

Y Grŵp Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Education and Public Services Group



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Nick Ramsay AM
Chair, Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

9 March 2017

Dear Mr Ramsay,

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN WALES

Thank you for your letter of 9 February concerning the Auditor General's *Community Safety in Wales* report and the Public Accounts Committee's ongoing consideration of this topic.

As Additional Accounting Officer with responsibility for this area of work, the Permanent Secretary Shan Morgan has asked me to respond to you directly.

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children has now followed up his 7 February announcement to plenary about establishing an Oversight Group to lead a fundamental review of community safety partnership working in Wales with a written statement to the Assembly which provides further detail about the terms of the review.

A copy of the written statement *Working Together for Safer Communities* of 9 March is attached and I hope this provides the clarification you and committee members are seeking.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Morgan', written in a cursive style.

REG KILPATRICK

Cyfarwyddwr Llywodraeth Leol /

Director for Local Government



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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.

**WRITTEN STATEMENT
BY
THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

TITLE **Working Together for Safer Communities**

DATE **09 March 2017**

BY **Carl Sargeant AM, Cabinet Secretary for Communities & Children**

On 7 February I announced a review of the way public services work together to help make our communities safer in Wales. I will be establishing an Oversight Group to review current arrangements and to develop an ambitious shared vision for public services to work together more effectively.

The purpose of the group is to ensure the delivery of a high quality evidence-based review following the Wales Audit Office report *Community Safety in Wales*. In part, it seeks to address the issues raised in that document however, the remit of the review and the group is wider and will examine the way public services in Wales work together to help make our communities safer and to develop an ambitious, shared vision within which organisations work together more effectively.

The Oversight Group will consist of the key partners and agencies – both devolved and non-devolved – who are responsible for providing the visible and effective leadership necessary to deliver sustainable community safety partnership working across Wales.

I want the review to be ambitious in its thinking and to develop a clear vision for community safety that is not only robust, relevant and responsive, but will be sustainable in the long term.

Almost 20 years on from the ground-breaking Crime and Disorder Act 1998 that established a statutory requirement for public services to work together in partnership to improve community safety we now have an unprecedented opportunity provided by the current implementation of the Well-being of Future

Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to establish a sustainable approach to partnership working in Wales that will deliver safer communities for future generations.

The review will ensure Welsh Government is better placed – through appropriate collaboration with non-devolved agencies and partners and via the wellbeing objectives published alongside the *Taking Wales Forward* Programme for Government – to provide effective leadership to the public service in Wales that supports the local delivery of safer and more confident communities.

The review will make recommendations for:

- Establishing a strategic vision for community safety in Wales which all organisations involved understand, share and build into their national, regional and local planning;
- A sustainable approach to partnership working in Wales developed through the collection and analysis of evidence including UK-wide and international evidence about what works;
- Understanding, defining and clarifying the range of stakeholders and their leadership roles, including that of Welsh Government, Police and Crime Commissioners, Local Authorities and Whitehall Departments;
- Creating stronger, more effective and more accountable leadership from all agencies and organisations;
- Reflecting the new clarity around leadership by streamlining and simplifying governance to enhance accountability while refocusing activity so as to avoid duplication, and confusion;
- Achievement of the well being objectives published alongside the *Taking Wales Forward* Programme for Government; and
- Ensuring delivery in accordance with the Taking Wales Forward Programme for Government.

It will take account of the wider political and policy context including:

- UK and Welsh legislation and whether there is a need for further reform, including opportunities offered by the Wales Act 2017;
- UK policy, for example in prison reform and developments in youth justice and community cohesion and around Police and Crime Commissioners etc.;
- the single planning process through Public Service Boards;
- Interdependencies between devolved and non-devolved responsibilities (including Police and Crime Commissioners) and the potential for better alignment; and
- Welsh Government's proposals for the reform of local government and in particular the regionalisation of services.

I do not intend to create a group that just debates the issues but one that can bring real expertise to the area and will have the credibility to make real change. The Oversight Group will be streamlined, consisting of a small number of representatives of the key services drawn from local government, fire and rescue services, Police and Crime Commissioners, Youth Justice Board Cymru, police chiefs, probation and prison services, Community Justice Cymru and UK Government Departments. The review itself, however, will be as inclusive as possible.

I anticipate the first meeting of the Oversight Group taking place early in March followed quickly by publication of the terms of reference and questions to pose to stakeholders during a summer consultation and gathering of evidence, research and perspectives from all quarters.

While the Oversight Group will work on developing a vision for community safety in Wales, there is no reason for local work to be stalled in the meantime. Police and Crime Commissioners in Wales have shown a strong desire to work with Welsh Government and their local partners to refresh the way in which community safety is delivered in their police force area.

I am pleased to support the commitment of each Commissioner to work with the Chief Constable and local authorities to revive community safety work in their area and I would encourage all other organisations to work with them on this agenda. Progress on the ground will inform the work of the Oversight Group and contribute toward the ambitious approach I am advocating.

It is my intention for draft findings and recommendations to be published in September. This will then enable Welsh Government to host a series of regional multi-agency stakeholder events to test and finalise our ambitious shared vision for safer communities for future generations before I make an Autumn Statement to the Assembly outlining the way forward.