

**Y Pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol a Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Local Government and Public Services Committee**

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

25 May 2004

Dear Colleague

Committee inquiry into public services regulation and inspection regime

The Local Government and Public Services Committee of the National Assembly for Wales is conducting an inquiry into the operation of the public services regulation and inspection regime in Wales. To inform this work, the Committee would welcome written submissions of evidence from interested parties.

Whilst the Committee's intention is to focus primarily on inspection and regulation within local government in Wales, I welcome views from regulators and inspectors across the public sector, those who are subject to inspection and regulation, as well as others with an interest in the impact of regulation and inspection on public service improvement.

Please find enclosed the terms of reference for the inquiry including issues of particular interest to the Committee and details of how to respond. Feel free to pass this invitation on to anyone else you feel may have an interest.

Yours faithfully



Ann Jones AM
Chair of the Local Government and Public Services Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the operation of the public services regulation and inspection regime in Wales

Terms of reference

The inquiry sets out:

To consider the operation of the public services regulation and inspection regime in Wales, including the roles and accountabilities of inspectorates, their interaction with inspected bodies and the added value the regime brings to public service improvement.

Definition from Public Audit Forum Report, 2002:

Inspection, which is the process of periodic, targeted scrutiny to provide an independent check, and to report, on whether services are meeting national and local performance standards, legislative and professional requirements, and the needs of service users;

Regulation, which is the process by which public sector activity and market forces are directed for the public good. It includes the 'authorisation' or 'registration' of bodies to undertake regulated activities and monitoring of their compliance with statutory requirements and professional standards. It may also include the prescription of compulsory activities and price controls.

Key issues

The Committee would be interested in views on the following issues, if not all are applicable, you may wish to select those issues most relevant to your organisation.

- The impact of regulation and inspection on public service improvement and the way in which this is measured;
- The impact of regulation and inspection on staff;
- The burden of inspection on inspected bodies;
- The cost of inspection, including compliance costs, opportunity costs, deflection of priorities;
- The extent to which the distinct aims of regulation and inspection are understood;
- The role and responsibilities of regulation and inspection bodies;
- The independence and impartiality of regulation and inspection bodies;
- The statutory framework within which regulation and inspection bodies operate;

- The planning and timing of inspection programmes and interaction between inspection regimes. The extent to which the work of regulation and inspection bodies overlaps with or complements each other;
- The inspection arrangements including methodologies and criteria;
- Different regulation and inspection styles and sharing of good practice between regulation and inspection bodies and;
- The means by which the regulation and inspection bodies are held to account, including arrangements for external scrutiny.

Responding

Should you wish to contribute to the inquiry, written submissions should be sent to us, bilingually if possible, by **27 August 2004**. It would be helpful if you would:

- Order your comments under the same headings as the statements above;
- Add any other comments on the issues that are not covered, which you feel are of importance;
- Include a summary of your comments if they are more than three pages long;
- State if you do not wish your response to be published. (We may publish consultation responses received electronically on our website, and place hard copies of those received by post in our library, unless consultees specifically request confidentiality. All responses will be included in any statistical or other summary of the results.)

Please send your response by e-mail to Local-Govn.comm@wales.gsi.gov.uk or by post to:

Local Government and Public Services Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Further information

Information about the Committee is available on our website www.wales.gov.uk under Committees of the Assembly/Local Government and Public Services Committee. If you have any queries or would like to discuss your response prior to sending it to us, please contact the Committee Clerk, Siwan Davies on 029 2089 8501 or by e-mail: siwan.davies@wales.gsi.gov.uk