
Minutes of the Board Meeting, 12 June 2020 – TEAMS Meeting

Present:

Shan Morgan
Meena Upadhyaya
Ellen Donovan
Jeff Farrar
Gareth Lynn
Andrew Goodall
Tracey Burke
Andrew Slade
Des Clifford
Peter Kennedy
Natalie Pearson
Gawain Evans
David Richards
Andrew Jeffrey
Helen Lentle
Charlie Thomas

Secretariat:

Charmain Watts

Apologies:

None

1. Welcome

- 1.1** The Permanent Secretary welcomed all attendees to the Welsh Government Board and welcomed Meena Upadhyaya to her first meeting as a Non-Executive Director.
- 1.2** The Permanent Secretary referred all to the Key Performance Indicators papers and asked all to feedback comments to the secretariat.

2. Current Issues/Covid-19

- 2.1** The Permanent Secretary provided an update around current working practices and advised that the majority of staff were working successfully remotely thanks to our excellent IT equipment. She also advised that key areas she was monitoring included: resources, governance, resilience of staff and decision making practices.
- 2.2** Andrew Goodall updated the Board on the latest developments on Covid-19 and the current position in Wales, discussion focused on:
 - Transmission of virus in Wales,
 - Critical care,
 - Mortality rate in Wales,
 - Track, Trace and Protect,
 - PPE.
- 2.3** Board further discussed the possibility of a second peak in winter and the plans to manage this alongside other winter pressures within the NHS. Andrew updated the Board on the Recovery Framework and the importance of giving confidence to people on what services people can access within the NHS.
- 2.4** The NED's asked how the organisation is balancing the demands of Covid-19, Brexit and the delivery of the programme for Government, outlining their concerns about the resilience and well-being of staff. The Board discussed the work of the baseline review and the work undertaken to understand the resources of the organisation.

- 2.5** The Non-Executive Directors offered additional assistance with anything that the Welsh Government required assurance on. The Permanent Secretary welcomed this and would inform the NEDs how they could be of assistance.

ACTION 1: All to consider additional assistance the NEDs could provide the organisation.

3. Director General Updates

- 3.1** The Director Generals provided an updated on key areas of work within their areas, Tracey Burke covered Education and Public Sector (EPS), Andrew Slade gave an update on Economy, Skills and Natural Resources (ESNR) and Des Clifford on the Office of the First Minister (OFM).
- Des' update focused on the work around the 21 day review cycle and the legal requirements, proposed plans for the tourist industry and latest developments around Brexit.
 - Tracey's update focused on work around ECC(W), schools, homelessness, childcare and Local Authorities, she also highlighted the relationship between the Welsh Government and the Local Authorities.
 - Andrew's update focused on how we move from emergency to the new normal, restart around the transport industry, our economic response, Brexit within ESNR, and other priority work around Programme for Government that has to be delivered alongside COVID-19 and Brexit.
- 3.2** Within the recovery plans, the NED's highlighted that 'Employment & Skills' featured high on both Impact and priority across WG priorities. A discussion followed on capability and capacity in this area.
- 3.3** Further discussions were held around the governance and decision making process around the 21 day review. The Permanent Secretary will ask the secretariat to circulate the governance structure.

ACTION 2: The governance structure to be circulated to Board.

- 3.4 The Permanent Secretary advised that she had informed all staff that any decisions were to be formally recorded along with the assumptions around those decisions. The Board agreed this was crucial for future scrutiny.
- 3.5 The NED's provided some questions over the emerging Recovery Covid-19 plans around process and Governance in response to key questions by policy area and more broader questions.

4. Finance Update

- 4.1 Gawain Evans talked through the report which provides an update on provisional unaudited outturn figures set against departmental budget allocations reflected in the Second Supplementary Budget 2019-20.
- 4.2 Gawain advised that this report follows the month 11 update on financial performance that was presented to the Board in March, these outturn figures along with any further adjustments will be reflected in the first draft of the 2019-20 accounts that will be presented to the Permanent Secretary later this month.

ACTION 3: Board agreed the importance of capturing all achievements by the Welsh Government in the Annual Report of the accounts.

- 4.3 Andrew Jeffreys provided an update which focused on the published supplementary budget, any potential overspend and financial risks.
- 4.4 Andrew also advised that a meeting was being held with the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd to look at pressures around COVID-19 for the year ahead. The Board noted the importance of this discussion and agreed that more time should be allocated for further discussion at the next Board.

ACTION 4: More time to be allocated to discuss financial matters at the next Board.

5. Communication Update

- 5.1 Natalie Pearson provided an update on internal communication and presented a one page dashboard on the latest statistics for news, the Learning Lab and intranet hits.

- 5.2** Natalie advised that key areas of work within her Department focussed on supply and demand of resources, keeping staff informed of all developments within the organisation and helping staff to work remotely.
- 5.3** Natalie also advised that a 121 risk assessment tool was being developed to assess staff returning to offices. Natalie will circulate this to the Board once it's fully developed.

ACTION 5: 121 risk assessment tool to be circulated to the Board.

6. Equality and Diversity Update

- 6.1** Katherine Thomas and Andrew Jeffreys provided an update to the Board on recent equality achievements and current equality challenges and invited discussion on high level approaches to improving equality and diversity in Welsh Government employment.
- 6.2** Katherine explained that since the last Board Equality Update, there have been significant achievements in relation to equality and diversity but Welsh Government face a range of long-standing challenges in respect of representation, differential experience and fair progression.
- 6.3** The update and discussion focused on:
- Progress on the organisational use of the social model of disability,
 - Other equality achievements during 2019-20,
 - Current employment equality impacts and handling arising from Covid 19,
 - Current diversity data and our ambition to see real change in the current picture of under-representation,
 - The development of a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan for the period 2020-2025, and our approaches to driving change, including the types of targets that might be used and how we could seek to meet those targets.
- 6.1** The Board welcomed the papers and agreed the importance of a very proactive approach to improving outcomes for those currently under-represented in our organisation.

7. Corporate Risk Register

- 7.1 Clare Collett presented the Corporate Risk Register and advised that it had been informed by discussions at the Finance Committee and has been specifically updated to reflect any changes in risk due to Covid 19. The Risk Register was also presented to the Executive Committee on 11 June.
- 7.2 Clare highlighted the key risks and any changes within the register. The NEDs queried the scoring of risk number 5 around workforce capacity, Clare agreed that the mitigation would be re-visited, she also advised that ExCo had requested that all Risk Owners review the mitigating actions to ensure they are aligned with the scoring.

Actions arising at Board meeting

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LATEST POSITION
ACTION 1: All to consider additional assistance the NEDs could provide the organisation.	All	Closed
ACTION 2: The governance structure to be circulated to Board.	Secretariat	Closed
ACTION 3: Board agreed the importance of capturing all achievements by the Welsh Government in the Annual Report of the accounts.	Gawain Evans	Closed
ACTION 4: More time to be allocated to discuss financial matters at the next Board.	Secretariat	Closed
ACTION 5: 121 risk assessment tool to be circulated to the Board.	Natalie Pearson	Closed