

## **Llais Cymru - Board Meeting**

**Wednesday 26 March 2025**

**Venue: Future Inn, Hemingway Road, Cardiff, CF10 4AU**

Zoom Meeting

### **Members:**

Grace Quantock  
Alyson Thomas  
Bamidele Adenipekun  
Jack Evershed  
Karen Lewis  
Rajan Madhok  
Jason Smith

Deputy Chair  
Chief Executive  
Non-Executive  
Non-Executive  
Non-Executive  
Non-Executive  
Non-Executive

### **Attendees:**

Angela Mutlow  
Ben Eaton

Charysse Harper

Joanne Bolton  
Richard Bevan  
Kirsty Contreras-Stacey

Director of Operations  
Strategic Director of Organisational  
Strategy and Engagement  
Head of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and  
Wellbeing  
Strategic Director of Operations and  
Corporate Services  
Interim Board Secretary  
Governance Officer

### **Apologies:**

Medwin Hughes  
Mwoyo Makuto

Board Chair  
Associate Member

## Welcome, introductions

- 1.1 It was explained that the Chair had been unexpectedly called away and had made arrangements for the Deputy Chair to chair the Board Meeting. The Deputy Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and also welcomed all those who were joining the meeting online.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Medwin Hughes, Chair and Mwoyo Makuto, Associate Member.

## Declarations of Interest

- 2.0 No declarations of interest were made in relation to the items on the agenda.

## For decision and approval - Draft Annual Plan 2025/26

- 3.0 The Strategic Director of Organisational Strategy and Engagement presented the draft Annual Plan for 2025/2026 and the associated Integrated Impact Assessment, which had been completed.

It was explained that Llais was entering the second year of its Strategic Plan for 2024-2027. The draft annual plan aimed to enhance Llais's impact by focusing on actions that would respond to the matters of most importance to people living in all parts of Wales.

The plan sought to ensure that the work and resources of Llais were allocated to initiatives with the greatest potential for meaningful change.

The Strategic Director thanked the Board for their involvement and guidance in the development of the draft document. The draft annual plan outlined the detailed work programme for 2025-2026, which would include:

- prioritising community-driven initiatives, backed by strong evidence and insights from stakeholders.

- aligning strategically with our 3-year objectives aimed at achieving measurable and meaningful change in 2025-2026.
- explicit commitments to inclusivity and equity, supported by thorough impact assessments.
- A focus on delivering tangible outcomes for individuals and communities across Wales, guided by ongoing monitoring.

The Board approved the Annual Plan. It was confirmed that the Annual Plan and the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) would be published.

The objectives and initiatives of the plan would then be integrated into Llais governance and accountability processes, and our reporting systems and an update would be provided at the May 2025 Board meeting.

#### **For decision and approval – Llais Budget 2025/26**

- 4.0 The Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services confirmed that £8.295 million had been allocated to Llais from Welsh Government. A draft budget for 2025/26 was submitted to the Welsh Government which requested a £759K increase over the 2023/24 and 2024/25 baseline budgets.

In December 2024, the Welsh Government issued its draft budget, which provided an uplift for Llais, which responded to Llais's request for a review of its budget. Therefore, Welsh Government had allocated an uplifted budget of £8.295m (which had been adjusted for Superannuation Contributions Adjusted for Past Experience - SCAPE). However, it was noted that this uplifted budget still fell short of the original budget requested by £192,000.

As a result, the Executive Team had undertaken a detailed review of Llais's draft budget, exploring various options and scenarios and considering impact on delivery. This led to a reduction in certain expenditure areas to ensure that Llais remained able to deliver its operational plans while staying within the allocated budget from the Welsh Government.

The Board approved the proposed draft budget for 2025/2026.

## For decision and approval – Annual Equality Report 2024/25

- 5.0 The Chief Executive and the Head of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing confirmed that Llais must report on how we are meeting our specific equality duties by producing an annual equality monitoring report by the 31 March each year, and gave an overview of the draft report.

A decision had been made to report on the current year proactively rather than retrospectively to ensure that Llais was meeting its legal duties and responsibilities with less chance of crossover moving into the next iteration of our Strategic Equality Plan 2029-2033.

The Board approved the report and thanked Llais colleagues for their work in this important area. It was confirmed that the annual report would now be published.

## For decision and approval – Draft Board Assurance Framework 2025/26

- 6.0 The Interim Board Secretary thanked the Board and particularly the members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for their involvement in the development of the draft Board Assurance Framework.

An overview of the draft Board Assurance Framework was provided. It was explained that the Framework was designed to assist and enable the Board in taking assurance from within the organisation.

It would help make sure Llais is meeting its obligations and requirements, that it is fully aware of the risk of non-delivery of the 3-year strategy and annual plans, and that it can provide a strong basis to give assurance to its partners, Welsh Government, and the people of Wales.

It would also support the Board in its commitment to openness and transparency in all areas of its work.

The Board approved the draft Board Assurance Framework. It was confirmed that the first report against the framework would be provided at the May 2025 Board meeting and would be aligned to

the performance and risk reports relating to the implementation of the Annual Plan.

### **For decision and approval – Draft Risk Management Strategy and Policy**

- 7.0 The Interim Board Secretary explained that the Llais Board had adopted a risk management strategy in March 2023.

As part of the ongoing governance review work a full review of the risk management arrangements had been undertaken. This work was also aligned to the development of the Board Assurance Framework.

The Interim Board Secretary thanked the Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for their involvement and guidance on the development of the reviewed Risk Management Strategy.

The new approach would seek to fully embed the traditional risk management systems across the organisation. However, it would also consider increasingly adopting a strength-based approach to risk management, which would be further considered at a workshop later in 2025.

The Board approved the new Risk Management Strategy, and it was confirmed that arrangements would be made to undertake a final review and publish the documentation. Work would then be undertaken to promote it and implement it across Llais.

### **For decision and approval – Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS)**

- 8.0 The Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services provided an update on the progress with the Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS), which the Board had agreed could be utilised at the end of the financial year to further enable organisational change.

It was confirmed that 12 applications had been received and supported. Agreements were being drafted and sent out to applicants, who would then be asked to take legal advice prior to signing the agreements.

The Strategic Director of Operations and Corporate Services thanked the People Team for their support during this busy period and confirmed that a further organisational update would be provided when the scheme had again closed on the 31 March 2025.

### **Close meeting and date of the next meeting**

- 9.0 The meeting concluded with the Deputy Chair thanking all involved in preparing the papers and contributing to the Board meeting.

The Interim Board Secretary confirmed that the next meeting of the Board would be held on Wednesday 23 April 2025 at 9:30am, in the Orbit Centre, Merthyr Tydfil.

**The meeting closed 18:00pm**