

Y Grŵp Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Education and Public Services Group



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mr Nick Ramsay AM
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF CF99 1NA

Date: 27 February 2018

Dear Mr Ramsay

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN WALES

Thank you for your letter of 30 January 2018 following the Committee's consideration of the Welsh Government's Working Together for Safer Communities Review and final report last month.

As you are aware, an Oversight Group involving key stakeholders from both devolved and non-devolved agencies and Welsh and UK Government departments was established last year to steer the review. The Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services met with the group last month to consider how best to take forward the various actions and commitments outlined within the Safer Communities programme (as described on pages 74-77).

The group is now developing a joint action plan and considering proposed timescales for the programme's implementation, some aspects of which will be delivered in the short term while others are longer term pieces of work. The Cabinet Secretary has, however, challenged the group to deliver a clear plan of action that makes a real difference to local communities and to do so "with pace".

I will be happy to send you a copy of the action plan, together with detailed timescales, once this is signed off by the Oversight Group and Cabinet Secretary.

In relation to the third agreed action, the 'development of a different relationship and strategic approach with non-devolved community safety partners that establishes a more effective leadership role for Welsh Government' has already commenced. For instance this is now being progressed via: the decision to continue the Oversight Group with the direct involvement of the Cabinet Secretary; the establishment of a new Justice in Wales Strategy Group bringing together Welsh Government and Ministry of Justice officials; and a refocusing of the Home Office Advisory Group with early policy discussions between UK and Welsh Government officials.



BUDDSODDWYR | INVESTORS
MEWN POBL | IN PEOPLE

Parc Cathays • Cathays Park
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Ffôn • Tel 03000 250913
reg.kilpatrick@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Gwefan • website: www.wales.gov.uk

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.

The Oversight Group has also initiated a rapid audit of the myriad of existing strategic boards with responsibility for various community safety thematic strands in order to rationalise and simplify the landscape wherever possible, for instance following a model of recent successful trials of 'back-to-back' meetings of the All Wales Criminal Justice Board and Integrated Offender Management Cymru Board.

This third action is also closely linked to the first as working with the Justice Commission will help to develop that different relationship and strategic approach. To this end, the Welsh Government will shortly be: setting out the outcomes it would like to see from the Commission; asking the Commission to examine how to achieve a more integrated and preventative approach to justice, drawing on the priorities and ways of working set out in Prosperity for All; and inviting the Commission to advise on specific actions that would promote better outcomes for the long term.

As you are aware, the timeframe for the work of the Commission takes us to the Autumn of next year when it is expected to report its findings and recommendations.

I can clarify that the Welsh Government does not intend to develop a distinct national strategy for community safety in Wales, as previously recommended by the Auditor General. Indeed, you will note that the Welsh Government response to this recommendation can be found in our report on page 49:

“However the strategic planning framework described in the 2016 report’s first three recommendations is highly unlikely to deliver the required progress and – worst still – would not meet the requirements for integrated and collaborative public services partnership arrangements prescribed by the Well-being of Future Generations Act.”

The 2015 Act requires more integrated and collaborative planning that cuts across the seven well-being goals, recognising interdependencies, as demonstrated in the Welsh Government’s *Prosperity for All* strategy. It is our contention that a stand-alone national ‘community safety strategy’ contradicts this more integrated and collaborative way of working and risks isolating community safety by reinforcing an outdated silo mentality.

We believe it is more important to embed our shared strategic vision for community safety in Wales – as detailed on page 2 of our report – and to support the local delivery of this vision by providing more effective guidance and leadership, including working more closely with non-devolved actors to mitigate the negative impacts of applying non-devolved crime and justice policy within an increasingly devolved landscape.

Whilst counter terrorism is not a devolved matter, successful implementation of CONTEST, the UK government’s counter terrorism strategy, requires close co-operation and co-ordination between the UK and the Welsh Government. CONTEST aims to reduce the risk to the UK and to UK interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.

CONTEST is organised around four work streams: Prevent - to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism; Pursue - to stop terrorist attacks; Protect - to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack; and Prepare - to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.

In Wales, we have well established structures for CONTEST and work closely with the Home Office at a UK and Wales level. Our CONTEST and Extremism Board Wales has been established to provide strategic leadership on CONTEST in Wales; it is co-chaired at a senior level by the Welsh Government and the Wales Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit. The Board is supported by senior Home Office officials and its membership includes the chairs of the regional boards across Wales, and also, a wide range of key partners.

The Board considers the implementation of the Prevent Duty which was introduced under the Counter Terrorism Act 2015. The Duty requires a number of 'specified authorities', including devolved authorities, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Advice, guidance and training has been made available to the authorities that are subject to the duty and these include health, local authorities and education. Support for people identified at risk of radicalisation is made then available on a voluntary basis through the Channel Programme. Of course, we recognise that it is not possible to eliminate the risk of terrorism completely. The Board has endorsed an ambitious programme of counter-terrorism training and exercising; this is intended to mitigate against the impacts of an terrorist incident should it occur in Wales. The Wales Board will continue to consider and counter any emerging risk and in so doing, help ensure the safety of citizens and communities in Wales.

In addition to providing a copy of the Safer Communities programme implementation plan and timescales, when available, I will be more than happy to provide an update on progress later this year.

Yours sincerely



REG KILPATRICK

Cyfarwyddwr Llywodraeth Leol /
Director for Local Government