



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEETING, DOCUMENT

Welsh Revenue Authority Board minutes: 16 December 2020

Minutes from the Welsh Revenue Authority (WRA) Board meeting held on 16 December 2020.

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Present

Members

- Kathryn Bishop, Chair
- Dyfed Edwards, Deputy Chair
- Jocelyn Davies, Non-Executive
- Mary Champion, Non-Executive
- Rheon Tomos, Non-Executive
- Dyfed Alsop, Chief Executive Officer
- Sam Cairns, Chief Operations Officer
- Lucy Robinson, Customer Insight and Strategy

Ymgynghorwyr (Advisers)

- Melissa Quignon-Finch, Chief People Officer
- Rob Jones, Chief Finance Officer
- Amy Bowden, Interim Head of Legal
- Neil Butt, Interim Chief of Staff
- Anna Adams, Deputy Director of Tax Strategy, Policy and Engagement - Welsh Treasury

Meeting opening

1. Welcome and introductions, conflicts of interest and apologies, minutes of the last meeting, matters arising

1. The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. Neil Butt joined for the first

time as an Ymgynghorwr to the Board, as Interim Chief of Staff. India Hitchens observed the meeting.

2. Apologies were received from Becca Godfrey and Andrew Jeffreys, Anna Adams would deputise and present the Director, Welsh Treasury report.
3. Two required updates were noted for the declaration of interest log, both of which would be sent to the Board Secretariat following the meeting. The Board was content with the remaining declarations, and no conflicts were declared.
4. The minutes of the last meeting and the redacted minute for the purpose of external publication were agreed. Members agreed the actions and decision from the last meeting, noting that one action would remain open. **Information redacted.**
5. Work would be undertaken over the coming months to communicate the WRA's status as a non-ministerial government department to our stakeholders and partners and to ensure it is properly reflected in our governance documentation.

Report, approvals and decisions

2. Chair's report

1. The Chair provided an update on recent activity. Since the Board last met, the non-executive members had participated in a session on technology and on cyber risk; and a Board briefing was held on tax risk.
2. The Chair informed the Board that she had met separately with the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd and the Permanent Secretary for their regular quarterly meetings and had also attended the Public Leaders Forum. An overview of the agendas for these meeting was provided.
3. The Board's annual effectiveness workshop would be held in January. In preparation for this, the existing online survey used for the previous 2 years

would be circulated for completion by members and ymgynghorwyr. The Chair had considered making changes to the survey but felt the existing questions were broad enough to cover the current situation. That said, she welcomed any suggested changes or additions made by the Board.

Members were content with the proposed approach. Ahead of the January session the Chair also planned to share a publicly-available document from Deloitte entitled “The Board’s Role in the COVID-19 Crisis” to stimulate thinking ahead of the discussion in January about the governance of our maturing organisation and the framework document.

4. The Chair’s objectives had recently been agreed by the Permanent Secretary, and these would be circulated to Board members for information and in advance of the Board’s contribution to the Chair’s performance appraisal at the end of the financial year.

3. CEO report and operational performance

Information redacted.

4. Financial performance

Information redacted.

5. Reports from committees

1. The Chair of the ARAC provided an overview of the committee’s most recent meeting. The first of the quarterly financial performance reports was scrutinised, the committee welcomed its new role and felt that the first discussion went well.

6. Report from Welsh Treasury

Information redacted.

Discussion

7. Key performance measures

1. A review of the organisation's key performance indicators was carried out to determine if they were still relevant and beneficial. The current measures were agreed by the Board as part of the corporate plan in March 2019 and were recently reported on in the 2019-20 annual report.
2. It was noted that this was not an urgent piece of work or a priority, however, it was a useful exercise and the beginning of further discussions to come. The Board was presented with 4 recommendations:
 1. That we make some changes internally to the Key Performance Measures (PMs) we review from April 2021;
 - i. merge our digital and automation measures to create 1 measure instead of 3.
 - ii. introduce a measure on the quality of our services.
 - iii. consider introducing an LDT measure.
 2. Leave our published Key PMs as they are until April 2022 in line with a new Corporate Plan publication.
 3. Review our key PMs as we develop the Corporate Plan 2022-2025 to ensure they are all fit for purpose and make any changes to the Key PMs at that stage.
 4. Continue to develop our operational data as we evolve, learn more and move through the lifecycle of delivering our taxes.
3. The Board were informed that currently the measures for automation and

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feedback were separate and it was therefore suggested that these were merged to show quality of automated services. Longer-term and when resources allowed, work would be done to establish what is important in the service for taxpayers and representatives. The Board were concerned that focusing on the quality of automation could lead to us losing focus on how easy it is for the user to use the service.

4. The Board agreed the recommendations and welcomed further discussions when the time was right. Members noted the importance of proceeding with caution to ensure that any changes or additions were meaningful, whilst acknowledging the need for continuity and consistency with other measures.

8. Corporate plan review

1. The Board were presented with a paper on the corporate plan review. It was noted that the organisation had made good progress despite the circumstances; however the Board noted that the paper did not emphasise enough the challenges that COVID-19 had on the organisation over this time.
2. It was noted that the Board had recently received an extensive report on the organisation's performance as part of the 2019-20 annual report and accounts. Members acknowledged the importance of not getting ahead of where we are as an organisation in terms of the corporate plan cycle and that their focus should be on the Board's forward look and currently on preparing in advance of the upcoming election.

9. Review of Our Approach

1. The Chair introduced the item by noting the importance of Our Approach and how it sits at the heart of our services and what we stand for as an organisation.
2. This was the second review presented to the Board and covered

perspectives from the Operations, Data and Customer teams.

3. Members were informed that Our Approach continued to be well received by our customers and stakeholders. Different methods of gaining feedback had been implemented in the last year which had increased the data to 100 per month and on the whole feedback was extremely positive. Further changes had also been made to the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to further improve feedback.
4. Some risks and challenges were shared which included, difficulty keeping the whole organisation engaged on all pieces of work; bringing new staff up to speed – particularly where they had joined from other tax authorities; remote working which had brought with it some challenges; and also operating with reduced resource as a result of COVID-19.
5. The Customer team were working on a 'Customer Approach' which would be brought back to the Board in February for approval.

Meeting closing

10. Any other business

1. No other business was raised.

11. Forward look

1. The forward look was presented and Board members were reminded that this was a working document. It was suggested that there may be a need for an item on Socio-Economic Duty at the February meeting given the duty would come into force on the 31 March 2021.

12. Meeting review

Information redacted.

Redacted information

There are certain circumstances where it is not appropriate to share all of the information contained within the Board minutes, for example, where it contains personal or commercial data or relates to the formulation of government policy or the effective conduct of public affairs. In such circumstances, the information has been redacted and the text is marked clearly that this has been the case.

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