

1 represented by Andrew Jones.
 2 You sent your apologies for that meeting. We can
 3 see that halfway down the page. But no doubt you will
 4 have been filled in by -- what took place during the
 5 course of the meeting and any recommendations that came
 6 out of it?
 7 **A.** Yes, I was on annual leave. Andrew Jones is my deputy.
 8 **Q.** Thank you.
 9 Can we go to page 4, please, of these meeting notes,
 10 and look at paragraph 5.2. Thank you.
 11 We can see that the:
 12 "CMO acknowledged [that] there were significant
 13 questions around the preparedness of NHS Wales to deal
 14 with a similar situation and to be able to manage
 15 an infected case at one of our acute hospitals for at
 16 least 24hrs. It was agreed that whilst a key work
 17 stream of strengthening the National Health Protection
 18 Service would look at an all-Wales system for dealing
 19 with high consequence infections more urgent action was
 20 necessary to provide reassurance."
 21 To what does this relate, please?
 22 **A.** So this relates to discussions that were taking place at
 23 the time about the development of a high-consequence
 24 infectious diseases unit in Wales.
 25 **Q.** Yes.

77

1 If we turn to page 2, please, we can see in the top
 2 third of the page that again you are the sponsoring
 3 executive, as the executive director of public health
 4 services, and medical director.
 5 Can you tell us when this group was established and
 6 what the purpose was for the group being brought into
 7 force?
 8 **A.** So the group was established in August 2018. The story
 9 behind it is we had conducted a review of our business
 10 continuity arrangements in 2016, and that review had
 11 recommended that we should bring together our business
 12 continuity and emergency planning arrangements under the
 13 leadership of a single executive. They were at that
 14 time under different executives within Public Health
 15 Wales.
 16 It also recommended that we should establish the
 17 role of the business continuity -- sorry, the
 18 executive -- the emergency planning and business
 19 continuity lead, the manager that I have already
 20 referred to.
 21 **Q.** Yes.
 22 **A.** So all of that was accepted in 2017, and in 2017 we
 23 brought -- started to bring these entities together, and
 24 that was finally completed and formalised in the first
 25 half of 2018.

79

1 **A.** At that time, it was necessary for any patient that had
 2 a high-consequence infectious disease to be transferred
 3 to a designated unit in England.
 4 **Q.** Yes. Right. Well, if we look at the bottom of this
 5 paragraph, we can see that action 23 was for the:
 6 "CMO to write to health boards, [Public Health
 7 Wales] and WAST requesting their plan/pathway for
 8 dealing with a high consequence infectious disease
 9 (deadline for [which was] March 2020)."
 10 Do you know whether or not that was done?
 11 **A.** So in January 2020, as it became clear to us in Public
 12 Health Wales the novel coronavirus represented a very
 13 serious threat, we as an organisation entered into
 14 discussions with Welsh Government and -- with one of our
 15 local health boards, to discuss how we could establish
 16 very quickly a high-consequence infectious disease unit
 17 at that hospital, in advance of and in readiness for
 18 potential patients if novel coronavirus came to Wales.
 19 **Q.** We can take that down now, please.
 20 I would like to look at the Emergency Planning and
 21 Business Continuity Group and look at the terms of
 22 reference for this group which are at INQ000089648.
 23 Thank you.
 24 We can see that's the front page there. These are
 25 the terms of reference.

78

1 **Q.** If we look at the bottom part of this page, we can see
 2 that under the heading "Updates and amendments" that
 3 there is a blank table. Has this document, these terms
 4 of reference, ever been updated or amended?
 5 **A.** I don't know the answer to that question to the current
 6 time.
 7 **Q.** All right. Well, if we need to establish the answer for
 8 that, then we will formally ask.
 9 Is it right that the Emergency Planning and Business
 10 Continuity Team was steered by the local resilience
 11 forum?
 12 **A.** The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team
 13 effectively provided the operational leadership for the
 14 implementation of the emergency preparedness planning
 15 and response arrangements of Public Health Wales, and
 16 that necessitated engagement with a wide range of
 17 partners, Welsh Government, local government, the health
 18 boards, the local resilience fora.
 19 **Q.** Well, let's look at the Emergency Planning and Business
 20 Continuity Work Plan, please, 2018 to 2020, which we can
 21 see at INQ000183523. Was this document the work plan
 22 for the group?
 23 **A.** It was.
 24 **Q.** You sponsored this document as well, didn't you?
 25 **A.** I did.

80