

Summary of the Minutes of the Agricultural Advisory Panel (AAP)

Meeting 4 – 11 May 2017

Welsh Government, Spa Road East, Llandrindod Wells

Attendance

Lionel Walford – Chair

Peter Rees – Independent Member

Steve Hughson – Independent Member

Darren Williams – FUW

John Davies – NFU

Ivan Monckton - UNITE

Bryan Godsell - UNITE

Helen Snow - Geldards

Helena Bird – Welsh Government

Lorri Browning – Welsh Government

Medwyn Roberts – Welsh Government

Apologies

Paula Whitfield – Welsh Government

Item 1 - Welcome

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting noting one apology. No new conflicts of interest had arisen since the previous meeting.

Item 2 – Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous Panel's meeting were discussed and approved. The Panel were asked to comment on the minutes from the Sub-committee meeting. It was noted that they had discussed two papers, the Labour Market intelligence (LMI) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) papers, which were on the meeting's agenda.

It was mentioned that a meeting had been arranged between the strategic board of Farming Connect and the agricultural colleges. Any developments from this will be fed back to the Chair in due course.

The Panel agreed on the importance of looking at what the agricultural colleges currently offer and determine whether the content fully meets the needs of the industry. It would also be useful to have some statistics on take-up of courses.

The Chair raised the need to clarify the employment status of farm workers who are studying and training or on apprenticeship schemes.

The Panel was concerned about cases where ‘bogus self – employment status ’ were being used as a method of avoiding the rates set out in the Order. The Panel would consider issuing guidance as a first step to address this.

Item 3 – Making the 2017 Order

The Panel discussed the progression on the 2017 Order. It was felt that a firmer timetable of events and meetings needed to be put in place to ensure the process runs more smoothly in future.

Item 4 – Labour Market Intelligence

The Chair introduced the LMI paper. Discussion followed on achieving accurate data and obtaining sufficient sample size for research. It was decided that approaching as many as 1550 businesses could be appropriate.

Item 5 – Continuous Professional Development

The Chair asked for thoughts on the paper presented. The opinion was expressed that with the UK leaving the EU, Wales is on the verge of a massive change and that a strategy will be necessary in order to go forward with a highly trained workforce and a sustainable industry.

It was suggested that CPD and a Personal Development Plan (PDP) provided a robust method of recording achievements would be beneficial to workers. An appropriate training and development structure should be put into place to encourage workers and attract incomers. It was argued that employers need an incentive to engage with CPD.

It was agreed that engaging with the ‘Agri Academy Alumni’ in order to produce a key paper on options for CPD would be beneficial.

It was agreed that it would also be useful to look at how other countries used CPD.

Item 6 – Modernisation of the Agricultural Wages Order

Simplification and modernisation remains a long-term aspiration for the Panel who saw this including a refresh in relation to the content of the CPD. It was suggested that a Sub-group would be needed for this and volunteers were invited. Development of proposals would take place and report to the Chair as appropriate.

Item 7 – Any Other Business

The Panel discussed the need to define the term ‘apprenticeships.’

Both farming Unions expressed concerns about workers becoming so highly trained that

they could be dismissed because they would no longer be affordable by the employer. It was suggested that this could be happening especially perhaps at the lower grades. It was agreed that employers shouldn't be constraining development but that employees should work with the needs of the business also.

The Panel discussed potential dates and timings for future meetings. All would be contacted in due course.