revealed significant gaps in existing public transport opportunities, including access to an hourly service, particularly during evenings and weekends and in areas away from the coastal corridor, across the southern areas of the region, the Llyn Peninsula and rural Wrexham.

3.9 The committee acknowledged that capital funding for rail and other transport improvement projects was a major issue following the UK government's recent fiscal statement.

3.10 The commission had concluded there was a case for rail investment in the region along the populated corridors, such as at Deeside station, along with enhancement of connections between Wrexham and Liverpool to improve public transport to key employment and development sites. However, for many in the region, the highest impact mechanism for modal shift in terms of geographical reach and likely timescales, was bus and active travel.

3.11 The commission wanted to see development of a more expansive and

accessible bus network with improved frequencies and longer operating hours. It would also support investment in specific public transport routes and bus priority measures to support congested routes, where feasible.

3.12 It was suggested the challenge would be in ensuring bus routes could serve more rural communities and cover longer distances and it was noted that a mix of options would be looked at to ensure an integrated network making the best use of active travel at the beginning and end of journeys.

3.13 The commission had identified that, despite a high proportion of trips made being very short journeys, levels of active travel remained low. Therefore, it proposed the development of more and better active travel networks, with an emphasis on much higher quality provision alongside separate, bespoke infrastructure and better support for local authorities to deliver.

3.14 In terms of car journeys, it was recognised the approach to rural and urban settings would need to differ, and electric vehicles could provide part of the solution, as could car and ride sharing schemes.

3.15 The commission also recommended prioritisation of schemes that demonstrated better handling of key rural-to-rural connections, including demand responsive transport.

3.16 The committee thanked Lord Burns for the update and looked forward to the next phase of engagement to improve transport across the region alongside all delivery partners.

Item 4: Visitor levy update

4.1 The Minister for Finance and Local Government provided an update on work to introduce a visitor levy in Wales, which was part of the Co-operation

Agreement with Plaid Cymru and had been discussed in detail with local authority leaders.

4.2 There had been a significant number of responses to the consultation and work was ongoing to consider those.

4.3 Work had been ongoing with delivery partners including local authorities and tourism businesses, the third sector, Welsh Revenue Authority and overseas and online booking operators, with four engagement events taking place around the country.

4.4 The issue of second homes and council tax was still under consideration in terms of the practical implications for the levy, and the Committee thanked local authority leaders for their engagement throughout.

4.5 It was recognised there were differing views about introduction of a levy, but there were many overseas examples of such a policy working successfully and delivering benefits to local communities. Leaders were reminded that the decision whether to introduce a levy rested with the authority. In addition, this would be a good example of where further devolution from the Welsh Government to local authorities could benefit communities by decisions being taken based on local need and demand.

4.6 The committee welcomed the update.

Item 5: Economic update

5.1 The Minister for Economy provided an update on the current state of the economy and noted that a recession was likely, but potentially not as deep as first feared. Despite this, there was the possibility of between 20,000 and 40,000 job losses over the next 18 months and the Welsh Government would need to

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-for-north-wales-meeting-26-january-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

balance supporting those businesses that were viable against supporting growth across the wider economy.

5.2 There were already examples of business closures, with the recent announcement from the 2 Sisters factory in Ynys Môn and discussions were ongoing with the company around what support could be provided to the workforce.

5.3 A meeting of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board was scheduled for March and a further report from that would be provided to the committee.

5.4 It was noted the withdrawal of European funding meant over £1bn in investment being lost to the economy over 4 years, and it was evident the UK government Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity Funds were not reaching all areas.

5.5 On ports, there would be investment in all ports in Wales, with the potential for freeports to create sustainable jobs.

5.6 It was reported the UK government's investment zones had been scaled back from their original plans, with 12 suggested across the UK, and at least one in Wales. The high tech, knowledge-based industries in North Wales would be promoted for investment.

5.7 The committee acknowledged that engagement with UK government colleagues had been minimal given the recent political upheaval, but further conversations were due to take place with James Davies MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales about the economy and investment in Wales.

5.8 The positive news about the developments around the nuclear industry in North Wales were welcomed, with Trawsfynydd and Anglesey respectively involved with the small and medium reactor programme and radioisotope

development.

5.9 Broader investment by the Welsh Government had seen large companies such as Toyota and Siemens increase their presence in North Wales, along with the paper tissues industry and Airbus.

5.10 In summary, it was clear there would be big challenges ahead for the economy, but there were also plenty of opportunities for development in the region.

5.11 The committee thanked the minister for the update and noted that a date for the next meeting would be circulated in due course.

Cabinet Secretariat
February 2023

This document may not be fully accessible.

For more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/cabinet-sub-committee-for-north-wales-meeting-26-january-2023-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).