

Nick Ramsay AM
Chair, Public Accounts Committee

28 February 2020

Dear Nick,

Ministerial Scrutiny on Employability Support Procurement Exercises

The Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee held a scrutiny session with the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales on Wednesday 12 February 2019 and questioned the Minister and his officials about failures in the procurement process for Jobs Support Wales, a contract worth £500m. In particular the Committee was seeking clarity from Welsh Government about information provided during annual budget scrutiny on 9 January and in the Minister's written statement on Employability Support on 30 January.

Although the committee welcomed the candour of the Minister and officials in answering Members' questions on 12 February, we were very concerned about the two failed procurement exercises for Jobs Support Wales, and the extent to which lessons have been learnt since the first procurement exercise was halted. It transpired that these procurement failures are now under review at the highest level within Welsh Government. The transcript of the session can be found here, and there has understandably been some media interest.



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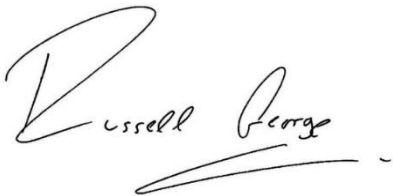
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I have informed the Minister that at this point it is most appropriate we refer the matter on to the Public Accounts Committee, given your functions in relation to scrutiny of public expenditure, and previous work by your committee and the Auditor General for Wales on public procurement. I am therefore writing to you as Chair of PAC to draw your attention to the evidence provided to us.

Should the Wales Audit Office or your Committee choose to examine this matter further, we would of course welcome being kept informed of the outcome of that work, given the EIS Committee's remit on employment and skills.

A copy of this letter has been sent to the Auditor General for Wales, and the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, for their information.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell George". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Russell George

Chair, Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee

Cc:

Adrian Crompton, Auditor General for Wales, Wales Audit Office

Ken Skates AM, Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales

