GIG CYMRU NHS WALES | Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Bae Abertawe | Swansea Bay University Health Board

Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB)
Minutes of the Special Board Meeting
held on 17 February 2026 at 1:30pm

Present:		
Jan Williams	(JW)	Chair
Stephen Spill	(SS)	Vice Chair
Abigail Harris	(AH)	Chief Executive Officer
Anne-Louise Ferguson	(ALF)	Independent Member
Andrew Griffiths	(AG)	Independent Member
Martin Lloyd	(ML)	Independent Member
Reena Owen	(RO)	Independent Member
Patricia Price	(PP)	Independent Member
Tina Ricketts	(TR	Executive Director of Workforce & OD
Gill Richardson	(GR)	Executive Director of Public Health
Liz Rix	(LR)	Executive Director of Nursing and Patient Experience
Nuria Zolle	(NZ)	Independent Member

In Attendance:		
Helen Annandale	(HA)	Associate Board Member
Lee Davies	(LD)	Executive Director of Strategy and Planning, Hywel Dda UHB
Pat Dunmore	(PD)	Associate Board Member
Matthew John	(MJ)	Director of Digital
Raj Krishnan	(RK)	Deputy Executive Medical Director
Alun Llewelyn	(AL)	Associate Board Member
Hazel Lloyd	(HL)	Director of Corporate Governance
Ian Macdonald	(IM)	Assistant Director of Finance
Carys Richards	(CER)	Senior Corporate Governance Manager
Karen Stapleton	(KS)	Deputy Director Strategy
Craige Wilson	(CW)	Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Apologies:		
Jean Church	(JC)	Independent Member
Alison Clarke	(AC)	Deputy Director of Therapies and Health Science
Marie Davies	(MD)	Executive Director of Planning and Partnerships
Richard Evans	(RE)	Executive Medical Director & Deputy Chief Executive

Deb Lewis	(DL)	Chief Operating Officer/Executive Director of Primary Care & Community and Mental Health & Learning Disabilities
Nicola Matthews	(NM)	Independent Member
Christine Morrell	(CM)	Executive Director of Therapies and Health Science
Charlotte Rees	(CR)	Independent Member
Richard Thomas	(RT)	Director of Insight, Communications and Engagement

Observers:		
Rose Turrell	(RoT)	Service Planning Manager (RJC)

Acronyms			
SBUHB	Swansea Bay University Health Board	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
RJC	Regional Joint Committee	WG	Welsh Government
WRP	Wales Risk Pool	HDUHB	Hywel Dda University Health Board

The meeting began at 13:30.

Minute Ref:	**Agenda Item**
PART 1. PRELIMINARY MATTERS	
1.1 Welcome and Apologies	
026/26	JW extended a warm welcome to all attending the meeting welcoming particularly: Councillor Alun Llewellyn, joining the Board as the Associate Board Member (local government); Helen Annandale, Associate Board Member (chair of the SBUHB Health Professionals Forum); and Lee Davies, the Executive Director of Strategy and Planning for Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB). JW expressed the Board's gratitude to LD for forgoing annual leave to join the meeting. JW set out the role of the Board as the Governing Body of the organisation, meeting on a bimonthly basis, with an agenda that covered the breadth of the Board's responsibilities. There were

	occasions when the Board had to meet outside the normal meeting cycle, to consider specific issues; this special meeting would receive a report on the Regional Cellular Pathology Programme. The Board received apologies as recorded above.
1.2 Declaration of Interests	
027/26	Charlotte Rees had registered a conflict of interest and sent her apologies. There were no other declarations of interest outside those already on the register.
PART 2. REGIONAL CELLULAR PATHOLOGY PROGRAMME	
2.1 Regional Cellular Pathology Programme	
028/26	JW welcomed LD and invited him to provide a summary of the proposal; he drew attention to: • Work undertaken over the past year by SBUHB and HDUHB in response to significant estate and workforce challenges facing both health boards in the delivery of cellular pathology services. • The joint work had resulted in the initial identification and shortlisting of two sites, with a third site added subsequently. Detailed technical and non-technical assessments of all three sites had included consideration of both capital and revenue financial implications and indicative timescales. • The papers sought support for the proposed preferred site of the Bay Campus and approval to submit the proposal to Welsh Government (WG). JW advised that the Regional Joint Committee (RJC) had considered the proposals at an extraordinary meeting on 16 February 2026, had endorsed the preferred site and agreed to recommend it to both Boards; the HDUHB Board would consider the same proposal at a Board meeting on 18 February 2026. She thanked LD for his summary of the work to date and invited questions:

	NZ indicated that, as she was not a member of the RJC, she had not had an earlier opportunity to consider the documents; she sought some additional information on the alignment of the proposal with SBUHB strategic and workforce objectives. LD provided some additional background: • The undertaking of a full assessment of the technical and non-technical implications of each site, as set out in the report. • A joint HDUHB and SBUHB workshop; this had considered the options in some detail prior to consideration by the Regional Joint Committee on 16 February 2026. External experts had supported the work. • Each site had advantages and disadvantages: the Bay Campus had lower capital costs as two of the floors already had existing laboratories and required no additional work. • The non-technical assessment had identified advantages associated with co-location on a University site; this supported a key objective of the project- to develop a Centre of Excellence to support the recruitment of pathologists, in short supply across the UK, and a challenging recruitment environment. • An economic assessment had also supported the Bay Campus. • Taken in the round, the consensus at the workshop was that the Bay Campus be the preferred option. JW confirmed that the Board was not asked to sign up to any revenue consequences at this stage. A series of recommendations framed the future opportunities to mitigate revenue costs; these included exploiting digital and technical developments, enhanced productivity and efficiency, and capital opportunities. JW thanked Huw Thomas, Executive Director of Finance, HDUHB, for his assistance. NZ confirmed that the additional information, together with the support of both Executive Teams, gave her reassurance. SS invited LD to provide an outline of the indicative timescales. LD emphasised the degree of urgency in progressing the matter, given the current estate risks; the preferred option would need a total implementation time of 24 months. Subject to approval, WG would receive the submission in the following week, with the Business

	Justification Case and other processes completed during 2026/27, subject to WG agreement and funding. Construction work would follow in 2027/28. JW thanked LD for the further detail and invited questions. AH extended her thanks to LD, IM and their teams for their intensive work to date; it reflected exemplary regional joint working. JW agreed and also extended her thanks to the SBUHB and HDUHB staff involved in the work; she regarded it as a blueprint for future RJC projects. JW also suggested the circulation of RJC meeting papers to all Board members, for information and ease of reference. **Action: HL** She also suggested to HA that the Health Professionals Forum might welcome a presentation on the project. HA agreed and JW asked IM if he would organise this. **Action: IM** JW extended her thanks to SS and to Eleanor Marks, Vice Chair of HDUHB, for their roles in maintaining Board level oversight of the project . The Board: • **CONSIDERED** the work undertaken on the site options appraisal and the recommendation from the recent Regional Cellular Pathology workshop for a preferred Laboratory Site. • **APPROVED** the submission of the paper, identifying the preferred site, to Welsh Government by 20 February 2026, **ACKNOWLEDGING** the endorsement by the Regional Joint Committee (RJC) on 16 February 2026.
2.2 Pathology Memorandum of Understanding report	
029/26	Introducing the report, HL drew attention to the redrafted Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) initially approved by SBUHB and HDUHB in March 2025; section three of the report set out the main updates to the structural and governance arrangements, with the leadership arrangements forming part of the 2026/27 service

	specification. The RJC meeting on 16 February RJC had endorsed it, for presentation to both Boards for approval. On behalf of JC, JW asked for confirmation that indemnity and liability clauses would set out clear responsibilities in the event of any mishaps. Responding, HL confirmed that, following selection of the preferred site option, revised documentation would set out contractual arrangements, working with the Wales Risk Pool (WRP) to cover the next stage of work. JW extended her thanks to HL and colleagues in HDUHB for their work on this key governance matter. The Board: • **APPROVED** the redrafted Transitional Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix A), for Regional Pathology services **ACKNOWLEDGING** the endorsement of the RJC meeting on 16 of February 2026.
Next SBUHB Board Meeting: (Special) Thursday 26 February 2026	

The meeting concluded at 13:52.