



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Minutes of the Board Meeting, 5 February 2021

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 Jeffreys Natalie Pearson Gawain Evans David Richards Helen Lentle Robin Bradfield	Sharon Cross Helen McFarlane Secretariat: Charmain Watts
Apologies: Charlotte Thomas	

1. Welcome

1.1 The Permanent Secretary welcomed all attendees to the Welsh Government Board and provided an update on preparations for the Senedd Elections this year.

1.2 The Board agreed the minutes from the last meeting.

2. Director General updates

2.1 Reg Kilpatrick updated the Board on the current position of the ECC(W), the 21 day review (including changes to the regulation) and work around international travel regulations. He referred to the alert level document and advised that work was ongoing in developing a National Strategy that will be announced during the next review.

2.2 Andrew Goodall updated the Welsh Government Board on the latest developments on Covid-19 and the current position in Wales, the update focused on transmission of virus, Covid pressures on hospitals, critical care activities and vaccination.

2.1 The Non-Executive Directors asked for further assurance on:

- Staffing of NHS and in particular nurses. Andrew Goodall explained the plans in place to ensure appropriate recruitment of future staff, this included international recruitment and technology and digital work.
- How we measure public mood and opinion. Andrew Goodall explained that a focus group meets every week and evidence from those groups are taken into account when decisions are made by the First Minister around changes to regulation.
- Vaccine supply - Andrew Goodall explained that latest figures will show that Wales has vaccinated a larger proportion of the total population than any other part of the UK. He also stipulated that this isn't a race between governments.
- Future working practices – The Board agreed that the diversity in opinion about returning to the workplace and working remotely will need to be managed carefully.
- Is there a low uptake of vaccine in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in Wales as reported in England? Andrew Goodall explained that our numbers are smaller therefore it's more difficult to understand the trend, he advised that we have community leaders who are helping to support the vaccination rollout in communities.

- 2.2 Tracey Burke's update to the Board focused on education and the work around re-opening of schools, housing, homelessness and work with Local Authorities. Tracey further advised that the Minister for Education will announce today that schools will begin a phased return for foundation phase learners, from 22 February.
- 2.3 The NEDs asked what support is available to support children to settle back into a routine and catch up on learning. Tracey explained that additional teachers have been sought to allow catch up learning, also smaller groups will return to the classroom to ensure children did not feel overwhelmed.
- 2.4 Andrew Slade's update focused on current key areas of work, including: impacts on businesses and retailers due to the pandemic, higher education, transport and an explanation of new functions following EU exit. Andrew also advised the Board of future work including: longer term work around the pandemic, the economic response, and work around Climate Change.
- 2.5 Des Clifford provided an update on the EU exit and referred to the treaty that was agreed on Christmas Eve, he advised that a paper 'The new relationship with EU: What it means for Wales' is currently being drafted which he will share with Board. Des further explained the impact of EU Exit for Wales including future funding.

Action 1: Circulate the paper 'The new relationship with EU: What it means for Wales' to the Board

- 2.6 Des also provided an update on the latest position on preparations for the Senedd election, the work underway and the governance arrangements in place. He explained that the Senedd election is due to take place on 6 May, although a Bill is being introduced in the Senedd to allow postponement for up to 6 months if the pandemic does not allow an election to be held safely in May. The NEDs asked how decisions will be taken on the pandemic during pre-election period, in particular officials working with Ministers. Des explained the process.
- 2.7 The Board briefly discussed the Programme for Government but agreed that a more detailed discussion should be taken forward with NEDs outside of this meeting.

3. Finance Update

- 3.1 Gawain Evans provided an update on month 8 in year management which focused on:
- Revenue forecast
 - Capital forecast
 - Position of current reserves
- 3.2 Andrew Jeffreys provided an update on the Welsh Government budget. The Final Budget will be published on 2 March, the day before the UK Government will publish their budget on 3 March. Work on allocations to be made in the Final Budget is being pulled together and will be presented at Cabinet on 22 February.
- 3.3 The NEDs asked how financial decisions will be managed during the pre-election period. Andrew Jeffreys advised that decisions needed to be made before the pre-election period.

4. People Survey Results

- 4.1 Natalie Pearson and Sharon Cross provided an overview of the People Survey results which was carried out in October 2020.
- 4.2 Natalie explained that in the main, the results were extremely positive, nearly all questions have improved since the Snapshot Survey carried out in March 2020 and we saw major improvements in a number of key themes. Performance has also improved against the wider Civil Service and we are performing above the benchmark for of core questions.
- 4.3 The Board were pleased with the positive results and agreed that they should act as a platform for action to take further improvements.

Action 2: An agenda item to be included at the next Board on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion.

Actions arising at Board meeting

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	LATEST POSITION
Action 1: Circulate the paper 'The new relationship with EU: What it means for Wales' to the Board.	Secretariat	Closed
Action 2: An agenda item to be included at the next Board on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion.	Secretariat	Closed