

Minutes

WLGA Executive Board

27th January 2023

Via Teams

PRESENT:

WLGA Deputy Presiding Officer, Cllr Charlie McCoubrey (Conwy)
Cllr Andrew Morgan OBE (Rhondda Cynon Taf)
Cllr Bryan Davies (Ceredigion)
Cllr Darren Price (Carmarthenshire)
Cllr David Simpson (Pembrokeshire)
Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn (Gwynedd)
Cllr Geraint Thomas (Merthyr Tydfil)
Cllr Huw Thomas (Cardiff)
Cllr Ian Roberts (Flintshire)
Cllr Jason McLellan (Denbighshire)
Cllr Lis Burnett (Vale of Glamorgan)
Cllr Llinos Medi (Ynys Mon)
Cllr Mark Pritchard (Wrexham)
Cllr Mary Anne Brocklesby (Monmouthshire)
Cllr Stephen Thomas (Blaenau Gwent)
Cllr Steve Hunt (Neath Port Talbot)

Cllr Steve Bradwick (representing Fire & Rescue Services)

Substitution

Cllr David Hopkins (Swansea) (substitute for Cllr Rob Stewart)

Apologies

Cllr Huw David OBE (Bridgend, WLGA Presiding Officer
Cllr Rob Stewart (Swansea) WLGA Deputy Leader
Cllr Jane Mudd (Newport)

ALSO PRESENT: Chris Llewelyn, Jon Rae, Tim Peppin, Daniel Hurford, Karen Higgins, Dilwyn Jones, Jenny Lloyd, Leah Whitty, Lee Pitt, Nerys Hurford (interpreter).

Item 1: Welcome and Apologies

1. Apologies were noted as above.

Item 2: Minutes of previous WLGA meetings

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2. These were approved as a true and accurate record.
3. Management Sub-Committee accurate.

Item 3: WLGA Leader's & Spokespersons Update

4. Cllr Andrew Morgan updated members on the meetings with the Welsh Government and education trade unions to try to minimise the impact on learning. Pressure on NHS and social care – push the case. The settlement has been the focus of recent discussions. The settlement was positive and the improved capital funding welcome.
5. Cllr McLellan, WLGA Spokesperson for Social Justice. Spokespeople met with Jane Hutt MS and the Anti-Racist Wales Plan. This was followed by a meeting with the Minister and Equality Cabinet Members focussed on assisting authorities to implement the plan including training for councillors and officers. The case for a dedicated resource in the WLGA is being made.

Item 4: WLGA Response to the Provisional Settlement 2023-24

5. Cllr Andrew Morgan introduced the item in the absence of Cllr Hunt, commenting that the outcome was about as good as could realistically have been hoped for. Cllr Morgan noted details are needed on revenue grants as soon as possible and reported that Ministers are keen to avoid any double digit increases in Council Tax, but are also realistic and not expecting council tax to be frozen. Cllr Morgan added that year 2 in particular is going to be exceptionally difficult.
6. Cllr Morgan noted the lobbying around education and social services appears to have made a difference, particularly the direct conversations between Leaders and Ministers. Cllr Llinos Medi agreed it was a better settlement than hoped for but wanted to make clear that 2023-24 is likely to be easier than 2024-25 and it may be beneficial to make difficult decisions this coming financial year to make things easier for the following one.
7. Members appreciated Cllr Morgan and Cllr Hunt's Morgan lobbying of Ministers. Some members expressed concern regarding the fairness or otherwise of the funding formula. Views were expressed that the formula could be reformed to give greater prominence to poverty, with the acceptance that as with any formula changes, there will be some who miss out a lot alongside those who gain.
8. Cllr Morgan expressed support for the proposal that the formula could be considered by the WLGA's Finance Group (without Ministers), noting that it may be appropriate to consider some of the drivers rather than a full review, with agreement that any changes would need to be phased in over a few years. Cllr Morgan urged caution and suggested it may be necessary to scope any review and set out

implications including whether a review is required, and if it should be a partial review or a full review.

9. Jon Rae, Director of Finance, reported that Treasurers have already started looking at the medium term and are interested in working with Wales Fiscal Analysis on 2025-26 onwards. He echoed Cllr Morgan's comments regarding the formula and noted that should a fundamental review of the formula be undertaken, it could take four or five years. He noted the Minister had committed to updating the census data which should also assist with the deprivation data.

10. Resolved that:

Item 5: Industrial Action Update Confidential

11. This report and discussion is not for publication as it contains information of the description set out in the WLGA Constitution paragraph *'20.6.4...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'*.

12. Resolved that:

- 12.1 Members noted the Industrial Action update.

Item 6: Update on and Responses to Social Care Pressures

13. WLGA Health and Social Services spokesperson Cllr Medi updated members on recent communications and discussions between the WLGA Leader, WLGA Health and Social Services Spokesperson and Ministers on the pressures facing social care and the impact it is having on councils.
14. Members noted the wider picture particularly in primary care and noted there was scope for improvement and changes that mean people don't end going to hospital in the first place and the Welsh Government should be encouraged to innovate in this area. £30m fund being made available to support this? Would be happy for Cardiff to be a pilot area. All conversations about delivery of health services are focusing on more money than a structural reform. Naomi to work with Cllrs on letter to Minister. Discussions need to be around extra investments with regards to pilots.
15. Members noted that the ever-increasing cost of children and adult services are making them unsustainable. Members noted that any pilot schemes should come with extra investments. The lack of care home beds and domiciliary staff is impacting on the ability to move people out of hospitals. Members asked that underspend the Welsh Government has at the end of the financial year is direct to councils.
16. The Welsh Government's discussion paper *'Further, Faster' – Our mission to build an Integrated Community Care Service for Wales* was presented to the Care Action Committee earlier in the week and shared with members in advance of the meeting.

The paper acknowledges the huge challenges in the continued 'demand for, and supply of, health and social care' and the need to create an effective community care service in Wales.

17. Chris Llewelyn noted the paper touches on a lot of the issues mentioned by members and that early intervention and prevention have been highlighted for some time. In terms of the discussion paper, he noted no members will disagree with thinking behind the paper and the need for a more integrated approach to health and social care. Chris noted that £30m has been allocated from the health budget to support the work but that local government will be invited to co-invest a similar amount.
18. From a local government perspective, there are concerns about the lack of democratic accountability in the system and the workforce pressures which are particularly difficult in domiciliary care and the paper does not address these issues. He asked for early views from members in terms of taking the work forward. WLGA to send out follow up briefing and incorporate Members ideas in response to ministers. The paper will be discussed at the Care Action Committee on the 8th of February.
19. Members noted that local government needs to have input into the discussions on primary care funding and prevention and lead on the terms of reference for reform. The Minister has held back £30m from the health budget and it looks like local government will be invited to 'co-invest' a similar amount to access the funding.

Item 7: Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles (Taxis) Modernisation Agenda

20. Tim Peppin, Director of Regeneration and Sustainable Development introduced the item updating members on the proposed modernisation of the legislation, policies and practices which apply to the hackney carriage, and private hire (taxi) vehicle trade in Wales.
21. Cllr Morgan had discussions with the Deputy Minister Lee Waters on a voluntary agreement/approach that will limit the need for legislative change on how taxi licensing can be brought up to date. The Welsh Government is looking to organise workshops for Cabinet Members and officials to look at the detail.
22. Simon Wilkinson, Regulatory and Frontline Services Policy Officer, noted that councils have been working collectively and collaboratively over the last few years and it's likely the White Paper will be brought forward at the end of February.
23. Members noted that working with trade and union representatives was important going forward. It was noted that proposals will affect authorities differently and that a pan Wales approach to enforcement would be helpful. Cllr Thomas mentioned that Cardiff may only lift its cap on issuing new licenses for electric vehicles.

24. Resolved that:

- 21.1 Members noted the contents of the report;**
- 21.2 Members agreed that officers should continue engagement with the Welsh Government on the issue; and**
- 21.3 Members agreed to consider the need to arrange workshop sessions locally to help change and embed policies required by new legislation and guidance.**

Item 8: Any Other Business

- 5. No further business.**