



Mark Isherwood MS
Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee,
Senedd Cymru.

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24 January 2025

Dear Mark,

I am writing in response to your letter of 4 December regarding publication of the Welsh Government Cabinet Handbook.

I would like to thank the Committee for its work to date on this topic and will deal with your points in turn.

Transparency

I reiterate my commitment to making this valuable resource available to the public to assist their understanding of the machinery of government, alongside upholding our commitment to transparency and accountability. The Handbook will sit alongside the Ministerial Code on gov.wales and act as an introductory guide to the Welsh Government for incoming Ministers, their Private Offices and those across government. It provides a preliminary overview of the key elements of support available to Ministers, and the decision-making mechanisms within government.

The Handbook introduces the Ministerial Code, what Ministers can expect from their Private Office and their policy department. It also sets out the constitutional context in which the Welsh Government operates, including its relationship with the legislature, as well as the UK Government and other devolved governments.

As you note in your letter, and as the Permanent Secretary reported to you, there will be recommendations from the COVID inquiry that we will wish to reflect upon prior to inclusion in the Handbook. You also direct me to the responses to the consultation you have undertaken, and we will need to consider these in preparing the version for publication. Given these points, I intend to honour the commitment to publish the Handbook, but the

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

timeline will need to be extended slightly to take account of the Committee's comments. Therefore, I expect an initial version to be published early in 2025.

Updates to the Handbook

The current internal Handbook has been reviewed in the run up to Senedd elections and by incoming First Ministers. This will continue to be the case, but in addition I intend to review the Handbook each autumn, to ensure any developments across government are included. I will set out further details of this in due course.

Content

I note the Committee's wish to continue engagement with the Handbook once published and look forward to any further suggestions the Committee might have.

Unauthorised disclosure

I can confirm that, as set out by the Permanent Secretary, the process in relation to unauthorised disclosures will be referenced in general terms, reflecting the necessary confidentiality of the process set out in the Handbook.

Guidance on technology

I intend to consider any recommendations from the COVID inquiry and to include appropriate guidance on good practice in relation to the use of technology to deliver government business, at the appropriate time.

Open Government

Publication of the Handbook will be another demonstration of my government's commitment to the principles of the UK Open Government National Action Plan.

Consultation

I align myself with the comments made by Transparency International UK you include in your letter and am pleased to continue delivering for the people of Wales through a transparent and accountable government.

Yours sincerely,



Eluned Morgan