

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE - CABINET

*Cabinet will wish to note that these minutes, except those items in italics, will be published in week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021*

**The Welsh Government  
Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet  
10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (via Teams)**

Present: Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford MS  
Rebecca Evans MS  
Vaughan Gething MS  
Lesley Griffiths MS  
Julie James MS  
Eluned Morgan MS  
Jeremy Miles MS  
Ken Skates MS  
Jane Hutt MS

Hannah Blythyn MS  
Julie Morgan MS  
Lee Waters MS

Officials: Shan Morgan, Permanent Secretary  
Will Whiteley, Deputy Director Cabinet Division  
Toby Mason, Head of Strategic Communications  
Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser  
[Name Redacted] Cabinet Secretariat (minutes)  
[Name Redacted] Cabinet Secretariat  
Tracey Burke, Director General, Education and Public Services  
Andrew Goodall, Director General, Health  
Andrew Slade, Director General ESNR  
Reg Kilpatrick, Director General, COVID-19 Crisis Coordination  
Frank Atherton, CMO  
Chris Jones, Deputy CMO  
Rob Orford, Chief Scientific Adviser for Health  
Simon Brindle, Director, Recovery and Restart  
Piers Bisson, Director, European Transition, Constitution and Justice  
Andrew Jeffreys Director Treasury  
Helen Lentle, Director Legal Services  
Dylan Hughes, First Legislative Counsel  
Tom Smithson, Deputy Director Restart  
Liz Lalley, Deputy Director Recovery  
Jason Thomas, Director, Culture Sport and Tourism  
Rob Holt, Deputy Director Tourism and Major Events  
Neil Buffin, Senior Lawyer  
Terry Kowal, Senior Legislative Counsel  
[Name Redacted], Restart Social Policy  
[Name Redacted] Restart Impact Assessment  
[Name] Restart Economic Policy  
Nicky Guy, Deputy Director Culture and Sport  
Steffan Roberts, Deputy Director Tourism Development  
Bethan Bateman, Deputy Director Sustainable Futures (Monday only)

- 2.15 Cabinet confirmed that there should be a move to Alert Level 2 from 17<sup>th</sup> May, subject to the increase to six people meeting in a regulated setting.
- 2.16 In terms of events, the proposal was that those within Alert Level two could resume from 17<sup>th</sup> May with specific caps on numbers, which would be in-line with Scotland. A number of pilot events, such as an Eid celebration at Cardiff Castle, had been scheduled to take place that month.
- 2.17 The Government could also signal that, providing the transmission rates remained low, it was hoped that larger events could take place from 7<sup>th</sup> June, with caps on numbers in line with the approach in England.
- 2.18 Ministers agreed with the proposals but recognised the importance of indicating what could take place from 7<sup>th</sup> June, in terms of numbers, rather than making firm commitments at this stage. *There would be a need to consider how the decisions on what events could take place would be made and the implications for larger weddings.*
- 2.19 Cabinet also agreed that the Coronavirus Control Plan should be updated to ensure that the references to the Alert Levels reflected the current review. Allowing people to exercise with one other person during Alert Level 4 would also be a permanent change.
- 2.20 It was noted that the UK Government was in the process of reviewing the rules around social distancing and Cabinet would need to meet again later that week to consider the Welsh Government's response to such changes.
- 2.21 In terms of the return to non-essential travel, the UK Government had recently announced a traffic light system, which included ten countries and territories within a 'green list' where it was considered safe to travel without the need to quarantine on return. *However, Welsh public health officials had raised concerns about the inclusion of Portugal.* There would be a further meeting to discuss the Welsh Government's response the following day and a note of this meeting would be shared with Cabinet.
- 2.22 *Ministers discussed whether the Public Health (Protection from Eviction) (No2) (Wales) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 should be withdrawn in line with a move to Alert Level 2, given that there was likely to be a legal challenge about whether they still were proportionate. Cabinet concluded that while there were restrictions on extended households in place, then the Regulations would need to remain in force.*
- 2.23 *This decision would be subject to further consideration at the next review. In the meantime officials would need to ensure that the relevant support agencies were prepared to deal with the aftermath of the Regulations being withdrawn. There would also be a need to consider the recent report by the charity Shelter on evictions.*

- 3.4 The Chief Scientific Adviser for Health (CSA) confirmed that there were also concerns amongst the scientific community on the rapid spread of this variant *and the potential for any vaccine escape.*
- 3.5 Cabinet agreed that it was too soon to take any decisions on relaxing social distancing requirements and on Friday the First Minister should signal, at his press conference, that it was the Government's ambition to make such changes and possibly become more aligned with Scotland, but there was a need for further clarity on the spread of B.1.617.2 before any changes could be considered. *In the meantime the CMO and the CSA would need to provide Cabinet with a note on the spread of the Indian variant.*
- 3.6 *The paper suggested that the requirement for learners and staff to wear face coverings in classrooms could be lifted to mirror what was happening in England. However, Cabinet decided that this could not take place until there had been sufficient engagement with Local Government and the relevant Trades Unions. It was noted that the Minister for Housing and Local Government would discuss these potential changes with Local Authorities later that week, but engagement with the Unions would need to wait until a new Education Minister was in post.*
- 3.7 *Cabinet noted the UK Government had begun signalling potential changes to social distancing measures on public transport to respond to the increased demand. Further information would be provided to Ministers once the UK Government's position was known.*
- 3.8 *In terms of adult day care centres for people with disabilities, there was nothing specific within the Regulations to prevent them from opening, but many had closed at the start of the pandemic and had failed to re-open. The Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADSS) had been commissioned to consider the impact of COVID-19 on the sector. Ministers agreed that there would be a need to encourage ADSS to report as soon as possible and it was noted that the issue would be raised with Local Authority leaders later that week.*
- 3.9 Cabinet recognised the need to give the wedding sector sufficient notice as to when there would be an increase in the number of people that could attend receptions, but it would be difficult to commit to numbers at this stage, particularly given the news about the Indian variant of the virus.
- 3.10 *It was reported that officials were expecting to receive imminently information on the risk of transmission at wedding receptions, which would be shared with Ministers. Furthermore, the pilot events may provide further evidence on whether it was safe to increase numbers. There was also a need for further discussions with the sector.*
- 3.11 Therefore, it was agreed that the First Minister would signal on Friday that more evidence on transmission rates was required before larger receptions could take place, but this would be reviewed when the information was available.