



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Cabinet meeting: 15 May 2023

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on 15 May 2023.

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Present

- Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford MS (Chair)
 - Lesley Griffiths MS
 - 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

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
- Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser
- Madeleine Brindley, 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
- 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
- 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
- Andrew Slade, Director General, Economy, Treasury and Constitution
- Helen Lentle, Director Legal Services
- Claire Bennett, Director Environmental Sustainability (item 4)
- Martin McVay, Noise and Chemicals Policy Manager (item 4)
- Matt Jenkins, Deputy Director, Futures & Integration Social Care (item 5)
- Emma Williams, Director of Housing & Regeneration (item 6)
- James Hooker, Head of Private Sector Housing Policy (item 6)
- Emily Edwards, Special Adviser (item 6)

Item 1: Minutes of previous meetings

1.1 Cymeradwyodd y Cabinet gofnodion y 24 Ebrill / Cabinet approved the minutes of 24 April.

Item 2: First Minister's items

Coronation

2.1 The First Minister reflected on his attendance at the Coronation of King Charles III. Wales had been well represented both during the service, with the use of the Welsh language and music, and amongst the congregation.

Co-operation Agreement

2.2 The First Minister informed Cabinet that he had spoken to the interim leader of Plaid Cymru and confirmed that as the Co-operation Agreement was an arrangement between the two political parties it should continue.

2.3 It was important to put on record the government's thanks to Adam Price MS for his constructive approach to the Co-operation Agreement.

Industrial action by Prospect

2.4 The First Minister reminded ministers that there would be a further strike by the Prospect Trade Union on 7th June. This would not have an impact on Senedd business and Plenary was scheduled to meet as usual, so ministers would be expected to respond to questions and debates.

Industrial action by NHS unions

2.5 Cabinet noted that the outcome of further ballots on further industrial action within the NHS would be announced in the coming days.

Item 3: Senedd business

3.1 Cabinet considered the Plenary grid and noted that voting time would be around 4:15pm on Tuesday, which was likely to be followed by a short break before Stage 3 of the Agriculture (Wales) Bill commenced. This had been scheduled for 3 hours. Voting time was scheduled for 6:25pm on Wednesday.

Item 4: Noise and Soundscape Plan 2023 to 2028 - CAB(22-23)68

4.1 The Minister for Climate Change introduced the paper, which invited Cabinet to agree the draft Noise and Soundscape Plan 2023-2028 for consultation before summer recess. The final plan would be adopted as the national strategy on soundscapes, which would be required under Part 2 of the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill.

4.2 Five-year noise and soundscape action plans had been published in 2013 and 2018, partly to discharge duties under the Environmental Noise Directive. The new plan would now be fully statutory in line with the national strategy on soundscapes within the proposed Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Bill.

4.3 Wales was the first UK nation to acknowledge soundscapes in national policy and legislation. The Government recognised not just the harm caused by excessive noise but also the positive effects on people's health and well-being of the right sounds in the right place and at the right time.

4.4 The stakeholder response to the inclusion of soundscape provisions in the Bill had been overwhelmingly positive, it did, however, represent a change of approach. The plan was careful not to impose any new obligations on public

bodies but sought to steer a steady transition to the wider application of soundscape approaches, supported by the ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

4.5 Cabinet welcomed the paper and the positive impact the policy would have on people's well-being and mental health. In particular, those who were neurodivergent.

4.6 It was recognised that government policies, such as the plans for a default 20mph speed limit on roads where cars mixed with pedestrians and cyclists, would help contribute to the policy.

4.7 It was agreed that there would be a need to engage, as part of the consultation process, with a wide variety of groups including those with protected characteristics, to identify and mitigate any unintended consequences. It was noted that the final plan would have an equality impact assessment.

4.8 Cabinet approved the paper.

Item 5: Building capacity through community care – Further Faster

5.1 The Minister for Health and Social Services introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to agree that an enhanced integrated approach should be taken to supporting older people and people living with frailty.

5.2 The recent winter months had been the most challenging on record for the NHS and social care. This had put enormous pressure on the hospital system.

5.3 This was despite the huge efforts of the workforce and the NHS being the government's budget priority over many years. However, but with an ever-

growing proportion of the population living with frailty, this was now an issue that would need to be addressed.

5.4 The government's focus on additional step-down beds over the winter did have a positive impact, with 678 beds and community equivalent packages being created.

5.5 The vision, within 'A Healthier Wales', of a health and care system focused on keeping people living as independently as possible in their own communities remained, but there was a need to speed up delivery of measures to strengthen place-based care. Along with thinking creatively of new ways to support people living with multiple health conditions.

5.6 In the context of the financial pressures, resources were being ring fenced and directed to this area to increase the resilience of the whole system ahead of the winter. This would also contribute to a reduction in waiting lists.

5.7 The Deputy Minister for Social Services highlighted that it had been a very challenging time across the whole health and social care system. Notwithstanding the pressures within hospitals, for every person in hospital awaiting a care package in order to be discharged, there were 7 people in the community also waiting for a care package. If these packages were not addressed, it could quickly lead to increased admissions.

5.8 Therefore, it was critical for the NHS and Local Government to work together to identify opportunities to use resources more effectively across the system by taking an integrated approach.

5.9 There were improvements in interventions and scaling good ideas from local to regional to national. For example, the Trusted Assessor model enabled, within a framework, a wider range of staff to undertake social care assessments in hospitals, thus speeding up hospital flow. 'Further Faster' would provide a real focus on what more could be done for people living with frailty, including a more

organised role for the Third Sector in supporting people to contribute within their own communities.

5.10 Cabinet welcomed the proposals outlined in the paper, particularly the role of the Third Sector in supporting the ambitions.

5.11 Cabinet approved the paper.

Item 6: Green paper on adequate housing and fair rents

6.1 The Minister for Climate Change introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to approve the green paper on securing a path towards adequate housing that included fair rents and affordability.

6.2 The Programme for Government included a commitment to publish a white paper that would include proposals for a right to adequate housing including fair rents and new approaches to making homes affordable for those on local incomes. This was part of the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru.

6.3 In order to gain an understanding of the potential evidence gaps in a Welsh context, research had been commissioned from both the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence and Alma Economics. The research concluded that there was a distinct absence of evidence to understand tenant and landlord behaviour, rental data, local incomes, and affordability in Wales.

6.4 To help inform the required integrated and regulatory impact assessments and ensure evidence-based policy development for the white paper, the government would publish a call for evidence through a green paper consultation. This would seek views and evidence on the different approaches for achieving housing adequacy and ask about a range of related issues such as

rent affordability and tenant and landlord behaviours. It would also ask for evidence to support the development of an approach for defining a 'local income' and 'fair rent'. A stakeholder advisory group had been established to help develop the green paper.

6.5 To support the consultation process, a series of workshops with tenants and landlords would take place over the Summer to obtain qualitative evidence through lived experience.

6.6 The outcome of the consultation would inform the development of the white paper, which was planned for publication in the Summer of 2024.

6.7 Cabinet welcomed the paper.

6.8 It was recognised that the private rented sector currently accounted for approximately a fifth of the housing stock in Wales and it was important for people to have access to affordable and adequate housing, not least given the impact on their mental health.

6.9 There was a need to ensure that landlords and tenants, particularly those with protected characteristics were invited to the proposed workshops.

6.10 Cabinet approved the paper and noted the green paper would be published on 6th June.

Cabinet Secretariat
May 2023

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