

Andrew Slade
Director General, Economy, Energy and Transport
Welsh Government
Via email

20 March 2026

Industry Wales

Dear Andrew,

As you are aware, the Chief Executive Officer and Chair of Industry Wales gave evidence to the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee on Thursday 5 March. This follows questions asked to you about the handling of Industry Wales's closure at our meeting on 12 February.

The issues raised during the evidence session with Industry Wales caused us deep concern regarding the Welsh Government's review of the company and its subsequent decision to dissolve it. The Committee considered this process to be seriously flawed and were concerned by the poor treatment of staff and board members, as well as the wider reputational damage caused by this episode.

We understand that you were unable to attend the Committee's meetings on 19 March or 26 March to answer further questions in relation to this issue. However, we believe there remains serious questions to be asked about this episode and ask you to provide further information in response to the following:

1. As Additional Accounting Officer, you are **responsible** for advising the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning about how well Industry Wales is "achieving its strategic objectives within the policy and resources framework determined by the Cabinet Secretary and whether it is delivering value for money", among other things. How did you discharge this role and why were the issues set out in the review not identified and addressed earlier?

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

2. The tailored review reports for the National Library for Wales and Amgueddfa Cymu noted the reviews had been conducted based on the methodology suggested in, or in due consideration of, the UK Cabinet Office guidance, 'Tailored Reviews: Guidance on Reviews of Public Bodies' (May 2019). Acknowledging the UK Cabinet Office withdrew this guidance in 2023 and the review of Industry Wales was not a 'tailored review', against what guidance or methodology did officials conduct the review of Industry Wales?
3. On 12 February, you said the Welsh Government's review of Industry Wales was conducted by a senior civil servant in your team, noting the official had been involved in the establishment of the company in 2012-13. What informed this approach since we note the tailored reviews of National Library for Wales and Amgueddfa Cymu were conducted by independent panels?
4. Could you provide a timeline for the review, starting from the Welsh Government's decision to conduct the review and running to date, including information about the dates on which officials engaged with the Board and officers at Industry Wales about the review, the emerging findings, the draft report and the resulting decision to dissolve it?
5. We are concerned to hear evidence to suggest the outcome of the review was predetermined. On 4 March 2026, the Chief Executive Officer told the Committee:

"It very quickly became clear to me—the official who was running the review called it 'a review to close Industry Wales'. So, that was a bit of a surprise to me at the time, and I actually went back to the Welsh Government handler and said, 'I'm a bit confused by this', and there was some commentary that they shouldn't have said that. But that sort of gives you an idea. From when it fell within the work year, that would have been part of that department's work programme for the year, so it would have been known that that was a discussion that they were going to have ..."

How do you respond to this evidence?

6. On 4 March 2026, the Chair of Industry Wales noted the review report did not include any "financial figures or risk analysis", which was "unusual" and the Chief Executive Officer said it did not include any scenarios to assess value for money. Can you provide information about quantitative analyses conducted for the review?
7. We were concerned to hear no support has been provided to staff at Industry Wales, who – with the exception of the Chief Executive Officer – will leave by 31 March 2026, resulting in a loss of knowledge and skills. Can you clarify the arrangements for staff and what measures the Welsh Government has put in place to ensure the transfer of institutional knowledge?

8. We are also concerned about the Welsh Government's treatment of the Industry Wales Board. The Chair said:

"I think that the first real knowledge of the closure being Jen being told in a meeting on a Friday and passing it forward in an e-mail to us was bad. I think the first real formal statement was almost a press release statement from the Cabinet Secretary, which was passed to us, which one of the board members, who is a very experienced industrial player, said was brutal and unprofessional, and we had to write chunks of that statement."

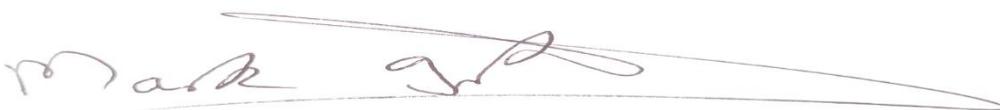
How do you respond to this evidence?

9. On 12 February 2026, you told the Committee the future of the Aerospace Wales Forum had been "sorted". On 4 March 2026, the Chief Executive Officer said two forums had announced they are to close: Technology Connected; and Welsh Automotive Forum. Can you provide an update about the sector forums and explain how the sectors will be supported from 1 April 2026.
10. On 12 February, you said "there are a number of areas where we would handle things very slightly differently" relating to the review of Industry Wales and the resulting decision to dissolve the company. Could you:
- clarify the main lessons learned following the dissolution of Industry Wales;
 - explain how you could have handled the matter differently; and
 - explain how you are applying the lessons when bringing the work of other bodies into the organisation, such as the Centre for Digital Public Services ('CDPS'), the functions of which are to be integrated into the Welsh Government from April?

We would be grateful for a response to the questions above by 31 March 2026.

Although we did not have the opportunity to consider these issues in greater detail before the end of the Sixth Senedd, this has been identified in our Legacy Report as a priority for our successor committee to consider further in the Seventh Senedd.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Isherwood MS

Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament