

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE - CABINET
Cabinet will wish to note that these minutes, except those items in italics, will be published in week commencing 13th April 2020

The Welsh Government
Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet
2nd March 2020

Present: Rt. Hon. Mark Drakeford AM (Chair)

Rebecca Evans AM
Vaughan Gething AM
Lesley Griffiths AM
Julie James AM
Eluned Morgan AM
Ken Skates AM
Kirsty Williams AM
Jane Hutt AM
Hannah Blythyn AM
Julie Morgan AM
Dafydd Elis Thomas AM
Lee Waters AM

Shan Morgan, Permanent Secretary
Des Clifford, Director General Office of the First Minister
Will Whiteley, Head of Cabinet Division
Jane Runeckles, Special Adviser
Alex Bevan, Special Adviser
Dan Butler, Special Adviser
Andrew Johnson, Special Adviser
Clare Jenkins, Special Adviser
Mitch Theaker, Special Adviser
Tom Woodward, Special Adviser

Apologies: Jeremy Miles AM

Item 1: Coronavirus – Covid-19

- 1.1 The Minister for Health and Social Services provided Cabinet with an update on the Coronavirus virus (Covid-19).
- 1.2 The First Minister and Minister had attended a COBRA meeting that morning, chaired by the Prime Minister. The meetings would now take place twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays, and the Prime Minister would continue to chair the meeting on Mondays.
- 1.3 *The latest evidence showed that the mortality rate was closer to 1% of those infected, rather than 2-3% initially expected. While this was low, the virus was very contagious and so even a low mortality rate could be significant. The focus of*

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efforts remained on isolating and containing the virus, thereby preventing or delaying its spread.

- 1.4 The four UK Nations had agreed a UK Covid-19 Action Plan, which would be published at midday the following day. The Plan represented a sensible approach and had been led by the UK health services. The Minister would be visiting a hospital at the time of the launch and would be making an Oral Statement to the Senedd the same afternoon.
- 1.5 *An Emergency Bill was being prepared by the UK Government and the intention was for it to achieve Royal Assent by the end of March. The draft Bill had been improved with a number of unsatisfactory clauses removed, and would include powers for the Welsh Ministers to exercise. Some of these powers were extreme but may not be needed.*
- 1.6 *The four governments of the UK and the Chief Medical Officers were working together and information was being shared, however there was still room for improvement. The Minister for Health and Social Services had engaged with opposition spokespeople, particularly in relation to the proposed emergency legislation, and would continue to brief them.*
- 1.7 *A Welsh Media Plan was in place to provide public health information and reassurance to the public. The Minister and Chief Medical Officer would continue to provide weekly statements, and the media would be briefed regularly. The Minister would use existing engagements with the NHS to discuss Covid-19 planning.*
- 1.8 *The Emergency Co-ordination Centre (Wales) had been stepped up. An exercise with Local Resilience Fora was to be undertaken the following day to go through a number of scenarios, including the Reasonable Worst Case Scenario.*
- 1.9 *It was noted that Cabinet would need to consider business continuity arrangements to ensure the business of government could continue in a scenario where a number of Ministers were required to self-isolate or unavailable for a prolonged period of time.*
- 1.10 An ad hoc meeting of the Cabinet would take place on 4 March to discuss Covid-19, following which a Cabinet Sub-Group would be established to meet weekly. The core membership of the Sub-Group would include the First Minister, Minister for Health and Social Services, Minister for Housing and Local Government, and the Minister for Education. *The meeting would be open to all other Ministers and Deputy Ministers, and the membership would be kept under review.*

Sections 35 & 36

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Action points and outcomes from a meeting of Cabinet on 2nd March 2020

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE – Cabinet, Policy and Commercial in Confidence

Item	Action / Outcome	Outcome/ Deadline	Officials