



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

9 January 2017

Dear Ann

Meeting on 18 November 2016

Thank you for your letter following the first meeting of the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister on 18 November 2016. I am grateful for your observations and I write in response to the questions posed.

Programme for Government

Evidence base

Taking Wales Forward signals a fresh start to delivery through a new way of working. We have set out where the Welsh Government has the levers to maximise its impact and how our key commitments will contribute. In respect of our evidence base, we have a wealth of information about what works in public policy – from our own experience, evaluation of programmes and the work of the Public Policy Institute for Wales. We have drawn on all information available to consider our priorities for Wales. However, we know that there are many other people who can help us develop the best approach to delivering our priorities and we will work closely with stakeholders to add to our knowledge and ideas.

Indicators

As I explained at the Committee meeting, we have now responded to previous comments and moved away from the 500+ indicators that we tracked in the last Government. We will improve the way in which we report on progress in delivering *Taking Wales Forward* and the associated well-being objectives. The Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Government's 7 well-being goals and 14 well-being objectives will underpin our approach to monitoring and reporting.

The steps developed to deliver these objectives will need to be carefully monitored and reported on annually, in line with the Act. We will provide further detail in due course about how we will monitor this delivery. In addition to measures that track the Welsh Government's progress towards its commitments and in relation to its well-being objectives, there are the 46 national indicators for Wales. These indicators are there to tell the story of our progress as a nation towards achieving the seven well-being goals, covering a whole

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

YP.PrifWeinidog@llyw.cymru • ps.firstminister@gov.wales

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.

range of areas that reflect our economy, our society, our environment and our culture. It is intended that the first statutory Annual Well-being Report for Wales report will be published in the summer of 2017.

Spending on health and social care

The Government is committed to improving health and wellbeing for all, through investing in evidence-based preventative healthcare interventions. These include screening and immunisations, improving health literacy and supporting individuals to take greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, legislating, through the Public Health (Wales) Bill and other mechanisms, to prevent harm from identified health risks and maximising the contribution of the NHS as a protector and promoter of population health. At the same time, we need to recognise and respond appropriately to the health needs of a growing and ageing population, which is why we have placed an emphasis on investing in primary care services and strengthening links between health and social care, including the investment of £60 million in the Intermediate Care Fund.

General Practice

In response to your request for further information on the future recruitment of GPs, both the Welsh Government's national primary care plan and its sister workforce plan both recognise the need to develop GP-led multi professional primary care services. While contracting general medical services remains the main way of securing these services, health boards are also increasingly directly employing GPs. This mixed model of contracting and directly employing will be determined by local needs and circumstances. We have a new GP recruitment campaign to strengthen the workforce irrespective of which model is used.

The Wales Bill

I have attached the letter dated 14 July, concerning the membership of the UK Government group on justice as an annex.

You also requested an update on progress towards reaching an agreement on a fiscal framework with the UK Government. An agreed fiscal framework was published on 19 December 2016. It will ensure fair funding for Wales for the long term by implementing the funding floor recommended by the Holtham Commission. It also includes arrangements for adjusting the block grant which, together with the funding floor, will protect our budget from undue risks which could arise following the devolution of tax powers, including stamp duty land tax, landfill tax and Welsh rates of income tax. This package of measures paves the way for the partial income tax devolution in Wales. As part of the agreement, Wales' capital borrowing limit will double to £1bn and a new, single Welsh reserve will be created, enabling the Welsh Government to better manage its budget, including the new tax revenues. The fiscal framework also includes provision for independent oversight – giving independent bodies a role, where required, to provide input into disputes between the Welsh and UK governments on matters relating to the agreement. The Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government will shortly be making an oral statement in the Assembly about the agreement

Severn Bridge tolls

At Committee I agreed to provide a note on the legal position in relation to the Severn Bridge tolls. Various statutory functions were transferred to the National Assembly for Wales under the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999. These functions were subsequently transferred to the Welsh Ministers under the Government of Wales Act

2006. However, functions under the Highways Act 1980 were transferred subject to exceptions which include functions exercisable by the Secretary of State in relation to that part of the M4 Motorway in Wales which comprises 'the New Toll Plaza area' and 'the New Bridge', as defined in section 39(1) of the Severn Bridges Act 1992. I am advised that the consequence of this is that the Secretary of State is the highway authority and traffic authority for both the Severn bridges.

A trunk road charging scheme under section 167 of the Transport Act 2000 in relation solely to the Severn bridges themselves could therefore be made by the Secretary of State in his capacity as the traffic authority for the bridges, notwithstanding that they are not wholly in England. A joint trunk road charging scheme between the Secretary of State and the Welsh Ministers would however be required if the scheme were to include lengths of highway for which the Welsh Ministers are the traffic authority, such as the length of motorway between the second Severn bridge and the toll plaza.

I hope this response addresses the issues raised in your letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carwyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

CARWYN JONES