

Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM
First Minister
Welsh Government
Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

8 December 2016

Dear First Minister

Meeting on 18 November 2016

Thank you for attending the first meeting of the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister in the 5th Assembly.

The Committee was grateful for your open approach to our questions. Following the meeting, we agreed that I should write to you with the following observations and some additional questions arising from your remarks.

Programme for Government

Members were grateful for the answers that you gave on the development and contents of *Taking Wales Forward 2016–2021*, including in relation to its place in the current external context and your decisions on prioritisation of different areas of policy.

Following the session, we agreed that I should seek further information from you as to how the evidence base for the policies and programmes in the programme for government was developed.

In addition, during the session you indicated that you would expect the Welsh Government's Well-being Objectives, which were published alongside the programme for government, to form part of judging your Government's record.



Members would appreciate clarification as to whether, or not, you also intend to develop specific indicators for measuring progress against *Taking Wales Forward*.

Spending on health and social care

Members were heartened by your acknowledgement of the need to address the challenge of simultaneously responding to the current level of demand on the NHS, whilst also prioritising preventative measures to reduce the prevalence of chronic conditions in the future. We would appreciate further detail on how your Government will work towards achieving an appropriate balance between health spending on current and future needs.

General Practice

Members of the Committee were interested in the responses you provided in relation to current challenges in recruiting and retaining GPs in some areas of Wales. You stated your view that a movement towards more salaried GP positions is likely in the future, and that this could present an opportunity for areas of Wales that have experienced difficulties recruiting GPs to buy into practices in the traditional way. You also indicated that you see this as primarily a role for health boards.

Members would appreciate further information on whether the Welsh Government is currently taking forward, or considering, further work in this area.

The Wales Bill

In answering questions relating to the Wales Bill you offered to share a letter from the 14 July 2016 concerning the membership of a UK Government group on justice. The Committee would be grateful to receive a copy of this letter.

We would also like to request an update on progress towards reaching an agreement on a fiscal framework with the UK Government, given your statement to the Committee that this agreement is needed “before any consideration can be given to supporting a legislative consent motion” on the Wales Bill.



Severn Bridge tolls

Finally, during our discussion of topical issues, you agreed to provide a note to the Committee on the legal position in relation to the Severn Bridge tolls following the return of the bridges to public ownership. You will recall that this was in response to a question as to whether the UK Government would require the agreement of the Welsh Government for tolling to continue from that point.

I would be grateful for your response on the points above in due course.

Yours sincerely



Ann Jones AM
Deputy Presiding Officer
Chair, Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister

