



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Cabinet meeting: 22 January 2024

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet on 22 January 2024.

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Contents

Present

Previous meeting

First Minister's items

Senedd business

TfW Bus Bill Implementation plan

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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
- Matthew Hall, 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
- Nia James, Interim Director of Legal Services
- Tracey Burke, Director General Climate Change & Rural Affairs
- Sioned Evans, Director General Public Services and Welsh Language
- Tim Moss, Chief Operating Officer
- Judtih Paget, Director General Health and Social Services
- Andrew Slade, Director General, Economy, Treasury and Constitution
- Joseph Dooher, Head of Bus and Community Transport (item 4)
- Robbie Thomas, Head of Bus Legislation (item 4)

Item 1: Minutes of the previous meeting

1.1 Cymeradwydd y Cabinet gofnodion y 15 Ionawr/ Cabinet approved the minutes of 15 January.

Item 2: First Minister's items

2.1 The First Minister invited the Minister for Economy to provide an update on Tata Steel.

Tata Steel

2.2 The Minister for Economy informed Cabinet that Tata Steel had confirmed on Friday that it would be closing the 2 remaining blast furnaces at Port Talbot, resulting in 2,500 job losses at the plant and a further 300 within the next 2 to 3 years at Llanwern in Newport.

2.3 It was reported that UK Ministers had failed to make the case for the £500 million subsidy that would result in such job cuts and the loss of indigenous steelmaking in the UK. It was not clear what outcomes were prioritised or why this level of support had been chosen. Both the UK government and the company had the tools to put in place a just transition that was good for green growth and essential for collective security, not least given the need for such high-quality steel to deliver the Crown Estate's plans for Celtic Sea floating wind.

2.4 Furthermore, there was also a concern about the wider supply chain, particularly for the Steelworks at Trostre, and the overall indirect job losses, which could be as high as three to four for every redundancy at Port Talbot. There were also concerns that the £100 million offered by the Transition Board to support workers would be insufficient.

2.5 The minister had continued to press the Secretary of State for Business and Trade for a meeting to discuss the future of UK Steel, but these requests had been declined. The First Minister had requested an urgent phone call with the Prime Minister on Friday but he was not available.

2.6 Ministers acknowledged there was a need to focus on exploring other credible ways forward for the business that did not require the planned loss of both furnaces and the scale of job losses. It was agreed that communications should focus on this and the impact on climate change of the UK becoming reliant on imports.

2.7 The minister would continue to work with trade unions and the UK government to try and prevent the predicted large scale job losses and to seek alternative solutions with the company. It was noted the minister would be making an oral statement to the Senedd the following day.

Item 3: Senedd business

3.1 Cabinet noted there had been 2 changes to the plenary grid since it had been circulated, with the statement on Tata Steel extended by 15 minutes and a statement on the Economy of the Heads of the Valleys postponed to another session. Voting time was now scheduled for 6:15pm on Tuesday and around 6.25pm on Wednesday.

Item 4: Transport for Wales Bus Bill Implementation plan

4.1 The Deputy Minister for Climate Change introduced the paper, which asked Cabinet to agree the draft implementation plan set out in Reforming Bus Services for Wales, which would be used to engage further with the sector.

4.2 Transport for Wales (TfW) had produced an implementation plan, known as the Roadmap to Franchising, which set out how it would approach the delivery of the Buses (Wales) Bill. This included working with partners and the planning of

bus services.

4.3 The document would help contextualise the Bill by giving the industry, local government, and the public a clearer understanding of how franchising would work in practice and create an integrated public transport network. This was essential to drive modal shift and help meet the statutory Net Zero targets relating to transport.

4.4 The roadmap set out three objectives: to provide a bus network that was linked with the rest of public transport and easy to navigate; co-ordinated timetables, which were easy to use and allowed connections across public transport in Wales; and simpler ticketing, which would enable travel across public transport in Wales with affordable and consistent fares.

4.5 The roadmap also recognised the importance of buses in addressing inequality, as women, Black Asian and Minority Ethnic people, disabled people and those with low pay or insecure work were all likely to use buses proportionally more than others.

4.6 TfW had continued to work with local authorities across Wales to consider where better planning could significantly improve bus networks. This had produced 9 core network planning principles, which were designed to remove duplication and maximise the network across a given area, rather than focus on passenger numbers of an individual route.

4.7 Cabinet welcomed the paper and agreed that the roadmap was a good plan and well set out. The focus on equality issues and the work with the Disability Rights Taskforce travel working group to improve accessible travel, was also welcomed. It would be important to ensure safety on public transport, to keep buses safe from racism and gender-based violence.

4.8 Cabinet approved the paper.

Cabinet Secretariat
January 2024

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