



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
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Wales Audit Office / Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru

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Dear Darren

Wales Audit Office value for money examination: AWEMA

I am writing to provide you with a brief progress update on our current value for money study which is examining whether the Welsh Government, including the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO), has managed its relationship with the All Wales Ethnic Minority Association (AWEMA) appropriately to protect and make good use of public funds.

In my letter of 15 February 2012, I had indicated that, acting on behalf of the Auditor General and dependent on a range of factors, I anticipated being able to publish our final report in May or June 2012. However, that timetable has proved increasingly ambitious and I can confirm that I now expect to publish our final report at the start of the National Assembly's autumn term. This extension to our study timetable will provide sufficient time for us to complete our ongoing programme of interviews and to then draft and prepare our final report for publication and translation. In line with our normal practice, this process will involve a period of clearance with the Welsh Government and other third parties as regards the factual accuracy and balance of the report.

I would emphasise that Wales Audit Office staff have been working very hard to complete what has proven to be a much more substantial programme of file reviews and interviews than we first envisaged. Although the evidence base for our work has been broadly consistent with that described in my previous letter, it is the scale of our work that means it has taken longer than expected. I can confirm that we have continued to experience full co-operation from the Welsh Government throughout our fieldwork. My study team is now nearing the point at which we will be able to step back from the process of evidence gathering in order to draw out the key findings and conclusions that will provide the basis of our report.

I should also like to take this opportunity to confirm once again the scope of our work, in light of some inaccurate recent media coverage. The Wales Audit Office has not been examining the internal workings of AWEMA itself. The responsibility for any examination of AWEMA's governance, in particular the trustees' action and decision-making in managing the charity, rests with the Charity Commission. We have also been mindful of the need to take into account the scope of any action by South Wales Police. While we are examining payments to AWEMA made by the Welsh Government and WEFO and their purpose, we are not, as has been suggested in some quarters, carrying out our own audit of AWEMA's finances.

Our interest in governance and financial management issues at AWEMA extends only to consideration of how the Welsh Government has responded throughout its relationship with AWEMA to issues or concerns that have come to its attention.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter to the members of your Committee, and I confirm that I would be happy for a copy of it to be placed on the Committee's website

Yours sincerely



Anthony Barrett
Assistant Auditor General