

# Wales Office

## Departmental Board

### Minutes of meeting

Wednesday 2 March 2016

13:00 – 15:00

Gwydyr House

*A joint Committee of:  
Wales Office Ministers, officials  
and Non-Executive Directors*

*Objective:*

**Attendees:** *Chair  
Board Secretariat  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (HoC)  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (HoL)  
Director  
Principal Private Secretary  
Head of Policy  
Deputy Director, Head of Communications  
Deputy Director, Head of Constitution & Corporate Services  
Head of Finance & Corporate Services  
Lead Non-Executive Director  
Non-Executive Director*

**Documents:** *Agenda  
Minutes and Actions from previous meeting  
Business Plan  
Strategic Risk Register  
Wales Office Post Spending Review 2015  
Communications Plan  
Governance arrangements  
Departmental Work Programme*

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#### 1.0 Opening of meeting

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and confirmed that this meeting now integrates the previous Strategy Board. The new Head of Policy introduced himself to the group.

#### 2.0 Minutes/Notes from previous meeting

Copies of the minutes and actions from the previous meeting were circulated to all attendees. The Chair confirmed with the group that all Actions from the previous meeting had been completed.

#### 3.0 Open Issues

- 3.1 The Deputy Director, Head of Constitution and Corporate Services confirmed that the amendments to the Business Plan had been completed and updated over 3 months.
- 3.2 The Board agreed to publish an equivalent Single Departmental Plan online. It was also agreed that divisional working plans should be in place.
- 3.3 The Board discussed how staff deliver and support Ministers within the Wales Office and it was highlighted that the paper 'Managing Business Engagement in the Wales Office' should be

discussed at a meeting with all three Ministers and the paper should be made available for the next Departmental Board.

- 3.4 The Principal Private Secretary provided a brief overview of the Strategic Risk Register. The Director confirmed to the Chair that Risks between separate teams are picked up in SMT meetings.
- 3.5 The Chair pointed out that the Risk Register is only looked at in Departmental Board meetings, when it should be a working document, being updated regularly.
- 3.6 The Director confirmed that Ministers are informed if there is a significant change in Risk. The Chair highlighted that he feels that we are still in red territory on Risk 2, the Wales Bill.
- 3.7 The Lead Non-Executive Director highlighted that the Risk scores and Risk Descriptions need to be amended to tally with the ongoing risk assessment. The Director agreed that descriptions have now changed due to a shift in the work being delivered and the Chair agreed that both the Scores and Descriptions should be looked at.
- 3.8 The Chair moved the Board on to discuss the Post Spending Review paper and The Director gave a brief overview of the document and the future structure of the office. He highlighted that changes can be made from now until 2020 including being well connected, visible and more plugged in to other departments.
- 3.9 The Director confirmed that staff have been asked to come up with ideas of supportive change for the office.
- 3.10 The Deputy Director, Head of Communications proceeded to give a brief synopsis of the Communications Evaluation and how this is a measurement of what the Comms team is achieving.
- 3.11 The Chair highlighted that we should be more creative on tweets and media, along with reaching the National newspapers, making sure we are getting out to the key papers and media outlets.
- 3.12 The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (HoC) emphasised that local small papers have limited resources and wondered if there was anything we could do to make it easier for them to report. Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (HoL) also highlighted that the information needed tailoring to specific local papers.
- 3.13 The Chair confirmed it would be helpful to have a list of weekly/daily Welsh newspapers, with a column to show how many times we have made contact and what contact we've had in what context.
- 3.14 The Chair also believed that our current Press Cuttings were not picking up everything behind the Media Pay Walls and would like this to be looked into, to establish what is included in our subscription to Press Data.
- 3.15 The Lead Non-Executive Director summarised the Governance arrangements paper to the Board and no questions or issues were raised.
- 3.16 The Chair finalised proceedings by thanking The Lead Non-Executive Director for his work and dedication over the preceding Board meetings and wished him well in the future.

#### **4.0 Actions**

- 4.1 Subsequent to 3.4, the paper 'Managing Business Engagement at the Wales Office' should be discussed at a meeting with Ministers and be available at the next Departmental Board.
- 4.2 Subsequent to 3.8, the Risk Register scores and descriptions should be looked at to achieve a more accurate assessment.
- 4.3 Subsequent to 3.14, a list of weekly and daily Welsh newspapers should be provided, with columns confirming statistics of Wales Office's engagement with them and the context of what contact is made.
- 4.4 Subsequent to 3.15, the Wales Office subscription to Press Data is looked into to confirm what media it picks up and to make sure we do not miss stories behind Pay Walls.