

MINUTES OF WLGA MEETINGS

Purpose

1. For Executive Board Council members to review the draft minutes of the WLGA meetings specified.

Background

2. The draft minutes of the meetings listed below, are appended in date order:
 - 2.1 WLGA Council 27th March 2021
 - 2.2 WLGA Audit Committee 15th April 2021
 - 2.3 WLGA Management Sub-Committee 23rd April 2021

Recommendations

3. Members are asked to:

- 3.1 Note the draft minutes of the WLGA Council held 27th March 2021;**
- 3.2 Note the draft minutes of the WLGA Audit Committee held; and**
- 3.3 Note the draft minutes of the WLGA Management Sub-Committee held 23rd April 2021**

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2.1 WLGA Council

Draft Minutes 26th March 2021 via MS Teams



Present:

CLlr Nigel Daniels (Blaenau Gwent)
CLlr Dai Davies (Blaenau Gwent)
CLlr Huw David (Bridgend)
CLlr Cheryl Green (Bridgend)
CLlr Hywel Williams (Bridgend)
CLlr Philippa Marsden (Caerphilly)
CLlr Eluned Stenner (Caerphilly)
CLlr Nigel George (Caerphilly)
CLlr Huw Thomas (Cardiff)
CLlr Susan Elsmore (Cardiff)
CLlr Russell Goodway (Cardiff)
CLlr Sarah Merry (Cardiff)
CLlr Michael Michael (Cardiff)
CLlr Lynda Thorne (Cardiff)
CLlr Christopher Weaver (Cardiff)
CLlr Mair Stephens (Carmarthenshire)
CLlr Linda Evans (Carmarthenshire)
CLlr David M Jenkins (Carmarthenshire)
CLlr Ellen ap Gwynn (Ceredigion)
CLlr Sam Rowlands (Conwy)
CLlr Goronwy Edwards (Conwy)
CLlr Nigel Smith (Conwy)
CLlr Hugh Evans OBE (Denbighshire)
CLlr Julian Thompson-Hill (Denbighshire)
CLlr Derek Butler (Flintshire)
CLlr Michelle Perfect (Flintshire)
CLlr Dyfrig Siencyn (Gwynedd)
CLlr Dafydd Meurig (Gwynedd)
CLlr Llinos Medi Huws (Isle of Anglesey)
CLlr Ieuan Williams (Isle of Anglesey)
CLlr Lisa Mytton (Merthyr Tydfil)
CLlr Peter Fox OBE (Monmouthshire)
CLlr Robert Greenland (Monmouthshire)
CLlr Edward Latham (Neath Port Talbot)
CLlr Leanne Jones (Neath Port Talbot)
CLlr Carol Clement-Williams (Neath Port Talbot)
CLlr Jane Mudd (Newport)
CLlr Roger Jeavons (Newport)
CLlr Mark Spencer (Newport)
CLlr David Simpson (Pembrokeshire)
CLlr Paul Miller (Pembrokeshire)

CLlr Rosemarie Harris (Powys)
CLlr Aled Davies (Powys)
CLlr Matthew Dorrance (Powys)
CLlr Andrew Morgan (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
CLlr Robert Bevan (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
CLlr Rhys Lewis (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
CLlr Christina Leyshon (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
CLlr Maureen Webber (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
CLlr Rob Stewart (Swansea)
CLlr Andrea Lewis (Swansea)
CLlr Mary Sherwood (Swansea)
CLlr Mark Thomas (Swansea)
CLlr Richard Clark (Torfaen)
CLlr Neil Moore (Vale of Glamorgan)
CLlr Lis Burnett (Vale of Glamorgan)
CLlr Ben Gray (Vale of Glamorgan)
CLlr Mark Pritchard (Wrexham)
CLlr T Alan Edwards (Wrexham)

Apologies

CLlr Ian Roberts (Flintshire)
CLlr Carolyn Thomas (Flintshire)
CLlr Sean Morgan (Caerphilly)
CLlr David A Bithell (Wrexham)
CLlr Ray Quant MBE (Ceredigion)
CLlr Anthony Hunt (Torfaen)
CLlr Emlyn Dole (Carmarthenshire)
CLlr Clive Lloyd (Swansea)
CLlr Gareth Thomas (Gwynedd)

Associate Members

CLlr Peter Lewis MBE (North Wales Fire & Rescue)
CLlr Gareth Ratcliffe (Brecon Beacons National Park Authority)
CLlr Jan Curtice (Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue)

Other Members in attendance: CLlr Colin Mann (Caerphilly)

WLGA Officers

Dr Chris Llewelyn, Chief Executive
Naomi Alleyne, Director of Social Services & Housing
Dr Tim Peppin, Director of Regeneration & Sustainable Development
Daniel Hurford, Head of Policy (Improvement & Governance)
Sharon Davies, Head of Education
Graham Jones, Associate HR Adviser
Dilwyn Jones, Communications & Public Affairs Manager (Interim)
Stewart Blythe, Policy Officer (Social Services & Health)
Emily Griffiths, Senior Support Officer

Item 1. Welcome and apologies

- 1 The Presiding Officer welcomed members to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.
- 2 The Presiding Officer reminded Members of the simultaneous translation service for non-Welsh speakers. He noted that the next meeting will be via Zoom with integrated interpretation.
- 3 The Presiding Officer formally welcomed Cllr Ted Latham as the new Leader of Neath Port Talbot Council and Cllr Leanne Jones as the Deputy Leader and also Cllr Lisa Mytton as the new Leader of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.
- 4 The Presiding Officer noted that this is the final meeting of the WLGA Council before the Senedd Elections and mentioned that among Council members at least three Councillors are standing at the Senedd Elections, Cllr Peter Fox OBE, Cllr Sam Rowlands and Cllr Carolyn Thomas.

Item 2. Minutes of WLGA Meetings

- 5 Special Meeting on Diversity in Democracy held on the 5th of March 2021.
- 6 WLGA Council 27th of November 2020.
- 7 Resolved that:**
 - 7.1 Members approved both sets of minutes.**

Item 3. WLGA Leader's Update

- 8 Cllr Morgan noted the WLGA Council meeting comes a full year on from the first lockdown on the 23rd of March 2020. He said that the last 12 months has shown the strength of local government. Firstly, in terms of political leadership of local government but also in terms of chief officers and staff on the front line.

- 9 The Leader recalled that a year ago last week, he took part in a press conference with the Minister for Housing & Local Government, Julie James MS, around the fact local government may have had to consider reducing bin collections, amongst other services that may have had to stop. He also recalled attending a meeting with the First Minister on Shielding, something that local government had very little notice about.
- 10 The last 12 months have made Ministers and Welsh Government recognise the strength of local government. They understand that without the effort of local government staff over the last 12 months things could have been very different. He noted that there is a lot of expertise within local government that has helped influence policies and decisions made.
- 11 The Leader hopes that when Wales comes out of the pandemic, noting that Covid-19 will never go away, that new kind of understanding and relationship with the Welsh Government continues going forward, irrespective of the political mix in the Senedd.
- 12 As Councillors and portfolio holders Members have a role going forward in ensuring the voice and expertise of local government is clearly present in discussions.
- 13 The Leader noted that this is a time to reflect on the last 12 months and how local government has supported communities.

Item 4. WLGA Consultation responses

4a) Social Care White Paper: Re-balancing Care and Support

- 14 The Presiding Officer gave a short introduction as the WLGA Spokesperson for Health and Social Care and noted that the White Paper proposals had been discussed at a recent Leaders meeting to inform the WLGA consultation response. The White Paper proposes what could be significant reforms and the draft response highlights that there is too much focus placed on establishing or forming regional and national arrangements, rather than building on the strengths of the current system or addressing other significant challenges that impact on the sector.
- 15 The Director of Social Services & Housing introduced the report. The WLGA had some pre-discussions with the Deputy Minister, through Cabinet Members and Spokespeople, around what officials were considering to be included in a White Paper. While the WLGA has had some influence on the White Paper, the proposals there are from the Welsh Government.
- 16 There are three main proposals within the White Paper: Developing a national framework for commissioning care and support for children and adults aimed at rebalancing the market and improving quality; proposing to establish a National Office for Social Care, which would maintain an overview of the stability of the market but would also have responsibility for developing national framework; and establishing Regional Partnership Boards as corporal

legal entities in their own right, where they would have functions set out in the Social Service and Wellbeing Act but also the ability to employ staff, hold their own budgets and undertake significant commissioning.

- 17 The White Paper does set out some challenges that exist within the social care sector, many will recognise these challenges. The White Paper does not however address the two fundamental issues that are impacting on the sector at the moment, one around funding and the real need for long-term, sustainable funding settlement for social care over time and workforce and some of the core issues that affect social care staff in terms of, low wages, lack of structure for staff around career and opportunities and development in the sector.
- 18 The WLGA has discussed the proposals with Leaders, Cabinet Members and Spokespeople but also Association of Directors of Social Services, Social Care Wales and the Royal College of Nursing and are meeting with Care Inspectorate Wales.
- 19 The WLGA response notes that there is some benefit in developing national frameworks for commissioning but with flexibility, so councils are able to address some local issues. It highlights concerns around the role of a national office and its cost. Concerns are also highlighted about the proposals related RPBs and questions what governance model would be used.
- 20 Members will be aware that the response is due on 6th April and we are in the pre-election protocol period. WLGA assumes the outcome to the consultation will be presented to a new government to be taken forward. In discussions with the Spokespeople the WLGA hopes there can be early discussions with new Minister to highlight concerns within the response.
- 21 The Presiding Officer thanked Naomi and Stewart for their work in drafting the response, he also thanked Cllr Llinos Medi Huws and Cllr Susan Elsmore as Deputy Spokespeople and their input into discussions, including with the Deputy Minister.
- 22 Some Members noted that the work that local government have done over pandemic with different sectors has been fantastic, the Welsh Government should recognise that local delivery has worked very well. It is disappointing, given that local government is best placed to deliver some of these services locally, that Welsh Government seem to want to take the services further away from local government again.
- 23 Noted that it has been discussed in the Independent Group meeting and there are great concerns within Conwy County Borough Council and within the Independent Group.
- 24 It was noted that some Members do not want to see another CJC as a replacement for RPBs and it could add complexity of arrangements at the regional level with different regional groupings of CJs. Social services in essence are a local service for local people, there do not need to be new regional structures.

- 25 Cllr Mary Sherwood declared an interest as member of the Board of Trustees of Wagada.
- 26 Cllr Sherwood raised the point about what the consultation response says about the funding to pay the living wage and the importance of including similar recognition for all external contractors, including those in the third sector.
- 27 She noted that improving the income of the social care workforce is important in improving economy and living standards in Wales.
- 28 Cllr Medi noted that this work has moved a lot since the early meetings, the WLGA have had influence to get to this point, although there is still concern about the proposals. Cllr Medi Huws referred to the wider question in terms of PHW and how they fit in to social services and other local authority in the future, it is important to highlight what has not been included in the White Paper as well as commenting on the proposals made. She encouraged individual responses from local authorities and to also convey the same messages as the WLGA response.
- 29 Cllr Medi thanked Members, as this is her first experience after receiving the Deputy Spokesperson role, for listening to a North Wales voice when discussing matters like this as there is a big diversity and difference in delivering services.
- 30 The Presiding Officer noted that there is need for a similar investment to 21st Century Schools in social care. Much of the accommodation and care homes are outdated and aged, they need huge investment to be brought up to good standards. He suggested this is an issue that local government could discuss with Welsh Government as part of the national recovery as this would also create jobs in terms of construction sector and create investment in all of our communities. If Members are content this can be strengthened in the response.
- 31 **Resolved that:**
- 31.1 Members noted the contents of the report.**
- 31.2 Members are content with the changes proposed to strengthen the WLGA response.**

4b) Welsh Government Agriculture (Wales) Bill White Paper

- 32 The Presiding Officer noted that this response has been considered at depth by the WLGA Rural Forum on the 18th of March.
- 33 Cllr Peter Fox, Cllr Goronwy Edwards, Cllr Hugh Evans, Cllr Aled Davies and Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn declared an interest and left the meeting for this item.

- 34 Dr Chris Llewelyn introduced the report. He noted that he was conscious that groups have discussed paper and Members wanted to make comments at the end of the introduction.
- 35 Dr Chris Llewelyn noted that as a consequence of the UK leaving the European Union it means that the provision of the Common Agricultural Policy that has been in place for over 40 years will come to an end. The Welsh Government is consulting on arrangements that will come into place once the Common Agricultural Policy has come to an end.
- 36 The UK Government is committed to providing similar levels of support and funding to agriculture up until the end of the current parliamentary term which is 2024. The White Paper is looking at arrangements from 2024 onwards. It is looking at what is referred to as Pillar One payments, which is why some members have declared interest. Consultation focuses on the issues of sustainable farming and the rewards for farmers going forward in terms of supporting the environment, land management and supporting the supply chain. 28 Dr Chris Llewelyn notes that the WLGA response emphasises wider context of the impact that the changes will have on rural economies and the wider communities. WLGA response recognises important role that agriculture plays in the rural economy in sustaining rural farms, rural communities and the Welsh language.
- 37 He notes that the report also stresses the importance of the idea of a level playing field. The importance of food security is emphasised in the response, and in the context of the current pandemic is something Members will want to support. There is a strong focus on the economic and environmental impact and cultural benefits that farming provides for communities.
- 38 There is also to be a consultation on what will replace Pillar Two funding which supports wider community development., The WLGA expects there will be a consultation later in the year on that dimension. The WLGA response argues a complementary rural development programme is needed to support rural economies and communities.
- 39 Members noted that this paper on the whole is a good paper as a response. The Rural Forum as a group agreed the report focuses on the main issues.
- 40 Members agree that there is a need to strengthen and underline the impact that the cuts to subsidies to farmers will have on the rural community and rural economy in general. The need in the current situation with Brexit, having difficulties getting imports and exports of food, highlights the importance to have emphasis on growing and producing as much food as we can, whether that be meat, fruit and vegetables. The area around this part of legislation needs to be strengthened, to ensure that Wales is far more self-sustaining and that the supply chains from farms to shops are strengthened and develop that element of business to rural economy and economy in general. The danger of losing Pillar two is important, the rural economy is far broader than agriculture. Unfortunately, the new NDF does hinder

development in the countryside rural areas, this point needs to be made. In all the response was accepted and approved by Rural Forum.

- 41 Some Members noted that there were previous discussions at group meetings on whether rural farm members would have to declare an interest and leave the meeting. They noted that it was disappointing that these Members had to leave as they are living the life and would have given good input to the debate.
- 42 The loss of council owned small holdings was discussed at one of the group meetings and the fact that some of the funding to larger farms and landowners was enabling them to snap up the feeder/smaller farms for the ongoing rural farming sustainability. There is a need to be mindful of that going forward.
- 43 The Presiding Officer and WLGA Chief Executive noted that the contribution of some of the Members that had to leave has been reflected in the draft consultation response given the in-depth discussion at the WLGA Rural Forum meeting. It is a rare situation for so many Members to have leave the meeting having given declarations of interest. The WLGA will consider perhaps in future a presentation in a different setting, for the benefit of the wider Council.
- 44 Resolved that:**
 - 44.1 Members noted that contents of the report.**
 - 44.2 Members are content with the changes proposed to strengthen the WLGA response.**

4c) UK Government Subsidy Control: Designing a new approach for the UK

- 45 Cllr Rob Stewart, WLGA Spokesperson for Economic Development, Europe and Energy introduced the report.
- 45 He noted Members will be aware that we are at the tail end of the EU programmes and in that respect the State Aid regime that is in place will continue until programmes cease. The UK Government is consulting on plans to put in legislation for all of the UK that will apply after that period. The Consultation response needs to be submitted by the 31st of March.
- 45 The new regime will be of relevance to all LAs, in areas like the type of Business Support Grants that LAs have been giving out during Covid, Levelling-Up Fund, Community Regeneration Fund and the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 46 The key proposals in the document comply with other international commitments not to distort competition. Aid will be allowed if there are clear social, economic or environmental advantages and a value for money case can be made. The proposal is to have the equivalent of current de minimis

levels for State Aid rules, permitting up to £340,000 of grant to be given over three years. All public bodies will be required to publish awards above £500,000 and the system is essentially likely to be overseen by a body like the UK Competitions and Market Authority.

- 47 In terms of the WLGA response, the new regime must be at least as beneficial as the present arrangements and should not disadvantage Wales. There must be flexibility to enable local ambitions and priorities to be pursued. Any new reporting arrangements should be light-touch, responsibility of keeping track of aid received should lay with the businesses supported and not LAs. The response is asking for training to be provided to LA officers to understand the new regime. The response welcomes the consistency with previous de minimis arrangements. There is also a call for continued use of notified schemes.
- 48 The EU Regime included an assisted area map, identifying specific local areas where higher levels of subsidy could be provided due to socio-economic needs. The response suggests there should be a replacement UK regional aid map, to ensure future interventions continue to reflect the need across UK. Any such map should be co-designed with relevant devolved government and LG to assist with Levelling-up across the UK.

49 Resolved that:

49.1 Members noted contents of the report.

49.2 Members are in agreement with recommendations to response.

Item 5: WLGA Budget 2021-22 & Medium-Term Financial Plan

- 50 Dr Chris Llewelyn introduced the report given the absence of Cllr Anthony Hunt and the Director of Resources.
- 51 It was noted that the Draft WLGA Budget was discussed at the WLGA Executive Board in January and was approved and today comes to Members for ratification.
- 52 Noted that assumption for next year that the subscriptions will increase by 2% and the figure continues from next financial year within the medium-term plan, it is in line with lowest settlement increase that LAs get.
- 53 Going forward assuming 2% pay award for next year and subsequent years within medium-term financial plan, discussions are ongoing as we do not know what position will be.
- 54 The WLGA carry one vacancy a year, which is built into next year's budget and the medium-term financial plan.
- 55 In terms of premises expenditure, the assumption is an inflationary increase for next year, as Members will be aware the WLGA accommodation will

change, the lease on current accommodation is up in September. In the medium-term there will be savings.

56 Noted that the rest of the report goes into more detail on internal recharges, IT contracts and other service level agreements that the association has.

57 Recommendation is that WLGA Council approves the paper and proposed increase in subscriptions.

58 Resolved that:

58.1 Members note the content of the report.

58.2 Members approve the paper and proposed increase in subscriptions.

Item 6: WLGA Welsh Language Standards Report

59 The Head of Education introduced 2018-19 report. The report outlines the Welsh Language standards the WLGA as an organisation must comply with. The Welsh Language Standards that are relevant to WLGA are identified in four categories: Service Delivery, Policy Formation, Operational and Record keeping Standards. The report is relevant from 1st April 2018 to the end of March 2019.

60 Sharon notes that the report is similar to the previous year's report. One thing to note, if you look at responses to the basic skills in the report there are fewer members who have responded to the audit. It is important to note that the WLGA have not lost staff who are fluent in Welsh. The pandemic has happened and as we move forward there will be a need to push the Welsh Language in the association to move forward to the previous level of skills and to see if we can move staff to be more fluent in the language.

61 Cllr ap Gwynn noted that she did not see this report until it appeared here which is disappointing, as she is the Spokesperson.

62 Some Members wanted to draw attention to the level of staff who are fluent in Welsh. Members would ask the WLGA to look in more detail at appointments made, the WLGA are advertising in both languages, but need effort to increase the numbers of staff who are able to speak Welsh as some counties administrate through the medium of Welsh more than others and the contact with WLGA staff is important.

63 Dr Chris Llewelyn noted that the WLGA will arrange a meeting with Members to discuss ideas how the WLGA can resolve these Welsh Language problems.

64 Resolved that:

64.1 Members noted the contents of the report.

64.2 All Members are in agreement with report.

64.3 The WLGA to organise a meeting for Leaders to discuss how to progress issues.

Item 7: WLGA Pay Policy Statement

- 65 WLGA Senior Management Teams members left the meeting after declaring an interest.
- 66 Graham Jones, the WLGA's independent HR Adviser, introduced the report.
- 67 The statement proposes how the WLGA will take an approach to pay conditions for the next year in relation to all employees.
- 68 There are only three significant changes to the document. The WLGA has been accredited as a living wage employer, although the WLGA is a champion of social partnership, there were no formal agreements in place in relation to staff, there are now in place formal social partnership recognition and facilities agreements, Chief Digital Officer role hosted by the WLGA as a senior officer.
- 69 Cllr Philippa Marsden as WLGA Spokesperson on Workforce recommends supporting the document.

70 Resolved that:

70.1 Members noted contents of report.

70.2 All Members are in agreement to support the document.

Item 8: Closing Comments

- 71 The Presiding Officer noted that April 1st would mark the 25th Anniversary of the 22 unitary authorities in Wales coming into existence and of the WLGA. The full copy of the WLGA press release, issued 1st April, commemorating the event is below.
- 72 The Presiding Officer thanked the current Leader and past Leaders for their service and contribution on behalf of local government.
- 73 The Presiding Officer noted that given the past twelve months this is a time for recognition rather than celebration and acknowledge the contribution councils have made to communities, to the country, jobs created and saved, thousands of young people councils have educated and trained, the tens of thousands of the most vulnerable councils have cared for and housed and communities' councils have regenerated. The past year government and many in communities have turned to the councils and relied upon councils like never before.
- 74 The Presiding Officer noted that this is the last WLGA Council meeting before the Senedd elections. The next scheduled meeting of the WLGA Council would be the AGM on the 25th of June. He thanked all Members for their commitment and contributions during the past year and closed the meeting.

For reference - WLGA press release:

25 Mlyneddiant sefydlu'r 22 o awdurdodau lleol Cymru a Chymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru

Dydd Iau, 01 Ebrill 2021

Yn cyfarch Cyngor CLILC ar 25ain Mawrth, dywedodd y Cyngorydd Huw David (Penybont ar Ogwr), Llywydd CLILC:

"Mae hi'n 25 mlynedd yr wythnos hon ers sefydlu ein 22 o awdurdodau unedol a CLILC."

"Fel arfer, fe fydden ni wedi dathlu'r achlysur gyda rhyw fath o ddathliad. Ond ni fyddai hynny wedi bod yn briodol gan ein bod ni wedi nodi carreg filltir fwy lleddf a phwysicach, wrth nodi blwyddyn ers y clo cyntaf."

"Mewn cyfnod pan fo'n cymunedau a thrigolion ledled y wlad mewn gwewyr o achos y pandemig, dyma amser i gydnabod yn hytrach na dathlu."

Rydyn ni'n cydnabod y cyfraniad hollbwysig mae cynghorau wedi ei wneud i'n cymunedau a'n gwlad."

"Y cannoedd ar filoedd o swyddi y mae cynghorau wedi eu creu neu eu harbed."

"Y cenedlaethau a'r cannoedd ar filoedd o bobl ifanc sydd wedi cael eu haddysgu a'u hyfforddi."

"Y degau o filoedd o bobl fregus yn ein cymdeithas sydd wedi derbyn gofal neu wedi eu cartrefi gan ein cynghorau."

"Y cymunedau ar hyd a lled Cymru sydd wedi cael eu hadfywio."

"Y cannoedd o wasanaethau sydd wedi cael eu darparu gan gynghorau i bawb yn ein cymdeithas - pob un diwrnod, pob un blwyddyn am chwarter canrif."

"Hyd yn oed yn bwysicach, rydyn ni'n cydnabod ac yn rhoi diolch i'r ased mwyaf sydd gan llywodraeth leol: ei phobl. Cynghorwyr ac, yn arbennig, ein sawl miloedd o weithwyr cydwybodol, penigamp sydd eleni wedi mynd uwchlaw a thu hwnt i'r galw ac wedi bod ar reng flaen yr ymateb i'r argyfwng."

"Fe wnaeth ein cynghorau ail-flaenoriaethu ac ail-strwythuro gwasanaethau, ac adleoli miloedd o staff dros nos. Bu i'n cynghorau barhau i ymateb wrth i'r pandemig waethygu trwy'r gaeaf."

"Yn fwy nag erioed, mae'r llywodraeth a chymunedau wedi troi atom ac wedi dibynnu arnom ni. Heb ein gweithlu ardderchog, ni fyddai dim o hyn wedi bod yn bosib. Mae'n cynghorau wedi eu lleoli yn unigryw wrth galon ein cymunedau. Nhw yw'r porth cyntaf am gymorth i'r rhai mwyaf bregus neu'r rhai sydd angen cefnogaeth neu sicrwydd. Wrth ymateb i'r argyfwng, mae nhw wedi mwy nag arddangos gallu cynghorau i ymateb waeth beth fo eu maint, ac wedi atgyfnerthu safbwynt CLILC ar bwysigrwydd sybsidiaredd a lleoliaeth, gydag aelodau etholedig a'r gweithlu wedi eu gwreiddio yn eu cymunedau lleol."

"Wrth adlewyrchu ar 25 mlynedd o lywodraeth leol yng Nghymru, rydyn ni'n cydnabod ymroddiad ac arweiniad yr aelodau etholedig sydd wedi cynrychioli, gwasanaethu a chefnogi eu cymunedau trwy Gymru gyfan, a rydyn ni'n ymfalchïo ac yn talu teyrnged i'n gweithlu am eu tosturi, ymroddiad, proffesiynolrwydd, a'u gwasanaeth cyhoeddus yn enwedig yn ystod y 12 mis diwethaf - y cyfnod mwyaf heriol y mae'n cymunedau a'n gwlad wedi ei wynebu mewn cenedlaethau."

25 Year Anniversary of the establishment of Wales' 22 local authorities and the Welsh Local Government Association

Thursday, 01 April 2021

Addressing WLGA Council on 25th March, Councillor Huw David (Bridgend), WLGA Presiding Officer said:

"The 1st April 2021 marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of our 22 unitary authorities and the WLGA."

"Ordinarily, we would have marked this occasion with some celebration. However, that would not be appropriate given we marked a sombre, more significant anniversary of the lockdown last week."

"At a time when communities and residents across our nation are still suffering due to the pandemic, now is a time for recognition rather than celebration."

"We recognise the vital contribution councils have made to our communities and to our country."

"The hundreds of thousands of jobs councils have created or saved."

"The generations and hundreds of thousands of young people councils have educated and trained."

"The tens of thousands of the most vulnerable in our communities whom councils have cared for or have housed."

"The communities the length and breadth of Wales councils have regenerated."

"The several hundred services councils have provided to all in our society, every single day for each of those 25 years."

"Even more importantly, we recognise and give thanks to local government's greatest asset: its people. Councillors and, in particular, our many thousands of brilliant, hardworking staff who this year have gone above and beyond the call of duty and have been on the front line of the COVID response."

"Our councils reprioritised, restructured services and redeployed thousands of staff overnight. Councils have continued to react and respond as the pandemic worsened through the winter."

"Like never before, the government and our communities have turned to us and relied on us. Without our incredible workforce, none of this would have been possible. Our councils are uniquely placed at the heart of our communities. They are the first port of call for the most vulnerable or those in need of support or assurance. In responding to the crisis, they have amply demonstrated councils' ability to respond irrespective of scale and reaffirmed the WLGA's stance on the importance of subsidiarity and localism, with elected members and the workforce rooted in local communities."

"As we reflect on the past 25 years of Welsh local government, we recognise the commitment and leadership of the elected members who have represented, served and supported their communities across Wales and we are proud of and pay tribute to our workforce, for their compassion, dedication, professionalism and public service particularly during the past 12 months, the most challenging period our communities and country has faced in generations."

2.2 WLGA Audit Committee

Draft Minutes 15th April 2021

via MS Teams 10:00am – 11:30am



Chair: Cllr Linda Evans (Carmarthenshire)

Present: Cllr Christopher Weaver (Cardiff)
Cllr Carol Clement-Williams (Neath Port Talbot)

WLGA Officers: Dr Chris Llewelyn, Chief Executive
Jon Rae, Director of Resources
Daniel Hurford, Head of Policy
Naomi Alleyne, Director of Social Services & Housing
Lee Pitt, Democratic Services Officer
Gaynor Williams, Finance Officer
Martin Edwards, Finance Lead, Data Cymru
Elizabeth Jones, Finance Assistant, Data Cymru
Janet Davies, Administrative Support Officer (Minute Taker)

Others Present: Mr Harri Lloyd Davies, Bevan and Buckland LLP

Apologies: Cllr Rosemarie Harris (Powys)
Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill (Denbighshire)
Cllr Maureen Webber (Rhondda Cynon Taf)

Item 1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

1. The Chair, Councillor Linda Evans, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the WLGA Audit Committee and noted apologies as above.
2. Jon Rae suggested considering membership of the committee to ensure there is a quorum of members for each meeting. the suggestion is to review the constitution and possible have other members on standby, the constitution allows people to step in and deputise providing they are from the same political party.

Item 2 Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting 8th October 2020 and Matters Arising

3. Members reviewed the draft minutes of the WLGA Audit Committee meeting held 8th October 2020.

4. Resolved that:

- 4.1 The minutes of the WLGA Audit Committee, held 8th October 2020, were approved.

Item 3 WLGA External Audit Plan and Interim Audit Report

5. Harri Lloyd Davies, Bevan Buckland LLP, introduced the item and explained its purpose is to update members on the external auditor's proposed audit plan for the audit of the Welsh Local Government Association for the year ending 31 March 2021.
6. He noted three potential areas of significant risk this year:
- Revenue recognition (including inappropriate recognition of receipts received in an agency capacity)
 - Management override of controls – manipulation of accounts to make them look better than they are.
 - Insufficient recognition of dilapidation provision - in relation to the move from Local Government House
7. Additional areas of audit focus were also highlighted and will be monitored:
- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions on Going Concern
 - Recognition and disclosure of the pension liability and associated movements during the year
 - Recognition & recoverability of grant debtors
8. Harri explained the process and said Chris, as the WLGA Chief Executive and Jon as its Financial Officer, will make sure information provided is accurate and then the Auditors will give assurance to the Audit Committee that it has been done effectively. It was reported that the Interim Audit has already taken place and findings are also set out in Annex 1. The Final Audit will commence 28 June. Any changes will be reflected in the next report.
9. The Chair asked about the impact of the pandemic and potential impacts on the association. Harri reported he was confident the work would be completed and there were no areas of concerns. A concern would be a reduction in funding to the Association, which currently does not appear likely.
10. **Action: Interim Audit report to be shared with the Audit Committee.**

11. Resolved that:

11.1 Members discussed and agreed the Audit Plan and Interim Report.

Item 4 Accommodation Review Update – CONFIDENTIAL

12. Following the presentation of the report by the Director of Resources containing exempt information as defined in Paragraph 20.6.3 of the [WLGA Constitution](#) which is based on Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) it was:

13. Resolved that

13.1 Members noted the update.

Item 5 Review of Internal Finance Controls

14. Gaynor Williams introduced the report and explained work had been delayed due to the pandemic. Questionnaires have been issued to over 40 members of staff, not all have been returned yet, but the ones that have been analysed are very positive.

15. Resolved that:

15.1 Members noted the progress on the Review of Internal Finance Controls.

15.2 An updated report be presented to the Audit Committee in October 2021.

Item 6 Review of the WLGA Strategic Risk Register

16. Jon presented the updated WLGA Strategic Risk Register for consideration by members. He talked through each strategic risk and drew attention to the areas highlighted red in the annex. He noted all risks are considered by the Senior Management Team every quarter.

17. Jon reported that since the last meeting of the Committee, the impact of covid continues to shape the risk environment. However, a lot of effort has gone into the risk mitigations around engagement with Welsh Government, communications with elected members and WLGA staff, and our approach to business continuity. The

planning and arrangements in support of the moving of WLGA's office base is a risk which will be closely monitored and managed over the forthcoming period.

18. Daniel Hurford talked about effective governance and stated that this is a risk for all local authorities and organisations. He noted that in the new virtual world technology is vital. Currently Microsoft Teams does not allow for simultaneous translation in meetings which is of concern in the WLGA would wish to allow members to communicate in the language of their choice (in compliance with Welsh Language Standards). He also noted that the 'new normal' could impact on the association in relation to democratic arrangements, meeting structures, technology, meeting support and the constitution.

19. The Chair agreed how important it is for those attending meetings, to be able to speak in their language of choice.

20. Jon confirmed the meaning of I L O.

- I – IMPACT
- L – LIKELIHOOD
- O – OUTCOME SCORE

21. Chris noted that we have come a long way in the last 12 months in relation to remote working, but more needs to be done in the coming months. Until Teams support interpretation, the Association will use Teams and Zoom in parallel, to comply with Welsh Standards. It was confirmed that the Welsh Government and Welsh Language Commissioner have written on behalf of bodies in Wales to Microsoft and there has also been a petition. It was reported that the situation with Teams is an international issue.

22. Chris reported that the biggest and continued risk for the Association, is keeping the 22 councils in full membership and the effort and work that goes into that cannot be underestimated. Negotiating the settlement is also key as inevitably there are authorities who come bottom of the table and thus feel hard done by. He also noted the difficulty in balancing the need to review and identify risks and with it becoming too 'routine' and things can be missed.

23. Cllr Clement-Williams raised whether there is a process for staff to have risk put on the risk register and if they are and the request is refused, if there is a subsequent appeals process?

24. Chris and Jon confirmed that no reasonable request would be refused, and that staff are probably not aware they can do this, but regular all staff meetings are held every 3 weeks where staff are encouraged to raise any issue they have.

25. Cllr Clement-Williams suggested to make staff more aware of this, to maybe put 'risk' on agendas when having team meetings or maybe suggestion boxes. Jon noted the points raised and said they would be taken on board.

26. The Chair asked how the Business Continuity plan was being used and Jon confirmed that Graham Jones, the WLGA HR adviser, is using it to make assessments and has proved that it works as we are all working very well outside the office environment.

27. Resolved that:

27.1 Members noted and commented on the contents of the Strategic Risk Register and requested a further update at the 7 October 2021 Audit Committee meeting.

Item 7 Audit Committee Work Programme

28. Jon introduced the work programme and explained it had evolved since the committee's inception to include cyclical financial, risk and performance reporting but also to review specific areas focussing on key risk areas for the Association.

29. He noted that the proposals for the future work programme encompass the cyclical work but allows scope for specific, broader reviews are attached at Annex 1. The shaded items are 'out of synch' or delayed with their traditional cycle and need to be brought back in line by next April.

30. He reported that the forward work programme had been interrupted by the pandemic and explained the three highlighted areas in the Anne are out of kilter to what they should be, Jon confirmed the report would be presented at the October meeting.

31. Resolved that:

31.1 Members agreed the proposed work programme.

Item 8 Approach to Annual Report (Oral Item)

32. Jon noted that that this year would be a short municipal year and the Audit Committee Annual report that will be taken to the WLGA AGM in June will mention that there have been no Treasury Management or Data Protection reports but they were considered at the Audit Committee meeting in October 2020.

34. Action: Draft Audit Committee Annual Report to be circulated to Audit Committee members for approval in advance of its presentation to the Council AGM in June.

35. The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions to the meeting and asked that members please have alternatives from their political group on standby should they be unavailable to attend a meeting of the committee.

36. Date of next meeting – 7th October 2021

2.3 WLGA Management Sub-Committee

Draft Minutes Friday 23rd April 2021

10:00 to 11:30 via Zoom

Present:

Chair: WLGA Deputy Presiding Officer, Cllr J Mudd (Newport)

Cllr H David (Bridgend), WLGA Presiding Officer

Cllr Andrew Morgan (Rhondda Cynon Taf)

Cllr Philippa Marsden (Caerphilly)

Cllr H Evans OBE (Denbighshire)

Cllr Peter Fox OBE (Monmouthshire)

Cllr E Dole (Carmarthenshire)

Cllr R Quant MBE (Ceredigion)

Cllr Huw Thomas (Cardiff)

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr R Stewart (Swansea)

Cllr D Siencyn (Gwynedd)

Cllr Ian Roberts (Flintshire)

Cllr S Rowlands (Conwy)

WLGA Officers in Attendance:

Dr Chris Llewelyn, Chief Executive

Andrew Stephens, Executive Director, Data Cymru

Naomi Alleyne, Director of Social Services & Housing

Jon Rae, Director of Resources

Daniel Hurford, Head of Policy Improvement & Governance

Richard Dooner,

Lee Pitt, Democratic Services Officer



Item 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

1. The Presiding Officer had difficulty joining the meeting and the Deputy Presiding Officer, Cllr Jane Mudd chaired the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence were accepted and recorded as above.
3. The Chief Executive reported that both Cllr Stewart and Cllr Roberts, although absent from the meeting, had approved the Accommodation paper recommendations.

Item 2. WLGA's Future Accommodation Arrangements **CONFIDENTIAL**

4. Following the presentation of the report by the Director of Resources containing exempt information as defined in Paragraph 20.6.3 of the [WLGA Constitution](#) which is based on Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) it was:
5. **Resolved that**
 - 5.1 **Members noted the progress on arrangements for acquiring and moving to new accommodation space at One Canal Parade; and**
 - 5.2 **Members approved the draft Agreement for Lease.**

Item 3. Draft WLGA HR Policies: CONFIDENTIAL

6. Following the presentation of the report by Graham Jones, the WLGA's Independent HR Adviser, containing exempt information as defined in Paragraph 20.6.4 of the [WLGA Constitution](#) which is based on Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Association or its Member Authorities or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Association; it was:
7. **Resolved that**
 - 7.1 **Members approved the WLGA Early Retirement / Severance Scheme as set out.**
 - 7.2 **Members approves the WLGA Flexible Retirement Policy and Procedure as set out.**
 - 7.3 **Members approved the WLGA LGPS Employer's Discretionary Decisions Policy Statement as set out.**

Item 4. WLGA Consultation Response to Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill

8. Cllr Marsden introduced the report seeking approval for the proposed WLGA response to the consultation on the Social Partnership & Public Procurement (Wales) Bill. The bill seeks to strengthen and promote consistency in the Welsh system of social partnership, to deliver fair work outcomes, and to ensure socially responsible public procurement.
9. Cllr Marsden noted the WLGA response to the questions laid out are fair and that the proposed Bill was positive but could go further in terms of procurement. She asked that a cover letter and summary accompany the response, in addition, to the answering the questions asked would be more appropriate.
10. Jon confirmed that would happen and that comments were still be received from professional colleagues and networks in local authorities would be incorporated. He noted there was board support but some issue, for example 'what is fair work?' He noted that Bill looks like enabling legislation and more detail will come after in regulations and guidance.
11. Chris reported that about a year ago the Executive Board took the decision to support social partnership and that this is a flagship piece of legislation for the Welsh Government. Throughout the pandemic the Leader has joined the Shadow Social Partnership Council on behalf of the WLGA and Cllr Marsden has chaired the Schools Social Partnership Forum which has played a pivotal role between local authorities and teaching unions in managing the return to school after the various lockdowns. He noted that social partnership delivers better services and outcomes for service users who are able to input more effectively and those delivering services should be partners in decision being made. The WLGA has been a member of the WLGA Workforce Partnership Council for many years. The Bill takes the approach a step further. Leaders agreed last year in principle to support the Bill, but the detail will be important.
12. Cllr Marsden noted that the last year has demonstrated that all partners need to be around the table and the Bill will allow local authorities to exert their influence further.
13. Grahm noted that the WLGA has been a long-standing advocate of social partnership and welcome it as a start of a long journey.
14. Richard Dooner, Programme Manager WLGA, noted that at first glance a lot of what is proposed is already with local authorities' policies but acknowledge the detail was yet to be seen. He also mentioned the inter relation between

policies such as the Future Generations Act and Social Services & Wellbeing ACT and queries remain.

15. Chris confirmed that a cover letter would routinely accompany all WLGA consultations but will highlight the success of the last twelve months reflecting the long track record of local government and the WLGA working in social partnership. The Leader being member Shadow Social Partnership Council on behalf of the WLGA and Cllr Marsden's role chairing the Schools Social Partnership Forum and the important contribution they have made to the Covid response. Along with the work of local government generally during this time – including the provision of face coverings in schools and the wider procurement work with NHS Shared Services.

16. Resolved that:

16.1 Members noted the report and agreed to submit a cover letter

11:30 The Deputy Presiding officer closed the meeting.