



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE (OPEN SESSION) HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2026 IN THE CARDIFF MRD AND VIA TEAMS

Meeting started at 09:30

MEMBERS:

Jayne Beeslee	Non-Executive Director and Chair
Peter Curran	Non-Executive Director
Colin Dennis	Trust Board Chair

PRESCRIBED ATTENDEES:

Lee Brooks	Executive Director of Operations
Matthew Dugdale	Head of Commercial Development
Carl Kneeshaw	Director of People
Trish Mills	Director of Corporate Governance/Board Secretary
Hugh Parry	Trade Union Partner (Joined at Item 6)
Jonny Sammut	Director of Digital
Chris Turley	Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources
Liam Williams	Executive Director of Quality and Nursing

ATTENDEES:

Hugh Bennett	Assistant Director Commissioning and Performance
Julie Boalch	Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and Risk
James Fletcher	Head of Business Change and Benefits (Observing)
Sarah Harland	Corporate Governance Officer
Mark Harris	Assistant Director of Operations NEPTS (Item 5)
James Houston	Assistant Director for Planning and Transformation
Fflur Jones	Audit Wales
Osian Lloyd	Head of Internal Audit, NWSSP
Toni-Marie Norman	Business Manager (Observing)
Alex Payne	Corporate Governance Manager
Aiden Rave	Corporate Governance Institute (Observing, left at comfort break)
Ed Roberts	Assistant Director of Finance

APOLOGIES:

Bethan Evans	Non-Executive Director
Rachel Marsh	Executive Director of Strategy, Planning & Performance
Damon Turner	Trade Union Partner

OPENING ITEMS

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND QUORUM

- 1.1 Apologies from Bethan Evans, Rachel Marsh and Damon Turner were noted. It was also noted that Trade Union Representatives were in attendance virtually. Quorum was confirmed.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no other declarations recorded.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 18 NOVEMBER 2025

- 3.1 The minutes of the open meeting of the Finance and Performance Committee held on 18 November 2025 were received and approved.

4. ACTION LOG AND MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 The Action Log was received and discussed, as follows:

Action 51/25 Quality and Performance Management Framework (QPMF) Logic Benefits Map Hugh Bennett provided a simplified QPMF Logic Benefits Map, approved by Rachel, Liam and Trish, which was attached to the Action Log on publication of papers. The committee were satisfied with the information provided and the action was closed. *Update at meeting* Hugh explained that the revised benefits map has been simplified for committee use by replacing the previous complex "wiring diagram" with a clearer overview that highlights key inputs such as time, money and effort, alongside main activities, processes, and expected assurance mechanisms, while clarifying the framework's purpose and outcomes to better align with strategic intent and using acronyms to condense the information onto a single page.

Action 82/55 Finance report - Shift overruns cost analysis Members reviewed the financial implications of shift overruns for the Trust and agreed that an analysis of this matter would be included in the Finance Report at the upcoming Committee meeting in January 2026. *Update for January 2026 meeting.* Ed Roberts confirmed this will be included in the month 8 Finance Paper.

Action 85/25 Digital Reporting Jonny Sammut suggested a future deep-dive session on AI-driven cyber threats for the committee, given the fast-moving nature of these risks and the need for better understanding and questioning, which was supported by the Chair. *Update 28 November 2025*
This action has been transferred to the closed FPC given the sensitivities around cyber. The deep dive will be scheduled for the March FPC meeting.

4.1 HIGHLIGHT REPORT 18 NOVEMBER 2025

4.1.1 The Highlight Report from the meeting held on 18 November 2025 was noted.

ITEMS FOR ASSURANCE, DISCUSSION OR APPROVAL

5. OPERATIONS UPDATE – Q3 2025/26

The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.

- 5.1 Lee Brooks highlighted successful participation in the COVID Inquiry and Exercise Pegasus, operational challenges with handover delays, the first operational use of the Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) drone, rapid deployment of a patient text update solution, ongoing roster review, positive results from the Falls Desk trial, and smooth implementation of the revised Ambulance Performance Framework, with no patient safety incidents attributed to the model changes.
- 5.2 Peter Curran commended the Trust on the revised Ambulance Performance Framework launch, noted the drone's cross-agency benefits, questioned 45-minute release targets, and praised improved staff survey response rates. Lee Brooks and Jonny Sammut stressed the importance of teamwork and careful management to ensure drones are used appropriately and collaboratively across emergency services.
- 5.3 Colin Dennis asked about the progress towards recruiting 290 Specialist Operational Response Team (SORT) team members, their rostering, and their importance given the single HART team, to which Lee confirmed recruitment is ongoing, staff are regular rostered members with additional skills, and while valuable, SORT is not a substitute for HART; Colin also enquired about texting to landlines, with Lee explaining technical limitations are being addressed, and asked about advanced paramedic re-rostering, with Lee stating the aim is to have more Advanced Paramedic Practitioners (APPs) on rosters when needed, though rotational models add complexity.

6. **AMBULANCE CARE CAPACITY (NEPTS)**

The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.

- 6.1 The Quality, Patient Experience and Safety Committee (QUEST) asked this committee to take a deeper dive into the action underway to address persistent high demand for Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS), noting the resultant level of complaints relating to unmet patient needs. Within this context, the committee's discussion on NEPTS capacity confirmed that the service continues to operate within significant limitations, with demand regularly exceeding available and funded capacity.
- 6.2 In 2025, NEPTS completed 552,602 journeys. 184,901 journeys were cancelled. Of the total demand, 7.6% was cancelled by health boards and 5.1% was cancelled by service users. Capital Management Plan (CMP) cancellations amounted to 3.9%. Members noted the impact of reduced volunteer availability, longer journey distances, and increasingly complex patient requirements, all of which contribute to cancellations, delays and poor patient experience. These issues directly align with the concerns raised through Putting Things Right (PTR) and the QuEST action regarding unmet need and potential patient harm.
- 6.3 The committee reviewed internal actions already underway, including roster optimisation, efficiency improvements and closer monitoring of activity patterns. While these measures were recognised as necessary and appropriate, the committee emphasised that they will not fully bridge the gap between capacity and rising demand. As a result, the committee concluded that system level engagement, particularly with health boards and commissioners, remains essential. Ongoing discussions through the Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC) were highlighted as key to exploring eligibility criteria, funding arrangements and wider opportunities for service redesign.
- 6.4 Non-Executive Director triangulation confirmed that these points align with their own experiences, providing further assurance that the constraints and risks are well understood and that the actions being taken are proportionate.
- 6.5 In addressing the QuEST action directly, the committee confirmed that the organisation is taking reasonable and responsible steps to mitigate patient harm and improve the service. However, the committee acknowledged that, given current demand and capacity pressures, some level of poor patient experience is likely to continue. Trish Mills said they will ensure that the AAA report is comprehensive on this topic and suggested that the QuEST

action log should link to this discussion. Trish added that the AAA will be detailed enough to give QuEST the necessary assurance, and that Liam will be present at the meeting to support this, concluding that this approach should be sufficient.

- 6.6 Osian Lloyd confirmed that an internal audit was already in progress, noting that they were just starting the early stages of fieldwork, and that a visit with Mark Harris was arranged for that week. The resulting report would come to the committee once finalised

The Committee: Noted the information provided within the report and confirmed its assurance that the Trust is taking the necessary steps to address the position with regards to the demand and capacity issues in NEPTS.

7. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE AT MONTH 8, 2025/26

The papers for this item in relation to the financial performance at month 8, 2025/26 are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.

- 7.1 Ed Roberts delivered an overview of his presentation for the position at month 9 2025/26. The committee heard that the month 9 financial position shows a year-to-date revenue underspend of £180,000 and a monthly surplus of £246,000. Welsh Government's decision to fund the increase in the Welsh Risk Pool forecast improved the Trust's reported position and enabled acceleration of some expenditure that would otherwise have impacted next year. The Trust continues to forecast a break-even year-end, with the capital plan progressing well against a £32 million budget. Gross savings achieved are £6.492 million, exceeding the £6.362 million target, and payment performance remains strong at 98.4%. Members commended the strong financial management demonstrated by the Trust.
- 7.2 The Chair confirmed the month nine report would go to the Trust Board, and asked about the commercialisation savings line, specifically whether the forecasted £100k would remain at zero by year end. Ed confirmed that it would remain at zero. The Chair noted this was helpful for managing expectations and linked it to future financial sustainability work.

The Committee:

- 1. Noted and were assured in relation to the Month 8 revenue financial position and performance of the Trust as at 30 November 2025;**
- 2. Noted the delivery of the 2025/16 savings plan, and the context of this within the overall financial position of the Trust;**
- 3. Noted the capital programme for 2026/26; and**

4. Noted the Month 8 Welsh Government monitoring returns submission (as required by Welsh Government).

8. MONTHLY INTEGRATED QUALITY PERFORMANCE REPORT (MIQPR)

The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.

- 8.1 Hugh Bennett presented the MIQPR update for November/December 2025, adding clarification that the consultant close rate mentioned in the MIQPR report was not a Welsh Government target but a modelled position, correcting an error in the paper.
- 8.2 The MIQPR discussion centred on concerns about NHS 111 call abandonment rates, staff sickness absence and call answering performance against targets. Members highlighted the unusually high abandonment rate in December and questioned whether seasonal factors contributed to increased staff sickness, noting the absence of December data. The low percentage of calls answered within 60 seconds was also raised, with suggestions to include median and 95th percentile analysis for better context. In response, it was clarified that abandonment rates were linked to insufficient call handler capacity and rising demand, and that sickness absence typically increases in winter, with benchmarking showing rates in line with other ambulance sectors. Members that future reporting should consider more informative metrics, such as median and percentile measures, and that ongoing monitoring and engagement with commissioners would address capacity and performance issues.
- 8.3 The Chair asked about the purple dashboard marker for national reportable incidents and the status of the 999 Amber 1 median, seeking clarification on both. Liam clarified ongoing work on national reportable incidents and referenced the BTR recovery plan being overseen by QuEST Committee, while Hugh Bennett confirmed the 999 Amber 1 indicator would transition to new categories in the next report.
- 8.4 The committee took assurance that the MIQPR provides a consolidated, strategic view of performance across key areas and that agreed actions, such as reviewing KPIs, strengthening predictive analytics and enhancing reporting quality, are actively being progressed to improve oversight and decision-making.

The Committee: Considered the November/December 2025 Integrated Quality and Performance Report and the action being taken.

9. DIGITAL REPORTING

The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.

- 9.1 Jonny Sammut highlighted ongoing challenges with the Digital Team capacity and recruitment, the impact of market competitiveness on filling technical roles, and progress on AI governance and national digital initiatives; while also noting positive developments such as award recognition for the Albot virtual agent.
- 9.2 Members asked Jonny about specific risks to digital strategy from recruitment difficulties, whether there is increased staff attrition or poaching, and if hybrid working is affecting staff turnover. Jonny explained that the main risks are attracting specialist skills and maintaining delivery pace, and confirmed there is some loss of talent especially in higher banded roles. Jonny added that hybrid working is now standard for technical roles and not currently impacting turnover.
- 9.3 Peter asked if the lowlights in digital delivery are directly linked to the 26 vacancies, and whether these vacancies offer an opportunity to rethink future workforce needs given rapid changes in technology and AI. Jonny Sammut confirmed the lowlights are due to unfilled specialist roles, explained that current vacancies limit delivery pace but do not provide excess capacity, and described ongoing efforts to align future digital roles with evolving technology and organisational strategy.
- 9.4 Members noted the strong progress across digital delivery despite significant capacity and recruitment challenges, and welcomed the continued focus on governance, innovation and responsible implementation of emerging technologies.

The Committee: Acknowledged the contents of the papers and determined they provided assurance on the progress of the Digital Plan activities, IMTP commitments and CMT involvement of the Digital Directorate Teams.

10. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE REPORT

(Data and intelligence from the period of 1 October to 30 November 2025)

The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.

- 10.1 Jonny Sammut flagged that a missed Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for the Paxton ID card system is now being addressed with lessons learned. Disaster recovery testing schedules are in place with a full business

continuity review planned. A significant records management backlog is being managed as a potential corporate risk. An increase in reported data breaches reflects improved monitoring rather than more incidents. The Information Governance (IG) toolkit submission is on track for 100% completion with only CCTV compliance outstanding.

- 10.2 Members discussed concerns regarding declining Freedom of Information (FOI) compliance rates, with Peter questioning the reasons behind the drop and whether the figures represented specific data points over time, as well as what actions were being taken to address the issue and improve future compliance. Trish responded by clarifying that FOI compliance is challenging to measure consistently due to significant variation in the number and complexity of requests each month; some requests contain many questions, requiring extensive coordination across multiple directorates, which can slow response times. Trish emphasised that while the team is working to streamline processes and increase efficiency, complex multi-directorate requests, especially those involving the PTR and records teams, remain time-consuming. Trish also noted that exemptions are applied where possible, but redacting information is not included in the exemption calculation, and the statutory requirement to respond within 20 days is difficult to meet given current capacity increasing request volumes.
- 10.3 The committee encouraged exploring more assertive approaches to managing FOI requests and offered support for any changes needed to address the growing challenge.

The Committee: Considered the contents of the paper and were assured on the progress of the Trust's Information Governance arrangements and related specialist activities for Data Quality, Records Management, Freedom of Information requests and Information Security.

11.1 INTEGRATED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN (IMTP) PROGRESS REPORT, Q3 UPDATE

The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.

- 11.1.1 Hugh Bennett provided an overview of the Integrated Medium-Term Plan.
- 11.1.2 The Chair commented that the one-page summary of the RAG status was much easier to read, and asked Hugh specifically which elements of the strategic objectives are most at risk. Without the information to hand, Hugh advised that he would ensure that the position would be clearly articulated in the associated paper to be presented at the meeting of the Trust Board on 29 January 2026.

The Committee: Noted progress for quarter 3 IMTP deliverables (CMT & Directorate level reported deliverables).

11.2 INTEGRATED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN (IMTP) 26-29 DEVELOPMENT UPDATE, INCLUDING FINANCIAL PLAN 26-27

The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.

- 11.2.1 Hugh Bennett reported that development of the 2026-29 IMTP is on track for submission to Welsh Government on 31 March 2026 with a number of further touchpoints for the board in February and March. The financial year 2026-27 is expected to be the most financially challenging for the Trust in many years, with a maximum 1.11% uplift already offset by unavoidable pressures, including employers National Insurance and Welsh Risk Pool contributions. Further challenges include non-pay inflation, digital contract costs, cost pressures, and substantial savings targets requiring difficult investment and disinvestment decisions. A closed board session is scheduled for 29 January 2026 to address these issues.
- 11.2.2 Chris Turley outlined that the coming financial year is expected to be the most challenging he has experienced, with a maximum commissioner uplift of 1.11% that is not yet confirmed and, even if received, will be fully absorbed by the employer's NI shortfall and Welsh risk pool costs. This leaves an opening gap of £7 million before factoring in additional pressures, including the full-year impact of prior investments and the requirement to re-achieve around £2.5 million in non-recurrent savings, alongside potential new investments totalling a further £10–12 million.
- 11.2.3 Chris presented both best-case and worst-case scenarios, noting that even the best case does not achieve balance and the worst case would require around £20 million in savings, which he described as unachievable. The Trust will therefore undertake intensive work over the coming weeks through executive and board sessions to identify a realistic position, recognising that some desired investments may not be affordable. Chris also advised that if a balanced plan cannot be produced, an Accountable Officer letter may need to be issued to Welsh Government by 13 February. It was agreed that the role of the Finance and Performance Committee in budget development would be revisited after the upcoming board session to determine the level of further involvement required as the financial plan progresses.
- 11.2.4 Peter Curran expressed support for the transparent approach to financial planning, acknowledged the significant challenges ahead, and emphasised

confidence in the executive team's methodical process. Peter highlighted the importance of being clear about the implications of any disinvestment decisions, noted the tight timeline between the late February board development session and the March FPC meeting, and suggested that an additional session for scrutiny may be needed if proposals are not sufficiently developed by then. Peter reiterated the need for clarity on what will be stopped if new investments are made and offered support from the board and committee as needed.

11.2.5 Trish Mills said that after the upcoming board session, she and Chris would discuss possible touch points between the finance team and non-executive directors to ensure engagement and readiness for the board development session, especially given the tight timeline before the next FPC meeting. She suggested this approach might be easier to arrange and could be widened to include other non-executive directors if helpful.

11.2.6 Liam Williams emphasised that any savings at the scale being discussed will likely impact service delivery, patient experience, quality and safety, making alignment between the Finance & Performance Committee and the Quest Committee critical for assurance. Liam also noted that both 111 and NEPTS have commissioned capacity gaps affecting performance, and that wider system pressures (like handover delays in EMS) further reduce effectiveness. Liam cautioned that Health Board partners are facing similar financial pressures, which could worsen these issues for the organisation.

11.2.7 Members were assured on the transparent view and the executive team's methodical approach to preparation of the IMTP and budget for final approval at Board, notwithstanding the magnitude of the challenge ahead.

The Committee: Noted the progress reported to develop the 2026-29 IMTP.

12. FIRE SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT – JANUARY 2026

The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.

12.1 The Committee received the annual Fire Safety Compliance update, which outlined significant progress made across the WAST estate, including full compliance with statutory servicing requirements, improvements in fire marshal training and risk assessments, and ongoing challenges around monthly and weekly testing at smaller sites, while highlighting remaining actions and upcoming policy and audit updates.

- 12.2 Colin Dennis expressed concern that the Trust had been significantly behind on Fire Safety Compliance, noting the large number of sites without fire drills and the substantial improvement needed, and suggested that fire safety should be monitored more frequently than annually.
- 12.3 Members raised concerns that annual fire safety reporting might not be sufficient, given past non-compliance and the significant improvements still needed, and suggested more frequent monitoring. Chris Turley and Trish Mills proposed a pragmatic approach: instead of a full six-monthly report, an action was raised to add fire safety to the forward planner for a six-month check-in, using exception reporting to highlight any issues, to ensure ongoing committee assurance without overburdening resources. This approach was agreed by the committee.
- 12.4 Whilst there are always areas of future improvement, the committee took assurance that significant improvements in fire safety have been achieved over the past 12 months and since the previous (reasonable assurance) follow up audit.

The Committee:

- 1. Noted the update and progress made since the appointment of a more dedicated facilities team to progress with the improvement of fire safety compliance across all WAST sites;**
- 2. Noted the appointment of new Fire safety advisor, namely Thomas Carroll Group PLC; and**
- 3. Noted the changes made to the training of fire marshals through Thomas Carroll Group PLC**

13. ENVIRONMENT, DECARBONISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.

- 13.1 Ed Roberts provided an update on the decarbonisation and sustainability agenda, highlighting the current action plan, progress on capital investments such as electric vehicle infrastructure, challenges with rapid charging suppliers, and the need for additional resources to maintain momentum, noting that much of the work so far has relied on goodwill which is now exhausted.
- 13.2 Chris Turley emphasised that while significant progress has been made in decarbonisation over recent years, it has relied heavily on staff goodwill, which is now depleted. Chris stressed that future delivery will require proper resourcing, and if resources are not available, the organisation may

need to openly inform Welsh Government about what cannot be achieved, making clear the consequences and prioritisation decisions required.

- 13.3 Trish Mills echoed Chris's points, noting that the challenge of resourcing applies to multiple areas, not just decarbonisation, and highlighted the need for the Trust Board to consider its risk appetite as difficult decisions may be required about reducing or stopping activities that teams currently take pride in delivering at a high standard.
- 13.4 The committee took assurance that the Trust's decarbonisation work is progressing as planned, with key programmes (including the Strategic Delivery Plan refresh, Targeted Estates funded capital schemes, Electric Vehicle fleet rollout and charging-infrastructure developments) being actively managed, monitored, and advanced despite recognised resource and system challenges.

The Committee: Noted the update.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT AND BOARD ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK REPORT

The papers for this item are in the committee pack in IBabs and on the Trust's website, therefore detail of the content is not repeated here.

- 14.1 The committee received the Risk and Board Assurance Framework report noting that Risk 623 (*Failure to comply with Data Protection Legislation*) has achieved its target score of 10 (2x5) reducing from (15 (3x5) and will be managed at a directorate level.
- 14.2 The new approach to Risk 542 (*Failure to deliver the Welsh Government NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Action Plan*) and the disaggregation of internal and external factors continues and will be presented at a later meeting.
- 14.3 Financial risks were discussed throughout in the context of ongoing pressures, including the need to revisit Risk 139 (*Failure to Deliver our Statutory Financial Duties in accordance with legislation*). It was noted that there was an error in the paper regarding the score for this risk, the risk score is expected to increase in the next round due to the financial position.
- 14.4 New risks are being considered in relation to the records management backlog and AI/FOI exemptions. The committee took assurance that each of the principal risks have been reviewed during this reporting period in line with the agreed schedule detailed at annex 3, with continual and dynamic focus on the highest rated risk scoring 15-25. Attention has been given to the risk ratings of each risk and the mitigating actions identified and taken

to ensure that risks achieve their target score. This is in addition to the standard and regular review of all controls, assurances, and any gaps.

The Committee: Considered the contents of the report including:

- 1. The reduction in score of Risk 623 to target of 10 (2x5) and ongoing management of the risk at a directorate level;**
- 2. The controls in place against the risks; and**
- 3. The actions described to further mitigate the risks.**

CONSENT ITEMS

15. COMMITTEE CYCLE OF BUSINESS MONITORING AND PRIORITIES REPORT 2025/26

- 15.1 The Committee noted the Cycle of Business Monitoring and Priorities Report 2025/26.

CLOSING ITEMS

15. REFLECTIONS AND SUMMARY OF DECISIONS/ACTIONS

- 16.1 Chris Turley observed that the meeting did not feel genuinely hybrid due to low in-person attendance. The Chair acknowledged this, suggesting that the meeting format should remain under review to determine what works best for the organisation.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 17.1 There was no other business discussed.

18. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

- 18.1 17 March 2026 at 9:30am.

MEETING CLOSE: 13:07