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AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT ON ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WALES: REGULATION OF WASTE

The Committee Clerk's letter of 27 July requests my advice on the further clarification of the Welsh Assembly Government's actions in response to the Committee's report Environment Agency Wales: regulation of waste management, as set out in the Minister's letter of 12 July.

Your letter of 28 June to the Minister had asked for further information with regard to recommendations 2, 5 and 9, where the initial Government response had been lacking. The Minister's response provides that information.

- On recommendation 2, the Minister sets out the action in train to address non-municipal waste streams (excluding agricultural waste, dealt with in the initial response), which account for the majority of the waste produced each year in Wales.
- Recommendation 5 concerned the need to raise public awareness of the range of issues concerning waste, not just recycling. The Minister explains that the Assembly Government has commissioned an evaluation of the effectiveness of an earlier media campaign which it will use to inform future campaigns.
- On recommendation 9, which related to the issue of exempt activities, the Minister reports that the Assembly Government and Environment Agency Wales are scoping a study in the current year to assess and cost the work needed.

Your letter to the Minister also asked for an update by the end of this calendar on the progress being made by the Government against recommendations 3 (local authority plans for waste facilities) and 4 (data on site capacity). The Minister does not provide much further information at this point, but refers to the need to provide this update.

Taken together with the earlier response from the Government the Minister's letter now provides a reasonably full reply to the Committee's report. I therefore do not think that the Committee needs to take any further action for now. I shall be happy to advise the Committee when it receives the additional information at the end of the year. And, of course, my forward value for money programme includes the suggestion to undertake a follow up study on waste management, in 2007-08 or later.

Jeremy Colman
Auditor General for Wales