



WALES **AUDIT** OFFICE

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Impact of value for money work over the past year and proposals for examinations in 2007/2008 and beyond

**Submitted to the Audit Committee of the National Assembly for Wales
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1. I am very pleased to present this memorandum which:
 - summarises the impact of my value for money audit work and that of the Committee over the past year;
 - outlines my value for money work that is currently underway or planned to start during the current financial year; and
 - sets out my proposals for my programme of value for money examinations to start in the coming financial year, 2007/2008; and in subsequent years.

I welcome the Committee's views on my proposals.

Our audit work over the past year has continued to support improvement in public services

2. Central to my work is my commitment to add value to those I audit. This emphasis on improvement reflects the powers given to me under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, and is encapsulated in the mission statement of the Wales Audit Office:

“to promote improvement, so that people in Wales benefit from accountable, well-managed public services that offer the best possible value for money”
3. Undertaking examinations that assist public sector bodies secure efficiency savings has been an important element of the external audit function of the Auditor General for Wales since that post was created in 1999. I estimate that the work of the Auditor General and the National Assembly's Audit Committee since devolution, has contributed to financial savings of around £117 million. In addition, we have identified scope for a further £36 million savings, which we will continue to track.
4. As the Audit Committee is well aware, however, audit work is about much more than financial savings. The focus of my value for money examinations is to help secure improvements in public services; and many of these improvements cannot be readily translated into a simple financial figure. Over the past year, my work and that of the Audit Committee has supported improvement across a wide range of areas, as illustrated below.
 - a) In examining the funding provided to the **National Botanic Garden for Wales** by Welsh public funders, the Committee identified the need for improvements in the way public bodies work together to identify and manage risks involved in major capital projects. The Welsh public bodies examined in this report were not the main funders of the project which, in this instance, was the Millennium Commission. There is a danger that in such circumstances the actions of smaller funders are not subject to the same scrutiny as the main funders and, as a result, important lessons about how best to appraise and monitor large projects can go unlearned. Following the Committee's report, the Assembly Government has sought to strengthen its arrangements for appraising and approving funding for

projects and those of its sponsored bodies, as well as strengthening its approach to risk management and monitoring.

- b) Our examinations of **NHS energy management** and of **energy and water management in the Higher Education sector in Wales** showed how public bodies can improve their procurement and use of key utilities. Better energy management, including simple steps such as switching off lights and turning down thermostats, can contribute to tackling climate change and support public bodies' efforts to become more environmentally sustainable. The financial savings realised from better energy management can free up resources which can then be used to improve front line services.
- c) Sometimes audit scrutiny has proved important in sustaining and enhancing progress and improvement that is already in train. This is exemplified by the report on the **Better Schools Fund**, provided by the Assembly Government to Local Education Authorities to assist them in developing new and innovative ways to improve teaching and attainment in schools. The Committee recognised that the fund was a significant improvement on the predecessor Grants for Education Support and Training and its recommendations sought to help further improve the use of the fund. As a result, the Assembly Government has introduced a range of measures, including better long term planning, training all Better School Fund staff in evaluation, and producing a Better Schools Fund handbook for all local authorities to use in assessing the impact of Better Schools Fund initiatives.
- d) As well as seeking improvements in the delivery of services, audit recommendations have also helped to improve working conditions for the people who deliver services. Our work provided the first all-Wales data on the number of incidents of **violence and aggression against NHS staff**: in 2003/2004, there was an average of 22 incidents of violence against NHS staff in Wales each day. These incidents blight the lives of NHS staff, have a detrimental impact on the delivery of healthcare for patients and cost the NHS an estimated £6.3 million in staff replacement, legal costs, training and security. The Committee made recommendations to help better protect staff from violence, for example by carrying out better assessments on high risk patients. Since publication of the report, planned improvements in patient risk assessment have come on-stream, particularly through the passport scheme whereby information on patients with a history of violence is shared between NHS trusts.
- e) The Committee identified weaknesses in the arrangements for **managing sickness absence across the FE sector**. Since publication of the Committee's report, there have been improvements in the recording of sickness absence, with an agreed sector-wide definition. Line managers across the sector have been trained in sickness absence management, and improvements are being made to occupational health services. I estimate that a reduction in absence by each employee of one day per year would provide a productivity saving worth around £900,000 across the sector.

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- f) The Committee has also sought to ensure that the wider public sector learns lessons from local problems, as was the case in its report on **the contract for out-of-hours GP services in Cardiff**, which followed correspondence from local GPs. Although the subject of the correspondence was specific to Cardiff, the key issues involved – background checks on a company with no track record or financial history, contracting with a private company on a risk sharing basis and monitoring performance against set standards – are pertinent to all Local Health Boards, and indeed the wider public sector. Although the Committee’s report was particularly robust in identifying deficiencies in the way Cardiff LHB let and managed the contract, the recommendations reflected the wider opportunity for public bodies to learn general lessons from the specific deficiencies identified.

We have been persistent in following up the impact of our work

5. Of course, our audit work does not end with the production of a report and recommendations. The Assembly Government provides a detailed response to each Committee recommendation and the Wales Audit Office monitors the Assembly Government’s progress in implementing those recommendations and in securing the intended improvements. Follow-up work of this kind can extend to undertaking full value for money examinations.
6. For instance, my examination of the Assembly Government’s ICT system, **Merlin**, followed up my earlier examination of the predecessor system, Osiris, in 2003. The Committee was pleased to note that the Assembly Government had learnt the lessons from Osiris and followed the Committee’s recommendations in procuring Merlin. Nonetheless, the Committee remained concerned that the system was not fully meeting the needs of Assembly Members, and I intend to report back to the Committee again on the delivery of the Merlin contract.
7. As I have indicated previously, I am also keen to provide the Committee with short follow-up reports specifically focused on the progress being made in implementing audit recommendations. Such reports provide the Committee with the opportunity to revisit issues that it had investigated previously and to take further evidence from the relevant senior officials. The Committee may thus satisfy itself as to the progress that has already been made in response to audit recommendations and, where necessary, act as a spur for further action.
8. The value of such reports is illustrated below. I shall continue to be flexible and responsive to issues that arise in following up the Committee’s recommendations although, as the Committee will see, I have already identified topics for follow-up work in 2007/2008.
- a) In early 2005, the Committee held three evidence sessions and published a highly critical report on **NHS waiting times**. That report led to a sea change in the Assembly Government’s approach to waiting times. In July 2006, the Committee considered my follow-up report, which detailed the significant progress that the NHS and Assembly Government had made in reducing waiting times, and in tackling their underlying causes. My

report also showed that the Assembly Government's overall strategy for the NHS and its plans for delivering shorter waiting times were in accord with the Committee's previous recommendations.

- b) The Committee also took evidence on the impact of its recommendations on **estates management and procurement in the further education sector**. In particular, I reported on the welcome progress that has been made in bringing further education estates in line with disability legislation, although further progress is still required. I also noted the reported financial savings that have been made through improved procurement processes across the sector, although the Committee made recommendations aimed at helping the further education sector better identify the full scale of such savings.

My extended powers and the creation of the Wales Audit Office are enhancing the quality and impact of our audit work

9. The Committee is aware that my new powers under the Public Audit (Wales) Act present me with the ability to examine expenditure and delivery across whole systems in the Welsh public service. The benefits of being able to examine in more detail the role of local public sector bodies in delivering Welsh Assembly Government programmes and priorities have been demonstrated in a number of my recent and forthcoming reports.
10. A good example of the benefits of my increased powers is provided by my examination of **the finances of NHS Wales**. Previously, while the Auditor General was the auditor of NHS Summarised Accounts, the Audit Commission or its appointed auditors audited the accounts of the individual health bodies. I have used the opportunity presented by my taking on the annual audit of all NHS bodies to provide an enhanced level of reporting: by examining the financial health of each NHS body, I am able to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the overall state of NHS finances.
11. It is increasingly the case that policies do not respect organisational boundaries. In many parts of the public service, the Assembly Government provides a strategic lead, but the achievement of its objectives depends on delivery by local organisations. This is certainly the case in three of my forthcoming reports: on Access to the Countryside, Increasing Physical Activity and the National Homelessness Strategy. It would have been considerably more difficult to do justice to these complex issues without my powers to access more directly local organisations, such as local government. My proposals for 2007/2008 will continue to take advantage of these new powers.
12. My report on **Adult Mental Health Services**, considered by the Committee earlier this year, was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government. Based on detailed audits of local bodies, my report provided a baseline of the national performance. In some ways, this report is an exemplar of the continuum between my local work and national studies. The Committee's recommendations have had an impact, with the Assembly Government producing a revised national service framework, and a national action plan that

incorporates the Committee's recommendations. Locally, Local Health Boards and NHS trusts in partnership with other stakeholders have been required to produce their own action plans that set out how they will address the key gaps in services identified by my report. The Committee's report will be used to inform future local audit work; this, in turn, may lead to a follow-up national report for the Committee. I see this example of the constructive links between my local and national work being replicated in other contexts.

My proposals for future examination need to be considered in the context of the totality of my work

- 13.** My programme of value for money examinations presented to the National Assembly and considered by the Audit Committee is not, of course, the totality of my work. In previous years, the Committee has also considered at least two reports a year arising from my financial audit work: my annual report on the finances of NHS Wales, and my general report on matters of wider interest arising from financial audit work across the whole audit field. I shall continue to produce these reports on the results of financial audit work in 2006/2007, so that these may be considered by the Audit Committee. However, as part of the development of my operational strategies for the central government and health sectors, I am considering ways in which I can improve these reports to maximise their impact and to help address the core themes of the Wales Audit Office's corporate strategy. For example, in the case of the general report, there is an opportunity to make better use of the additional assurance work undertaken as part of the financial audit of individual local bodies to address common value for money issues across the sector.
- 14.** The Committee has also, at different times, considered reports which arise from correspondence received from members of the public. Most recently, as described in paragraph 4, the Committee had the opportunity to take evidence on the award and management of the contract for out-of-hours GP services in Cardiff.
- 15.** As I have explained to the Committee previously, following the extension of my remit, my staff undertake work in the NHS that is intended to help local bodies improve their use of resources rather than form the basis of evidence sessions. Such work is funded by fees from the bodies concerned. This work includes a rolling programme of data collection and analysis that covers particular aspects of local NHS business, such as ward staffing and pathology services, known as the Acute Hospital Portfolio. Although much of this material is focused on local risks, I have made particular use of the Acute Hospital Portfolio work to inform my national value for money programme, notably in my recent report on making better use of NHS day surgery, on which the Committee took evidence in September 2006.
- 16.** My specific proposals for new value for money examinations also need to be considered in light of other examinations currently being worked on, or due to commence during the current financial year (Figure 1). Such work in progress will form the basis for the Committee's evidence sessions up to and beyond the

2007 National Assembly elections. Annex 1 also describes three notable pieces of ongoing cross sector work that I shall be undertaking across the central government, NHS and local government sectors over the next 18 months which may be of interest to the Committee, namely:

- Making the Connections;
 - Auditing Efficiency Gains; and
 - The National Fraud Initiative.
17. Naturally I will wish to retain some flexibility in my approach to this planned programme of value for money work, so that I can be responsive to developments in the audit field, as well as to emerging issues of concern for the Audit Committee, or for the public more generally. For instance, as set out in Figure 1 below, I have deferred two examinations, on Informing Healthcare and on Maintaining Commercial Skills, to make room in my programme of work for my investigation of the Welsh Ambulance Services, undertaken at the request of the National Assembly, and for my examination of the Red Dragon project at St Athan, which I am undertaking in collaboration with the National Audit Office in response to an inquiry and report earlier this year by the House of Commons Defence Select Committee.

Figure 1: Value for money examinations under way or commencing shortly

Title of examination	Status - as at September 2006
Public access to the countryside	Clearance
Homelessness	Clearance
Support for the LG project	Clearance
Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust	Drafting
Arts Council of Wales: capital projects	Drafting
Tir Gofal	Drafting
Increasing physical activity and its benefits	Drafting
The new General Medical Services contract	Drafting
Hospital acquired infection	Fieldwork
Chronic disease management	Fieldwork
Procurement of the new building for the National Assembly for Wales	Scoping
Regional Selective Assistance	Scoping
Higher and further education institution mergers and collaboration	Scoping
Child and adolescent mental health services (in partnership with Healthcare Inspectorate Wales)	Scoping
Sustainable development – business decision making	Scoping
RAF St Athan and the Red Dragon project (in collaboration with the National Audit Office)	Scoping
Flood risk management	Scoping
The Homebuy scheme	Not yet started

Title of examination	Status - as at September 2006
Capital investment in schools	Not yet started
Integrated transport	Not yet started
Wales Millennium Centre	Not yet started
Informing healthcare	Deferred to 2007/2008
Maintaining commercial skills during the process of incorporating ASPBs into the Assembly Government	Deferred

My 2007/2008 proposals are aligned with the key objectives of the Wales Audit Office's strategy for the whole of its work over the next three years

18. The Committee will be aware that I launched my three year strategy for the Wales Audit Office at our first external stakeholder conference in May 2006. This conference attracted considerable interest from across the public sector in Wales and demonstrates the value of bringing together key figures in public life, to focus on how best to develop and improve the Welsh public service.
19. From the strategy I have identified five core themes which will underpin all of the Wales Audit Office's work, including the design of the individual studies proposed as part of this programme, over the next three years. These five themes are:
 - a) examining how partnerships and collaborative working can be improved to maximise benefits to the public;
 - b) improving the quality of financial and performance management in the NHS;
 - c) facilitating whole systems thinking and responses;
 - d) strengthening corporate governance and tackling fraud; and
 - e) identifying, evaluating and helping public services introduce good practice.
20. My individual proposals for examinations are identified through a process of assessing risk to value for money. This, of course, goes beyond simply identifying the obvious wasting of resources and, in line with my strategy, also encompasses identifying scope to improve the use of resources, such as through improvements in service through better organisation. The process is also guided by considerations of financial materiality—the amount of money involved—and materiality by nature, for example the greater inherent risk attached to projects that are novel or ambitious. In respect of NHS Wales, my staff have used the risks identified at a local level with individual health bodies to identify priorities for my future work across the sector.
21. Figure 2 sets out a suite of options for value for money examinations that could be undertaken over the next three years. The strongest candidates for the coming financial year 2007/2008 are emboldened. After taking account of the

views of the Committee I shall then decide which examinations will form my final programme of value for money examinations for 2007/2008.

22. In most cases, these examinations will address more than one of my five key strategic themes for the work of the Wales Audit Office, as described in paragraph 19, but they are categorised in Figure 2 on the basis of their best fit with a single theme. For example, the theme of identifying, evaluating and helping public services introduce good practice will be a feature of all of my work over the next three years and I am also considering how best to capture and disseminate guidance on good practice as it arises. However, this theme is a particular focus of my proposed follow-up work which will examine the extent to which my previous recommendations and those of the Committee, have been implemented.
23. Annex 2 provides a brief summary of the issues each study might address, although their precise form will be determined following the initial scoping phase for each piece of work, using the Issue Analysis Drawing Conclusions (IADC) approach. This approach is providing rigour, clarity and brevity in all of my audit work and facilitates closer dialogue with audited bodies in the design of this work, as well as in agreeing its key conclusions.
24. Work on these projects will be scheduled across the year, with some projects not starting until later in 2007/2008. This scheduling of work is intended to provide the Audit Committee with a steady stream of material for its consideration, and to provide the Committee with the opportunity to take evidence on a range of subject matters across different categories of expenditure for which the Welsh Assembly Government is responsible.

Figure 2: Options for value for money examinations in 2007/2008 and subsequent years

Ref.	Title of examination (preferred options to be started in 2007/2008 are highlighted in bold)
Examining how partnerships and collaborative working can be improved to maximise benefits to the public	
1	Communities First
2	Emergency planning - Civil Contingencies Act
3	Impact of the Teacher Workload Agreement
4	Tackling substance misuse
5	Working with the voluntary sector
6	Developing markets for Welsh food produce
7	Supporting People
8	Selling Wales
9	Wales and Borders train services
10	Education of looked after children
11	Making the most of intellectual capital in the cultural sector

Ref.	Title of examination (preferred options to be started in 2007/2008 are highlighted in bold)
12	Arts and culture touring and lending initiatives
13	Maximising the benefits of major sporting events
Improving the quality of financial and performance management in the NHS	
14	Informing Healthcare (<i>deferred from 2006/07</i>)
15	Management of NHS capital investment programmes
16	NHS sickness absence (<i>follow-up</i>)
17	Securing benefits from pay modernisation
18	Performance management arrangements in health and social care
Facilitating whole systems thinking and responses	
19	Finance Wales
20	Operations of the Forestry Commission Wales
21	Adult mental health services (<i>follow-up</i>)
22	Tackling obesity
23	Services for older people
24	Managing climate change – reducing carbon dioxide emissions
25	Basic skills
26	National planning and funding system in further education
27	Iaith Pawb: Creating a bilingual Wales
Strengthening corporate governance and tackling fraud	
28	NHS clinical negligence (<i>follow-up</i>)
29	Compliance with equalities legislation
30	Creation of the Department of Enterprise, Innovation and Networks
Identifying, evaluating and helping public services introduce good practice	
31	Collections management at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (<i>follow-up</i>)
32	Payments to farmers (<i>follow-up</i>)
33	Developments in the control of bovine tuberculosis (<i>follow-up</i>)
34	The Merlin contract (<i>follow-up</i>)
35	Free breakfasts in primary schools
36	Raising attainment and individual standards in education

- 25.** Once I have had the Committee's views on these proposals, I intend to produce a final programme for presentation to the Committee early in 2007. In keeping with the need for responsiveness and flexibility, as illustrated in paragraph 17, I shall keep these proposals under close review as to their continued prioritisation, particularly in the light of any significant policy or expenditure changes that follow the forthcoming National Assembly elections in 2007.

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- 26.** I invite the Committee to give me an indication of the subjects that particularly interest Members and to suggest any other potential topics that are not among those that have been listed.

Jeremy Colman

Auditor General for Wales

4 October 2006

Annex 1. Notable ongoing cross sector work across central government, local government and the NHS

Title	Outline
Making the Connections	This project is currently being rolled out across the whole of the Welsh public sector in Wales and aims to answer the question: 'Is the public sector making adequate progress in implementing the Making the Connections agenda to deliver better services'. The project will assess progress in four key areas identified within Making the Connections: working together as the Welsh public service; making better use of resources; putting the citizen at the centre; and engaging the workforce. The focus will be on identifying the key actions that have already been implemented, barriers to progress, potential solutions and good practice that could be shared with other public bodies.
Auditing Efficiency Gains	Wales Audit Office staff are currently undertaking a project to assess the validity of reported efficiency gains at public bodies, and determine whether those organisations have met their efficiency targets. In the case of local government, efficiency gains as planned and reported under the Wales Programme for Improvement must consist of genuine and sustainable changes to business practices which either yield cash savings or allow more or better services to be provided for the same resource input. Cuts in budgets do not of themselves represent efficiency gains.

Title	Outline
National Fraud Initiative	<p>The National Fraud Initiative is a data matching exercise established by the Audit Commission in England that helps detect fraudulent and erroneous payments from the public purse across the United Kingdom. This identifies, for example, multiple (and fraudulent) claims for housing benefit, or claims for benefit where people are in well-paid employment. Since 1996 over £7.5 million of fraudulent and erroneous payments have been detected in Wales, despite the Initiative being largely confined to local government and local NHS bodies. This study will be a continuation of Welsh participation in the NFI, with the Wales Audit Office and my other appointed auditors working in partnership with the Audit Commission. As the NFI is being conducted in Wales under my powers as Auditor General, it will also enable wider coverage across the rest of the Welsh public sector. In view of this wider scope, and given the past results of the exercise, the study could yield substantial financial savings as well as providing important benefits in terms of safeguarding public funds and the conduct of public business.</p>

Annex 2. Details of options for value for money examinations in 2007/2008 and subsequent years

Examining how partnerships and collaborative working can be improved to maximise benefits to the public

Ref.	Title and outline
1	<p>Communities First</p> <p>The Communities First programme is a long-term strategy for improving the living conditions and prospects for people in the most disadvantaged communities in Wales. It is intended to help deprived communities to help themselves. It provides 'co-ordinators' who work with local people, local authorities, voluntary groups and business to establish partnerships and projects that help develop the community in sustainable social and economic ways, such as through the establishment of community-based childcare facilities. The Welsh Assembly Government has allocated over £129 million to the programme since its inception in 2001, with a further £38.2 million available in the budget for 2006/2007. The Assembly Government is currently developing proposals to extend the programme to new areas based on the 2005 Revised Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, as well as re-examining the way in which specific support for Communities First partnerships is funded. This study would examine how funds are deployed and monitored, and assess the impacts achieved, paying particular attention to the findings of, and the Assembly Government's responses to, the interim evaluation of the Communities First programme (published in September 2006) and ongoing internal audit work.</p>
2	<p>Emergency planning (Civil Contingencies Act)</p> <p>The UK-wide Civil Contingencies Act 2004 created a range of requirements for public bodies to meet in respect of their contribution to civil protection. The Act has its foundations in risk management and business continuity. Recent events such as the Boscastle floods, the Buncefield fuel depot fire, the terrorist attacks in London in July 2005 and concerns over the spread of bird flu or flu epidemics among the general population have highlighted the importance of this topic and the need for public bodies to work together to plan for the possibility of such events. This examination would focus on whether public bodies in Wales have the capacity and capability to respond to major incidents. In particular, it would examine whether major incident plans are up to date, comply with the latest guidance and have been tested. This examination would also assess whether public bodies have complied with other key duties, including the implementation of internal business continuity measures.</p>

Ref.	Title and outline
	It would also consider whether there are effective communication mechanisms in place between key partners and the public about what to do in the case of an incident, including minimising harm.
3	<p>Impact of the Teacher Workload Agreement</p> <p>Ministers in Wales and England and the majority of head teacher, teacher and school support staff unions signed the School Workload Agreement in January 2003. The Agreement provides a seven point plan designed to enable teachers to focus on teaching and learning of their pupils, with time and support to enable them to do this. A number of statutory contractual changes underpin the Agreement including: reducing the administrative work teachers undertake, limiting the cover they provide for colleagues and providing guaranteed non-contact time within the timetabled day. These measures have been introduced in three annual phases commencing from September 2003. Schools have to remodel their workforce to implement the Agreement, and the Welsh Assembly Government is responsible in Wales for issuing guidance and making regulations to LEAs to effect these changes and for supporting a national change management programme to help schools implement the changes. The Assembly Government set aside some £33 million to support the Agreement in 2004/2005, £25 million in 2005/2006 and a further £12 million in 2007/2008 (some £70 million in total). There remain disputes about the funding for the scheme, about the overall the cost of implementing the Agreement as well as the allocation of the cash at local level. There is also some evidence that head teachers' workload and hours have increased as a result of the Agreement. This study would assess the effectiveness of the Agreement and its impact.</p>
4	<p>Tackling substance misuse</p> <p>The Welsh Assembly Government launched its strategy 'Tackling Substance Misuse, A Partnership Approach' in April 2000. This is an eight year strategy designed to coincide with the UK strategy 'Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain (1998/2008)'. Responsibility for the local delivery of the substance misuse strategy has been transferred to the 22 Community Safety Partnerships in Wales, established in April 2003 following the reorganisation of the NHS in Wales. A key feature of the Assembly Government's efforts to address this problem has been the establishment of a Substance Misuse Action Plan Fund, provision for which has been increased significantly to £17.6 million in 2006/2007 with a planned increase to £19.8 million in 2007/2008. This study would examine the progress being made by Community Safety Partnerships in taking forward the Substance Misuse strategy at a local level, with particular reference to the distribution of the Substance Misuse Action Plan Fund. However, the precise timing and scope of this study would be influenced by the outcomes of the Assembly Government's current review of its strategy in this area.</p>

Ref.	Title and outline
5	<p>Working with the voluntary sector</p> <p>There are as many as 30,000 voluntary sector organisations operating within Wales, ranging from large organisations with significant budgets and well developed management structures to small community groups with few resources or members and more informal structures. The Voluntary Sector Scheme, set up in 2000, is the cornerstone of the Welsh Assembly Government's relationship with the voluntary sector and covers arrangements for consultation, partnership working and funding. In 2003, the Assembly Government commissioned an independent review of the Scheme, which examined the operation of the scheme and its impacts. The review praised the innovative nature of the scheme and argued that it remained fit for purpose and should not be remade. However, the review also made a significant number of recommendations which it saw as central to the continued success of the scheme. The proposed study would look at the process for, and progress with, implementing the recommendations made by the Independent Review. It would also assess the extent to which the operation of voluntary sector support in Wales is in line with the principles of best practice identified by both the Gershon Review (2004) and the National Audit Office report, <i>Working with the Third Sector</i> (2005). A more broadly scoped study might also assess the effectiveness and efficiency of services delivered through the voluntary sector. With the Assembly Government consulting on its voluntary sector strategy in Autumn 2006, this study would be best started in 2008/2009.</p>
6	<p>Developing markets for Welsh food produce</p> <p>The Welsh Assembly Government's vision for the future of Welsh farming hinges upon the development of niche market food products and greater local food processing capacity. To deliver this vision the Assembly Government supports a range of programmes, such as providing opportunities to exhibit under 'Wales the True Taste' brand, and offers funding under the Food Processing and Marketing Grants scheme. This study would assess the impact of these activities upon the viability of farm businesses in Wales and upon the Welsh economy as a whole. It could also consider the mechanisms for providing such support, assessing the suitability of these practices from the perspective of the buyer and the seller, as well as the Welsh Assembly Government's response to wider national, European and global factors that may affect the success of such initiatives.</p>
7	<p>Supporting People</p> <p>The Supporting People policy initiative came into operation across the UK on 1 April 2003, establishing a new funding and administrative framework for the provision of accommodation based support to vulnerable people. The budget for Supporting People in Wales during 2006/2007 amounts to £123 million. Some £67 million is committed to the Supporting People Grant which is administered by local authorities and provides funds for the elderly and those receiving care services. The remaining £56 million is administered by the Welsh Assembly Government as Supporting People Revenue Grant (SPRG), providing for all other types of support service such as for those with learning disabilities or women escaping from violence.</p>

Ref.	Title and outline
	<p>This study would examine the overall administration of the scheme by the Assembly Government, the allocation and monitoring of expenditure, and the outcomes achieved to date, although the scope and timing of any study would need to be reviewed in light of the ongoing consultation that is taking place with regard to the future of the Supporting People Revenue Grant.</p>
8	<p>Selling Wales</p> <p>The Welsh Assembly Government spends some £24 million per year on promoting tourism, international trade and inward investment. Increases of 15 per cent a year are planned for domestic and international business, while the tourism marketing budget will remain stable at around £13 million. The Assembly Government has brought together tourism and other marketing and business promotion activity under a single division within the Department of Enterprise, Innovation and Networks, and hopes to improve services through an integrated, targeted approach that makes best use of recent successes in tourism promotion. The Assembly Government is also reviewing its brands following the merger with the Wales Tourist Board and Welsh Development Agency. The study would examine the success of this overall marketing and business promotion effort, especially in inward investment where performance has been inconsistent in recent years. The study would examine the performance management framework and reported results, identifying the drivers and constraints to effective marketing and seeking to assess which initiatives are most successful. A review of plans and initial performance could be undertaken as part of the alternative study on the creation of the new department.</p>
9	<p>Wales and Borders train services</p> <p>Under the Railways Act (2005) the Welsh Assembly Government has increased responsibility for the Wales and Borders rail services franchise, but has more limited powers than the Scottish Executive over the rail infrastructure. The Assembly Government has its own programme, from its budget, for opening new lines, including the Vale of Glamorgan line (completed) and the Ebbw Vale line (work due to start in 2006/2007). This study would focus on the effectiveness of the new arrangements for delivering high quality rail services to passengers in Wales, including performance management arrangements, capacity to deliver infrastructure improvements and the risks to the Assembly Government of the new franchise.</p>
10	<p>Education of looked after children</p> <p>The education of children in the care of local authorities (Looked After Children) has been a long-standing concern. In 2005 only 42 per cent of Looked After Children aged 16 achieved 1 GCSE or equivalent at grade A*-G, the same proportion as in 2001, compared with over 95 per cent of children generally. In England, the proportion of looked after children achieving 1 GCSE has risen consistently to 60 per cent. Such children are much more likely to become offenders, homeless, and unemployed than the rest of the population. The educational attainment of looked after children reflects the effectiveness of joint working between education and social services staff, the level of commitment to 'corporate parenting', and the priority given to education by care providers, social workers and managers. The study would assess the current arrangements for accountability and practice and would engage</p>

Ref.	Title and outline
	councils in self-assessment and improvement planning.
11	<p>Making the most of intellectual capital in the cultural sector</p> <p>Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, the National Library of Wales and Cadw (now a division of the National Assembly for Wales) hold various cultural assets in trust for the nation – from collections of objects and works of art to ancient monuments and buildings. These cultural and heritage assets, many of them arguably priceless, are of great interest to a great many people, from specialist researchers to ordinary members of the public, across Wales and worldwide. In addition, the staff of the organisations in whose custody these assets are held, have considerable knowledge about them. The study would examine whether the most is being done to publicise and market these cultural and heritage assets, including what more could be done to generate additional income for those organisations concerned. It would identify and compare good practice within and between organisations, for the wider benefit of other public bodies in Wales with intellectual property assets.</p>
12	<p>Arts and culture touring and lending initiatives</p> <p>In attempting to increase access to the arts, cultural performances and exhibitions, the Welsh Assembly Government and some of its sponsored bodies (the Arts Council of Wales, The National Library of Wales, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales) have undertaken a number of initiatives (including, for example, the ‘Sharing Treasures’ and the ‘Night Out’ schemes) to loan out certain parts of their collections or to take performances, exhibitions and events to people in communities across Wales. The study would look at a number of these initiatives and examine whether they had achieved the desired outcomes, such as widening access, promoting education and strengthening communities. The study’s findings would inform future initiatives and programmes to increase access in the culture sector.</p>
13	<p>Maximising the benefits of major sporting events</p> <p>Cardiff’s Millennium Stadium is due to host seven association football matches as part of the 2012 Olympic Games, while the 2010 Ryder Cup will be held in Wales at the Celtic Manor, Newport, and a 2009 Ashes Test is likely to be held in Cardiff. These are opportunities to promote sport and its benefits in Wales. The study would examine whether the Welsh Assembly Government and the Sports Council for Wales are making the best use of these opportunities to promote their sporting and physical activity programmes and the wider economic benefits that such sporting events present. The study would include some follow-up of issues raised by the current study into increasing physical activity in Wales.</p>

Improving the quality of financial and performance management in the NHS

Ref.	Title and outline
14	<p>Informing Healthcare</p> <p>Informing Healthcare is the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy to support the modernisation of health services in Wales using information and communication technologies over the next 10 years. This is an ambitious programme and consequently has substantial risks associated with it. The examination would look at the overall management of the programme, especially the management of key risks. It would assess organisational capacity, capability and leadership, awareness raising and training for staff, all of which are necessary to ensure effective implementation. It would also examine the robustness of frameworks to ensure value for money from functions to be delivered through PFI/PPP schemes, and how the benefits of the programme are being realised. The study might also examine the current quality of information that is based on clinical data, which is essential for the good management of services. Local audit work at NHS trusts indicates that much of this is of poor quality and that trusts spend some £300,000 on data and benchmarking from commercial sources. This work could therefore seek to identify means of improving NHS Wales' clinically-based data.</p>
15	<p>Management of Capital Investment Programmes</p> <p>The Capital Investment Programme for NHS Wales over the next three years incorporates existing funded developments of just under £410 million and also identifies indicative funding of £1.6 billion for new capital developments. Service modernisation, including secondary care re-configuration and the development of community and primary care services will be a key driver for the Capital Investment Programme. This substantial capital investment is seen as a key under-pinning factor in the delivery of the ten year vision for the NHS in Wales set out in <i>Designed for Life</i>. Each capital investment scheme within the Programme will need to go through the process of business case evaluation. Business cases must demonstrate that schemes are strategically relevant, offer optimum value for money and are commercially viable, affordable and achievable. There is a risk that management arrangements within NHS bodies are not be robust enough to support the timely development of sound business cases or the efficient delivery of approved schemes. The examination would therefore review the overall management and implementation of the Capital Investment Programme. It would include assessments of the capacity and capability of NHS bodies to develop and deliver new capital schemes. It would also look at the support provided to NHS bodies in developing business cases and the timeliness and robustness of the scrutiny of business cases.</p>
16	<p>NHS sickness absence (follow-up)</p> <p>In January 2004, my predecessor as Auditor General for Wales reported that sickness absence was a significant problem for NHS Trusts in Wales, with trusts reporting an average of nearly 16 days lost to sickness absence per full time equivalent member of staff in 2002/2003. A key barrier to the effective management of sickness absence was the lack of robust management information, and there were weaknesses in the way procedures were applied by managers. The Auditor General's report, and that of the</p>

Ref.	Title and outline
	<p>Audit Committee, contained a number of recommendations for the Welsh Assembly Government and NHS Trusts to help improve the management of sickness absence. This examination would assess the progress made with the implementation of those recommendations. It would also assess the extent to which progress in implementing the Electronic Staff Record is helping to support the management of sickness absence.</p>
17	<p>Securing benefits from pay modernisation</p> <p>The NHS in Wales, as in England, is facing a substantial programme of pay modernisation. The main elements of the programme are the amended Consultants Contract in Wales and the Agenda for Change project which involves the introduction of a new pay system for NHS staff. A significant amount of resource has been invested in designing and implementing the pay modernisation agenda, both in terms of financial investment and staff time. The pay modernisation programme is intended to lead to a number of key benefits based around fairer and more transparent pay systems, improved recruitment and retention, better working environments, clearer career paths, better targeted training and better services for patients. There is a risk that the scale and complexity of the pay modernisation programme will mean that benefits realisation associated with the new consultant contract and Agenda for Change is slower than expected or does not happen at all. The examination would therefore assess the progress that has been made with implementation of the pay modernisation programme across Wales and look for evidence that the intended benefits are being, or are likely to be realised. It would also examine the effectiveness of arrangements in place to monitor whether the initiatives are having the intended benefits.</p>
18	<p>Performance management arrangements in health and social care</p> <p>The performance management culture of health and social care services is developing from a historically low base. <i>Designed for Life</i> identifies performance management as a key driver for change and the achievement of challenging service targets. A number of mechanisms and organisations are involved in performance management within the NHS in Wales. The Assembly Government's Regional Offices undertake a key performance management role through monitoring of the Balanced Scorecard and the delivery of service targets. The National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLI AH) and the Delivery Support Unit (DSU) also play an important role in providing capacity and support for improvement. This examination would assess the coherence of the various performance management mechanisms that currently operate within the NHS in Wales, and how effective they are as driver of change and improvement. Progress with the alignment of the different performance management mechanisms across health and social care will also be reviewed.</p>

Facilitating whole systems thinking and responses

Ref.	Title and outline
19	<p>Finance Wales</p> <p>Finance Wales is a company owned by the Welsh Assembly Government that provides investment and management support for small and medium sized enterprises and social enterprises. There is a range of funds, some of which are aimed at particular sectors, which provide investment finance and management support. The company aims to invest £100 million in the period 2000-2007, create access to £300 million of private sector funding, assist 4,000 businesses and create or safeguard 10,000 jobs. It also aims to create self-sustaining funds through re-investing its investment income. The funds are intended to provide funds at commercial rates where the risk is too high for the private sector. The study would examine the performance of Finance Wales against its targets and comparators, risk management, running costs, contribution to wider strategic priorities and progress towards the creation of self-sustaining funds. It would also assess the impact of the investments on the recipients of funding and support, the target sectors and the wider economy.</p>
20	<p>Operations of the Forestry Commission Wales</p> <p>The Forestry Commission Wales (part of the Forestry Commission GB) acts as the Welsh Assembly Government's Department of Forestry and is the steward of the 38 per cent of Welsh woodlands owned by the National Assembly for Wales. Forestry Commission Wales currently employs some 400 staff and, between 2005/2006 and 2007/2008, it will be operating with a Gross Annual Expenditure budget of around £51 million, with £30 million coming from the Welsh Assembly Government and £21 million being generated from the Assembly estate. Over the last few years, the Commission's income from timber sales has reduced, largely as a result of circumstances beyond its control such as a drop in the global price of timber. Each year Forestry Commission Wales allocates approximately £3 million for grants to woodland owners, and over £8 million for social and environmental projects. This study will examine the overall economy, efficiency and effectiveness of operations of Forestry Commission Wales. Possible areas of focus include the Commission's relationships with key stakeholders (notably the Assembly Government and Forestry Commission GB); timber sales and diversification, including the disposal of land for wind turbines and affordable rural housing; or the payment of grants to woodland owners.</p>
21	<p>Adult mental health services (<i>follow-up</i>)</p> <p>In October 2005 I published my report on adult mental health services in Wales which highlighted the need for significant and sustained action in a number of important areas if the National Service Framework (NSF) for Adult Mental Health is to be delivered successfully. The Audit Committee subsequently produced its own report on this subject in July 2005. The Welsh Assembly Government has now updated the NSF and produced a national action plan for adult mental health services. Successful implementation of this action plan will depend on how well NHS Trusts, Local Health Boards and local authorities are able to work together to design,</p>

Ref.	Title and outline
	<p>commission and deliver modernised mental health services. This examination will assess progress with the implementation of my recommendations and those of the Audit Committee, and the extent to which agencies are working together to modernise mental health services to meet the needs of local populations.</p>
22	<p>Tackling obesity</p> <p>Since 1980, the prevalence of obesity has nearly trebled in the UK and is continuing to increase. The latest Welsh Health survey shows that over 50 per cent of adults in Wales are either obese or over-weight (as measured by having a Body Mass Index of over 25). The increasing incidence of obesity has been described as a “health time bomb” and is seen as growing challenge for government. Obese people are more likely to suffer from a number of serious chronic diseases many of which are life limiting. Obesity also creates a significant economic burden through its impact on the NHS and as a cause of sickness absence. Tackling obesity requires a coherent approach to policy setting and local service delivery by a range of different agencies. The examination would assess the impact of obesity on the NHS in Wales and its partners and review the extent to which the Welsh Assembly Government and public sector bodies are working together to tackle the problem. The study would draw on my ongoing examination of the uptake of physical activity and would look to support the public sector’s approach to tackling obesity by identifying examples of good and innovative practice as well any barriers to further progress which need to be overcome.</p>
23	<p>Services for older people</p> <p>The Welsh Assembly Government launched its ten year Strategy for Older People in January 2003, the first such strategy in the UK. Implementation began in April 2003 and is based on collaboration between the Assembly Government, local government, the NHS and other sectors in order to ensure a coordinated approach to older people, and the active engagement of older people in determining how services should be organised and provided. Plans have also been put in place for the establishment of an Older People’s Commissioner for Wales. In March 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government launched a national service framework (NSF) for older people which identified evidence-based standards for improving the health and social care that older people receive and to help ensure equity of access to services. This study would examine the implementation of the strategy for older people, taking into consideration the Assembly Government’s new strategy for social service provision ‘<i>Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities</i>’. It would examine the extent to which joint working between organisations and sectors has been successful in delivering effective services to the elderly, avoiding duplication and ensuring that their needs are considered in formulating policy. Areas of possible focus might include suitability of current funding mechanisms, implementation of initiatives to promote independence and reduce reliance on long term care, provision of specialist services (e.g stroke, mental health, fractures), care homes provision, the impact of NHS service re-configuration, commissioning arrangements and engagement with the elderly in service design and delivery. The aim would be to assess how well strategic service aims are being delivered and to improve the implementation of cross-cutting policies in Wales. The study could also provide a baseline position against which progress with implementation of key elements of the NSF could be measured.</p>

Ref.	Title and outline
24	<p>Managing climate change – reducing carbon dioxide emissions</p> <p>Managing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions requires a number of organisations at local, regional and national level to work together to minimise potential impacts and achieve Wales, UK and international targets. Environment Agency Wales has specific duties in relation to clean air through regulation of industry and working with the National Public Health Service and local authorities on environmental health impacts. Local authorities have a number of duties through transport, planning and environmental health. Other organisations with important roles to play are the Countryside Council for Wales, Carbon Trust and the Energy Saving Trust. This study would analyse the delivery chain, looking at the efficiency and effectiveness of the arrangements for managing greenhouse gas emissions. The study might also analyse how the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners are contributing to UK programmes and whether adequate procedures are in place to measure and report on greenhouse gas emissions. The study could also look at the action being taken by local authorities, especially in relation to Local Air Quality Action Plans, and the use of the planning system in reducing emissions through the transport system, promotion of renewable energy projects and location of developments. The Welsh Assembly Government is in the process of developing departmental action plans to address this issue and, consequently, a study later in 2008/2009 would allow sufficient time for these plans to begin to have an impact.</p>
25	<p>Basic skills</p> <p>Wales has a significant deficit in basic skills defined as Level 1 ability in the National Qualifications Framework in literacy and numeracy. Low basic skills act as a brake on industry and reduce employment prospects for individuals; there is a clear correlation between a lack of basic skills and offending; and parents with low basic skills will have problems helping their children with literacy and numeracy. In April 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government launched a new Basic Skills Strategy through until 2010, to be delivered under the management of the Basic Skills Agency. The new strategy targets ten priority groups and ten "horizontal" themes, which include: quality of provision; working together; and evidence-based practice. The new strategy also sets targets for 2007 and 2010 which are lower than those in its predecessor strategy. This study would examine all or any combination of: improvement in identifying individuals with basic skills deficits; how the individuals concerned are engaged and consulted; progress at the first target stage ie, 2007; how the partners delivering the Strategy, such as the Sector Skills Councils, work together; monitoring arrangements; or Welsh medium issues.</p>
26	<p>National planning and funding system (NPFS) in further education</p> <p>The NPFS is a new planning and funding system for all post 16 learning in Wales, with the exception of Higher Education, and is designed to plan and fund Community Learning, learning in Further Education Institutions, Work Based Learning and learning in School Sixth Forms. The system, which began in 2004, aims to achieve equity of funding across all sectors by 2010. It is designed to bring about a more integrated and equitable system of planning provision and a fairer system of funding it and to remove the many anomalies in the old system. The system includes weightings for population sparsity and social disadvantage. Transitional arrangements protect those institutions which would lose money as a result of the</p>

Ref.	Title and outline
	<p>move to the new system. This study would examine both the way in which the new system was implemented administratively and the extent to which it had achieved its aims of "linking funding with policy objectives in post-16 education and training (outside of higher education) in a coherent, agile and responsive way".</p>
27	<p>laith Pawb: Creating a bilingual Wales</p> <p>Launched in 2002, laith Pawb is the Welsh Assembly Government's national action plan for a bilingual Wales, which seeks to promote and sustain the use of the Welsh Language and to provide people living in Wales with as much opportunity as possible to use and learn the language. Originally scheduled for review in 2007, difficulties relating to the proposed integration into the Assembly Government of the Welsh Language Board have postponed this. The national action plan sets out a number of key targets to be met by 2011, which the Assembly Government is chiefly responsible for delivering but which involve action by a wide range of public, private and voluntary organisations. The study would examine how effective measures to date have been and what specific actions are needed to successfully implement the plan and to take it forward to successor arrangements.</p>

Strengthening corporate governance and tackling fraud


Ref.	Title and outline
28	<p>NHS clinical negligence (<i>follow-up</i>)</p> <p>In February 2001, a report by my predecessor as Auditor General for Wales highlighted the fact that clinical negligence was costing the NHS substantial sums of money each year and that more could be done to reduce the cost and personal suffering associated with clinical negligence. Recent figures show that medical mistakes have cost more the £335 million over the last seven years in compensation and legal fees. Although the costs of claims did reduce between 2004/2005 and 2005/2006, £37 million was still paid out last year. The examination would review progress made in implementing the recommendations made by the Auditor General and the Audit Committee in 2001 and would assess whether initiatives to control risk and cut cost of clinical negligence, such as those introduced by the Welsh Risk Pool, have been successful. The opportunities to undertake this work in partnership with other review bodies such as Healthcare Inspectorate Wales and the Welsh Risk Pool would be fully explored.</p>
29	<p>Compliance with equalities legislation</p> <p>The field of diversity and equality is changing rapidly. Relevant legislation includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Race Relations Amendment 2000 Act places a duty on public bodies to have in place a Race Equality Scheme; • the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 introduces a requirement for public bodies to have a Disability Equality Scheme in place from December 2006; and • the Equality Act 2006 requires public bodies to have a gender equality scheme in place by April 2007 and demonstrate fair treatment of women and men in the delivery of policy and services as well as in their employment. <p>Non-compliance with legislation puts public bodies at risk of being fined and taken to court as the new duties are enforceable by law rather than being dependent on complaints being made by individuals. This study would examine how effectively the Welsh Assembly Government is meeting its own commitments under equalities legislation as an employer and service provider. It would also consider the Assembly Government's role in providing support to the rest of the Welsh public sector to help meet these obligations. In doing so it would follow up the action taken in response to the recent equalities audit commissioned by the Assembly Government. It is envisaged that this study would lead to the development of an audit methodology that could be applied more widely across the public sector and that the development of this approach would be undertaken in close conjunction with relevant partners, such as the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality.</p>

Ref.	Title and outline
30	<p data-bbox="339 315 1193 342">Creation of the Department of Enterprise, Innovation and Networks</p> <p data-bbox="339 353 1345 790">The creation of the Welsh Assembly Government's Department of Enterprise, Innovation and Networks was the biggest change to the organisation of publicly funded economic development in Wales for a generation. The new department is intended to create synergies, streamline operations for customers, shorten decision chains, improve accountability and generate savings for use in front-line activities. The study would consider how well the new department had maintained continuity of business and addressed key policy priorities, notably the implementation of a robust performance management system, integration of service delivery in key areas, preparation for the 2007-13 European funding round, and achievement of financial savings. The focus would be on these issues rather than looking back at the merger process itself, although this might form part of the study so that any useful lessons could be identified and disseminated more widely.</p>

Identifying, evaluating and helping public services introduce good practice

Ref.	Title and outline
31	<p>Collections management at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (follow-up)</p> <p>In 2004 my predecessor as Auditor General and the Audit Committee published reports on collections management at the National Museum and Galleries of Wales (now Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales). Although drawing attention to the improvements the National Museum had made in terms of the information it held about its collection and the quality of its storage, these reports highlighted particular concerns about a substantial backlog of work in record keeping and conservation and, collectively, included 25 recommendations for improvement. This study would assess the progress made by the National Museum in improving its collections management since publication of these reports.</p>
32	<p>Payments to farmers (follow-up)</p> <p>In 2003, my predecessor as Auditor General reported on grant and subsidy payments made to farmers. These payments were made under a variety of European Union Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) schemes. The report found that in 2002/2003 almost £50 million, or 25 per cent, of CAP money was not paid when it should have been. Payments were delayed because of wide ranging problems with a new IT system designed to authorise payments, including difficulties with the scanning technology and underestimates of the time needed for testing. However, since then, payments have been made on time. Since the publication of the Auditor General's report, and that of the Audit Committee in March 2004, the system for payments has changed with the introduction of a Single Farm Payment scheme in January 2005. This study would follow up on the findings and recommendations of these two reports, and look at the flexibility of the IT system in handling changes to the payment system.</p>
33	<p>Developments in the control of bovine TB (follow-up)</p> <p>The incidence of TB in Welsh cattle has been increasing since 1988. The Welsh Assembly Government, under both its Animal Health and Welfare strategy and Farming for the Future, has recently put in place a package of measures to address the spread of this disease. This study would assess the costs and effectiveness of the Assembly Government's efforts to protect areas of low incidence of the disease and reducing the incidence of disease in areas of high incidence. It would also assess progress against the recommendations in the Auditor General for Wales (2003) and Audit Committee (2004) reports on compensating farmers for bovine TB.</p>
34	<p>The Merlin contract (follow-up)</p> <p>In March 2006, I published my report on the procurement of the Merlin contract for ICT and business change across the National Assembly for Wales, which was followed by publication of the Audit Committee's report on this subject in September 2006. This contract will cost around £220 million over ten years.</p>

Ref.	Title and outline
	<p>The Audit Committee's report recognised that lessons had been learnt from the previous ICT procurement exercise, but concluded that slippage in the delivery of new equipment and the current standard of ICT performance presented a serious risk to the National Assembly's business. In its report, the Audit Committee made ten recommendations covering future procurement, performance and managing risks. A follow-up study would focus on the Assembly Government's progress in implementing the Audit Committee's recommendations and whether ICT performance under the Merlin contract has improved. It could also examine the ICT arrangements for the new Assembly Commission following separation from the Welsh Assembly Government.</p>
35	<p>Free breakfasts in primary schools</p> <p>The free school breakfasts initiative across Wales' 1,588 maintained primary schools (with 285,000 pupils) started in September 2004 in Communities First areas in nine Local Authorities and will become available in all maintained primary schools in Wales which wish to adopt it by January 2007. The policy is based on research into the health and educational benefits of a nutritious breakfast and grew out of a movement encompassing hundreds of different "breakfast clubs" across Wales. The initiative is intended to boost learning outcomes and reduce behavioural problems. Reduced truancy rates are also expected. This study would consider how the scheme was implemented, take-up rates (with particular regard to key target groups such as Communities First areas) and outcomes in terms of education and health.</p>
36	<p>Raising attainment and individual standards in education (RAISE)</p> <p>RAISE is intended to target disadvantaged pupils and raise their level of performance. The programme budget is £16 million a year and is funded initially in 2006/07 and 2007/2008 primarily out of the additional resources allocated to Wales in the 2006 UK budget. The funding will be distributed to over 600 schools where more than 20 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals (£14.4 million) and to Local Authorities to support the learning of Looked After Children (£1 million). The study would examine how the programme adds value to other Welsh Assembly Government schemes to tackle inequalities in education; the criteria for success; monitoring arrangements; examples of good practice; and outcomes.</p>



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