

Local Government Studies Programme

I am writing to obtain your views on the topics I am considering for my Local Government Studies Programme for the period to March 2009. This letter discharges my responsibility to consult local government bodies under Section 41 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

I have already issued a consultation letter on my proposed local government fee scale for 2007-08 which explains how fees will be determined locally with local government bodies. For context, but without repeating the fee scale consultation letter: the fees individual bodies pay will depend on a number of factors including risk and local circumstances such as the governance environment, complexity, financial and performance and management arrangements, and the statutory and other requirements in place. These circumstances will also include whether a body is subject to the Wales Programme for Improvement (WPI).

Studies that will form part of my annual Local Government Studies Programme, under WPI arrangements are continuing the programme of work which I have committed to in respect of:

- Helping public services improve through the aim of identifying, evaluating and facilitating the transfer of good practice within and between the various public sectors in Wales: and
- Focusing on the Making the Connections (MtC) agenda across the public sector in Wales.

I am also consulting you on a further study that will form part of the performance audit programme across unitary authorities and the NHS, namely – a follow up to my earlier study on Adult Mental Health Services.

Further information on these studies is included on our website, available by following this link, and I would welcome your views on the proposals by **14 September 2007**. Please contact us by emailing info@wao.gov.uk.

Alongside the work being consulted upon in this letter, I will maintain a programme of local risk based audit at individual local authorities. I have also issued a consultation to the NHS bodies in Wales to gain their views on possible priorities for Health and Social Care studies in the next 2-3 years. You are also welcome to respond to this consultation at info@wao.gov.uk.

I may choose to lay any eventual report before the National Assembly, when it might form the basis of an evidence session of the Assembly's Audit Committee. Such an evidence session would focus on the wider public sector and its co-ordination by the Welsh Assembly Government and would in no way seek to compromise the constitutional independence of local government from the National Assembly for Wales.

If you want to discuss the proposals further, please contact Anthony Snow, Chief Operating Officer, on 029 2026 2685 or by email on anthony.snow@wao.gov.uk.

Jeremy Colman
Auditor General for Wales