

**Public Accounts Committee
Public Audit (Wales) Bill
PA1 – Wales Probation**

YMDDIRIEDOLAETH PRAWF CYMRU

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**Prawf Cymru
Wales Probation**



CYFYNGEDIG / RESTRICTED

Fy Nghyf / Our Ref: SP/kn/mc

Ein Cyf / Your Ref:

3 Medi 2012 / 3 Sept 2012

Darren Millar AC / AM
Cadeirydd / Chair
Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Mr Millar,

Consultation on the Public Audit (Wales) Bill

Further to your letter dated 23rd July, please find below Wales Probation's responses to the above consultation:

Sections 2-12: relating to the Auditor General Wales

- It is noted that the proposed appointment would be for eight years. It would be helpful to clarify the formal review process during the eight year period.
- It is suggested that, when designing the Audit Code of Practice, consideration should be given to the balance between aligning the code with the strategic direction of the Welsh Public Sector and consistency with the wider UK code of practice.

Sections 13-28: relating to the Wales Audit Office and its relationship with the Auditor General

- Wales Probation fully accepts that there is a need for an approved scheme for charging fees (section 19). It is, however, also important that there is a transparent mechanism

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to ensure that the Wales Audit Office allocates the correct level of resources to a project to ensure it is efficient and cost effective (section 15).

- The deadline for the Wales Audit Office to lay their annual estimate before the National Assembly is at least five months before the beginning of the relevant financial year (section 20). It is of concern that this timescale does not fit the budget setting timescales of the majority of public sector organisations.
- With regard to the Annual Plan (section 25) it would be helpful to clarify how public sector organisations in Wales feed into the development of the plan and what risk measurement tool(s) will be used to inform the plan?
- It is suggested that there should be specific consideration given to ensuring that the Wales Audit Office has adequate skills over and above technical ones to address the challenges facing the Welsh public sector.

I hope these comments are helpful to you.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir / Yours sincerely,

Sarah Payne

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SARAH PAYNE
PRIF WEITHREDWR / CHIEF EXECUTIVE