

Shan Morgan  
Permanent Secretary  
Welsh Government

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17 April 2020

Dear Permanent Secretary

### **Welsh Government's Approach to Responding to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency**

Thank you for your letter of 30 March, which has been circulated to the Members of the Public Accounts Committee. It was unfortunate that we were unable to discuss this with you in Committee but perfectly understandable given the circumstances. I am extremely appreciative of the written update you provided and wish to pass my gratitude to you and your officials for all the work that has been undertaken and continues to be done to deal with the implications of this public health emergency.

I do not wish to burden you with requests for further information at this time, but with regard to the decision to stand down the spring round of audit and risk committees, I would hope that members of those committees are being kept abreast of developments. In due course, we would also be interested to understand the role that the Welsh Government's board/non-executives have played to support the response to this emergency.

We welcome the flexible and swift response by the Welsh Government in addressing the unprecedented challenges of the situation particularly the support to assist businesses and the changes to procurement processes and third sector funding. However, I would like to exercise caution, that full written analysis of decisions must be recorded, if not at the time of the decision, retrospectively at the earliest opportunity. You are aware that the record keeping of decisions has been an issue that the Committee has been concerned about in the past.

Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to advise you that our draft Report on the Scrutiny of the Welsh Government's Accounts 2018-19 has been considered in detail



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru**  
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1NA

✉ [SeneddArchwilio@cynulliad.cymru](mailto:SeneddArchwilio@cynulliad.cymru)  
☎ 0300 200 6565

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1NA

✉ [SeneddPAC@assembly.wales](mailto:SeneddPAC@assembly.wales)  
☎ 0300 200 6565

on a number of occasions by the Committee. I am hoping a final version will be agreed shortly. I do not plan to publish the report or formally lay it at this stage but instead will share it *in confidence* with Welsh Government officials. This is so ensure sensitivity to the current climate and prevent a distraction to the work of government in the current crisis. We will formally lay the report once normal business resumes.

I hope sharing the report in this way will be informative to the relevant officials and that its conclusions can be taken into account in preparing the 2019–20 Consolidated Accounts. However, I do acknowledge there will be constraints on the Welsh Government’s ability to respond to all of the Committee’s recommendations in the 2019–20 accounting round.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Ramsay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

**Nick Ramsay AM**  
**Chair**

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English

