



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Wales Audit Office / Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru
2-4 Park Grove
Cardiff / Caerdydd CF10 3PA
Direct Tel / Ffôn: 029 20 262 641
e-mail / e-bost: jeremy.colman@wao.gov.uk
PA / CP: Fiona Bashford, fiona.bashford@wao.gov.uk
www.wao.gov.uk

JEREMY COLMAN, AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES / ARCHWILYDD CYFFREDINOL CYMRU

Ms Janet Davies AM
Chair of the Audit Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Date 16th November 2006
Our reference JC/0410/fgb
Your reference
Tel No 029 2026 2641
Fax No 029 2026 2631
E-mail jeremy.colman@wao.gov.uk
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Dee Chan,

**WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT
THE MERLIN CONTRACT - ENABLING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO CHANGE ITS
BUSINESS PROCESSES THROUGH ICT**

The Clerk's letter of 25 October 2006 requested my advice on the Welsh Assembly Government's response to the recommendations made by the Audit Committee in its report *The Merlin Contract - Enabling the National Assembly to change its business processes through ICT*.

The Welsh Assembly Government's response welcomes the Committee's report and accepts all ten of the Audit Committee's recommendations. Five of these recommendations relate to strengthening the procurement of a future replacement system for Merlin and the Welsh Assembly Government's response recognises the applicability of these recommendations to future major procurements more generally, for example those recommendations relating to the scrutiny of procurement costs (recommendation 2) and to the use of external advisors (recommendation 1).

The response also sets out the actions being taken to address the other five of the Committee's recommendations relating to the management of the Merlin contract, in particular to improve the standard of service being delivered (recommendation 6), improving user satisfaction particularly amongst Assembly members and their staff (recommendation 7), and to improve control over ICT user costs (recommendation 8).

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The Wales Audit Office will continue to monitor the progress made by the Welsh Assembly Government in implementing the Audit Committee's recommendations, and will draw to the Committee's attention any areas where we think that further action by the Committee is merited.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy 

Jeremy Colman
Auditor General for Wales