



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## Minutes of the Board Meeting, 26 March 2021

<b>Present:</b>	<b>In attendance:</b>
Meena Upadhyaya Ellen Donovan Gareth Lynn Jeff Farrar Andrew Goodall Andrew Slade Tracey Burke Reg Kilpatrick Peter Kennedy Andrew Jeffreys Natalie Pearson Gawain Evans David Richards Helen Lentle Robin Bradfield Fran Hill	Glyn Jones Tayyeba Roula Paul Sullivan Joanne Glenn Claire Bennet Hannah Fisher  <b>Secretariat:</b> Charmain Watts
<b>Apologies:</b> Shan Morgan Des Clifford	

### 1. Welcome

1.1 Tracey Burke explained that she would chair the Welsh Government Board today on behalf of the Permanent Secretary. Tracey welcomed all attendees to the meeting and provided an update on preparations for the Senedd Elections this year.

1.2 The Board agreed the minutes from the last meeting.

## **2. Covid 19 update**

2.1 Andrew Goodall updated the Welsh Government Board on the latest developments on Covid-19 and the current position in Wales, discussion focused on:

- Current Covid 19 rates in Wales,
- Vaccination numbers,
- Critical care activities,
- Covid pressures on hospitals,
- Covid 19 rates in other countries.

2.1 Andrew explained that the health and care services pandemic recovery plan had been published on Monday. The plan was well received and will focus on longer term actions.

2.2 Ellen Donovan asked whether the achievements from the last Government term had been captured. The Chair proposed an item on this at a future Board.

**ACTION 1:** Include an agenda item at a future Board on achievements from the last Government term.

2.3 Meena Upadhyaya asked how the Welsh Government were encouraging hesitant people to get vaccinated. Andrew explained that raising awareness and public campaigns were key to getting people vaccinated, along with presenting evidence that the vaccine is effective. He also highlighted the importance of listening to people's concerns and advised that there are community leaders helping to support the vaccination rollout in communities.

## **3. Workforce, Workplace and Digital Strategy**

- 3.1 Natalie Pearson, Tayyeba Roula and Paul Sullivan talked through slides and updated the Board on each of the strategies.
- 3.2 Natalie explained that the focus of the discussion will be around what kind of workforce, workplaces and digital tools do we need to help take us from crisis transition through to the exemplar organisation we want to be for the future.
- 3.3 Natalie's Workforce strategy update focused on:
- Our goals
  - Engaging staff
  - Refining our Workforce Strategy Principles
  - Our Delivery Priorities
  - Leadership, Performance & Development
  - New Ways of Working
- 3.4 Tayyeba Roula's Digital Strategy update focused on:
- Current experiences
  - Future digital facts
  - Future Digital Vision and Principles
  - Future Digital high level roadmap
  - Future digital ask
- 3.5 Paul's update focused on the development of the future workplace strategy 2020-2030, he explained the need to re-evaluate our organisational model and long-term strategy for future ways of working and future of our estate and discussed the key themes which included:
- Multi-location/blended working
  - Environmental impact- decarbonisation and biodiversity
  - Dispersed presence
  - Economic regeneration/social value
  - Collaboration and space sharing
  - Re-purposed workspace
  - Workplace wellbeing
  - Efficiency, Performance and Affordability
- 3.6 Jeff Farrar commented on the importance of strong Governance to ensure this piece of work, which was very wide ranging, is successfully delivered. The Board agreed and welcomed feedback on this from the Non-Executive Directors.

3.7 Glyn Jones agreed and explained it would take all departments in the organisation to help deliver this piece of work, the Executive Committee recently agreed that the DDAT Directorate work with the Centre for Digital Public Services to develop a programme of digital leadership training within Welsh Government.

3.8 The Board discusses resourcing and funding and Andrew Jeffreys explained that this would need to be raised with the future Finance Minister as part of wider budgetary discussions. The Board asked for an update on this.

**ACTION 2:** An update to be provided to the board on the resource funding for the Digital Strategy work.

#### **4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion update.**

4.1 Andrew Jeffreys explained that on 2 March, the Welsh Government published its Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2026 together with a Delivery Plan. The Strategy sets out an approach focusing on three themes:

- Increasing diversity by addressing in particular the underrepresentation of disabled people and people from ethnic minority communities at all levels of the organisation and the underrepresentation of women in senior roles,
- Identifying and removing barriers,
- Supporting staff from all backgrounds to reach their potential, creating equality of opportunity for all

4.2 Jo Glenn explained that the strategy contains new flow targets which are ambitious and send out a message that we are serious about increasing the diversity of our staff.

4.3 The Board discussed the targets further and agreed it was important that they were ambitious. Jeff Farrar advised that performance management without using targets can also be successful.

4.4 Jo also explained that a new reverse mentoring programme for 2021 had been launched and they are keen to have as many Senior Civil Servant mentees as possible. She also explained that work to implement the social model of disability is continuing and a separate update will be provided at a

future Board meeting.

4.5 Andrew asked whether Board would be content to hold a regular discussion on race equality which is separate to the general updates on equality, diversity and inclusion. The Board welcomed this.

4.6 Andrew explained that as part of the strategy a commitment has been made to introduce non-executive roles on our leadership and decision making boards and open them to staff and stakeholders to ensure greater diversity in our decision making processes. This will be piloted via a shadow board with membership from under-represented groups with the intention of learning lessons on how to improve the diversity of our decision making fora. The Board is asked to feed in views on how this could work. The Board is also asked to analyse its own diversity and put steps in place to improve this where needed.

**ACTION 3** – Board members to feedback views on how a shadow Board could work.

**ACTION 4** – Remuneration Committee to consider diversity benchmarks, analyse the diversity of the Board and feedback ideas on how to improve this.

## **5. Race Equality Action Plan update**

5.1 Claire Bennet provided the board with an update on progress to create a Race Equality Action Plan and the work of the steering group.

5.2 Clare explained that the action plan had been published this week and highlighted some of the challenges to the Board. Clare further explained that this process has led to a clear set of principles which will ground the Plan. These principles are:

- Co-construction,
- Anti-racism,
- Closing the implementation gap.

5.3 Clare provided the background to the development of the plan and explained that it is based on the findings from a rapid evidence review undertaken by the Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) who have engaged with subject experts, including academics from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds in Wales and beyond; and on community

engagement led by grassroots organisations which the Welsh Government had funded to undertake this work.

5.4 Clare explained that as an organisation, it will be important that the theme of leadership and representation within the plan is considered and implemented for the benefit of all staff. This should happen alongside consideration of the findings of the internal “Running against the Wind” report and the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy.

5.5 Clare advised that the plan has organisational and external facing implications for the Welsh Government and the paper presented illustrated both. Within the Plan we commit to become an exemplar workplace that reflects our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population and ensure fair and open recruitment to our decision making bodies. Another key issue was how we monitored progress, held people to account for progress – or the lack of it – and ensure that attention remained on these issues.

5.6 The Board highlighted the seriousness and importance of this work and thanked Clare and all of her team for their huge efforts.

## **6. Finance Update**

6.1 Gawain Evans provided an update on forecasts submitted by Welsh Government Heads of Finance as at 24 March. The update focused on:

- Revenue forecast
- Capital forecast
- Position of current reserves

6.2 Andrew Jeffreys provided an update on the Welsh Government budget which was published on 2 March, the day before the UK Government published their budget on 3 March. Andrew explained funding allocated to Wales has been increased and he talked through slides which focused on prospects for public funding in Wales.

## **7. Any other business**

7.1 Ellen Donovan raised some questions around accountability for any major health and safety infrastructure incidents. The board agreed that this be discussed in more detail at a future board.

**ACTION 5:** Health and safety and the process around infrastructure incidents to be discussed at a future board meeting.

