



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Minutes of the Board Meeting, 11 December 2020

Present:	In attendance:
Shan Morgan Meena Upadhyaya Ellen Donovan Gareth Lynn Jeff Farrar Andrew Goodall Andrew Slade Tracey Burke Des Clifford Reg Kilpatrick Peter Kennedy Andrew Jeffrey Natalie Pearson Gawain Evans David Richards Helen Lentle Fran Hill Robin Bradfield	Sharon Cross Clare Collett Iona Lewis- Hannagan Secretariat: Charmain Watts
Apologies: None	

1. Welcome

- 1.1 The Permanent Secretary welcomed all attendees to the Welsh Government Board and welcomed Reg Kilpatrick who has been appointed as the Director General of Covid-19 crisis coordination.
- 2.1 The Welsh Government Board agreed that a lot is currently going on within the organisation, with balancing key priority areas of work including Covid-19, Brexit and the delivery of the Programme for Government – The Non-Executive Directors (NED) appreciated this and offered their help to the Permanent Secretary and Board. The Board welcomed this.
- 1.2 The Board agreed the minutes from the last meeting.

2. Current Issues/Covid-19 update

- 2.2 Andrew Goodall updated the Welsh Government Board on the latest developments on Covid-19 and the current position in Wales, discussion focused on:
 - Vaccination,
 - Transmission of virus in Wales,
 - Test, trace and protect,
 - Critical care activities,
 - Testing,
 - Covid pressures on hospitals.
- 2.1 Reg Kilpatrick provided an update on the regulations and advised that the First Minister would be announcing that day a 4 level tier system, along with an updated Covid-19 plan which will be published next Monday.
- 2.2 Discussion focused on communication and messaging, and the NEDs asked whether the messaging was tested to ensure it was appropriate to the audience. Andrew Goodall explained that all messaging was tested within public groups.

3. Finance Update

3.1 Gawain Evans provided an update on month 7 in year management which focused on:

- Revenue forecast
- Capital forecast
- Position of current reserves

3.2 Andrew Jeffreys advised that Welsh Government has continued to allocate the remaining Covid-19 funding. Andrew further provided an update on the headlines of the UK Government Spending review and the Welsh Government response, which was published on 26 November. He also explained that his team are currently working on the Welsh Government Budget which will be published on 21 December.

4. Corporate Risk register

4.1 Clare Collett presented the Corporate Risk Register and advised that it had been informed by discussions at the Finance Sub Committee and has been specifically updated to reflect any changes in risk due to Covid 19. The Risk Register was also circulated to the Executive Committee on 8 December.

4.2 Clare highlighted the key risks and any changes within the register since it last came to the Welsh Government Board in June. Discussion focussed on the well-being of staff, and the Permanent Secretary explained that an excellent campaign has been launched within the Welsh Government called 'Let's stay connected'. As part of the campaign we would be providing staff with ideas to look out for themselves and each other this winter, including some of the informal ways to get involved and connect with colleagues over the festive period.

5. Annual Board Review Self Assessment Questionnaire – Results

5.1 Sharon Cross explained that the purpose of the Board Review is to ensure that it continues to operate efficiently and effectively. Feedback was received from the Board's Executive members, Non-Executive members, the Shadow Board, and the Trade Union Side.

5.2 Sharon summarised the findings and explained that overall, board members were positive in their feedback about the Welsh Government Board. Particular strengths highlighted by members related to the Board's inclusive

and collaborative atmosphere and effective approach to scrutiny and challenge.

5.3 All members felt that Welsh Government Board meetings were inclusive and an open forum for discussion and debate where they were encouraged and empowered to contribute. Members reported that the challenge function provided by the Welsh Government Board was a particular strength. The level of scrutiny and challenge brought by the NEDs was thought to be extremely valuable, particularly due to the external perspective they contribute. The work which the NEDs did outside Board meetings was also valued highly.

5.4 Discussion focused on the diversity aspect of the Welsh Government Board, and Andrew Jeffreys, as Board Equality Champion, explained that he was exploring ways of improving diversity in decision making forums within the Welsh Government.

Action 1: The Permanent Secretary felt that when appointing board members, the Welsh Government Board should adopt the same framework used for Public Bodies Boards and Committees.

5.5 There was mixed feedback on investment in training and development and some members felt that Covid-19 had made it more difficult to access opportunities. The Permanent Secretary advised that the training offer available to Welsh Government staff would be shared with all board members. NEDs suggested that as part of their development they would like to meet with their counterparts in the Scottish Government to share learning. A suggestion was made that an additional session with the NEDs could also be helpful.

Action 2: Provide contact details to the NEDs of their counterparts in the Scotland Government so that they can agree to meet to share ideas and lessons.

Action 3: Explore with the NEDs if they would like an additional session to discuss the outcomes and suggestions from the annual Board review self-assessment questionnaire.

Actions arising at Board meeting

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LATEST POSITION

When appointing Board members the Welsh Government Board should adopt the same framework used by Public Bodies.	Peter Kennedy/ Secretariat	On-going
Provide contact details to the NEDs of their counterparts in the Scotland Government so that they can agree to meet to share ideas and lessons.	Secretariat	Awaiting reply from Scottish Government
Explore with the NEDs if they would like an additional session to discuss the outcomes and suggestions from the annual Board review self-assessment questionnaire.	Secretariat /KAS	Session not required. Action plan will be shared electronically.