

17 April 2018

Dear John,

PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (WALES) BILL

I am pleased that the Assembly agreed to the general principles of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill on 21 March 2018 and I am grateful for your Committee's work on scrutinising the Bill.

Timetable

In September 2017, the Business Committee considered the timetable for the Bill and agreed a provisional deadline of 18 May 2018 for Stage 2 proceedings. However, as Stage 2 proceedings rely on the Government bringing forward a financial resolution before your Committee can consider amendments, I have written to the Business Committee requesting an extension to the Stage 2 deadline. I have attached a copy of my letter for your information and I will keep you updated on this issue.

Inclusion of the Wales Audit Office in Schedule 3


You may recall the Auditor General for Wales (AGW) raised the issue of removing the Wales Audit Office (WAO) from Schedule 3 of the Bill. I replied to the AGW (and copied the letter to you) saying that, as the Bill had been introduced, it was a matter for your Committee to consider as part of Stage 1 scrutiny but, should evidence support the removal of the WAO, I would consider bringing forward an amendment. However, the Stage 1 report was silent on this issue.



As way of background, the WAO is not currently included in the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005. Following consultation on the draft Bill by the Finance Committee of the Fourth Assembly, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (in a joint submission) suggested the WAO's inclusion, and it was subsequently added to the Bill that was introduced.

Before deciding whether to bring forward an amendment on this issue, I would be keen to hear whether your Committee considered this matter as part of your Stage 1 deliberations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Thomas'.

Simon Thomas AM

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

