

Summary of the Minutes of the Agricultural Advisory Panel (AAP) Meeting 13 – 29 October 2018

Welsh Government Buildings, Spa Road East, Llandrindod Wells

Attendance

Lionel Walford – Chair
Steve Hughson – Independent Member
Darren Williams – FUW
Will Prichard – NFU
Ivan Monckton - UNITE

Helen Snow – Geldards

Spencer Conlon – Welsh Government
Ryan Davies – Welsh Government
Dan Ricketts – Welsh Government

Apologies

Peter Rees – Independent Member
Paddy McNaught - UNITE

Item 1 - Welcome

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting noting two apologies.

Item 2 – Update from Chair

There was nothing to report

Item 3 – Approval of Notes of Meetings 11 and 12 (4 September 2018)

The minutes of the previous Panel's meeting were discussed and approved.

The Action Points from the last meeting were also discussed.

The procedure around Impact Assessments, the paper on Employment Status and the statistical data required for the Wage Order 2020 were all on the agenda for this meeting

- Broadband provision in Wales – no further information had been received on this
- Executive Summary on the changes to the Agricultural Wages Order – in progress to be carried forward to the next meeting

- Online Wages Calculator – work is ongoing but the technical side is more complicated than first thought. There will be a further update at the next meeting
- Ideas on Modernisation – nothing specific to note so far

Item 4 – Discussion on Consultation Responses

There had been a very poor response to the consultation with regard to the draft Agricultural Wages Order – just three responses had been received out of over 250 people and organisations contacted.

The Panel discussed why there had been such a poor response and how future consultations could be more widely advertised including advertisements or press releases in the farming press (Farmers Weekly, Farmers Guardian etc) and the use of social media. It was agreed that Welsh Government policies on advertising consultations would be looked at and reported back to the Panel.

It was confirmed that if the lower end of the Order was affected by National Minimum Wage changes in the budget on 29 October then these grades will be raised accordingly to remain in line.

The Panel reaffirmed the figures and conditions of employment as set out in the Order although UNITE wished to make it clear that the proposed increase was a very low reward. The Order will now be progressed as fast as possible with the draft Order to be sent to the Minister.

Item 5 – To consider the Paper on Employment Status put together by Helen Snow and Peter Rees

A copy of the paper had been distributed before the meeting but it was noted there had been two amendments since – copies of the new paper were issued.

The Panel discussed the paper. There was confusion over the differences between an Employee and a Worker and that it would be easier for agricultural workers to be either employed or self-employed. It was agreed that these were very difficult legal concepts to explain but it needed to be put in terms that made sense in the “real world”.

It was suggested that the document would be easier to understand if it was stated that the first page of the document covers the economy as whole and then it talks specifically about agriculture. It could also be an idea to remove the first page completely and just produce a document for people working in the agricultural sector. It was also suggested that a Frequently Asked Questions document could be added to the paper that could be updated regularly to help solve confusion in specific cases

and that a visual aid such as a flowchart could be added to help in following the process.

It was agreed that the paper would be re-worked and that it would be discussed again at the next meeting where it will need to be finalised.

Item 6 – Update on Impact Assessments

The Panel were given an update on the new and simplified Impact Assessment process which now combines all mandatory risk assessments into one document. This should help to speed up the process of legislative changes. No issues were raised by the Panel.

Item 7 – 2020 Order for Discussion

Following on from Meeting 12 with regard to the statistical baseline data required for future Orders it was confirmed that a meeting was scheduled to take place with the Welsh Government Departmental Statistician on 31 October to unpick the definitions agreed in the last meeting and to get his views on the best method to obtain this information so it is robust including which statistics are already available that we can use.

It was re-affirmed that this data is vital in order to modernise the Order and to be able to carry out the business the Minister wants us to do.

Item 8 – Any Other Business

There was no other business from around the table

Item 9 – Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place in January 2019. As Peter Rees was not present he would need to be contacted so a date can be set as quickly as possible

The Chair then closed the meeting.