Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

1.1 The Minister for Local Government and Government Business welcomed members to the twelfth meeting of the PSLG.

1.2 The Minister welcomed Jeff Cuthbert AM, Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty and Peter Davies, Commissioner for Sustainable Futures to the meeting. She also welcomed Iwan Davies, who was attending the meeting to present the final report of the Childhood Obesity project.
1.3 The Minister announced Andrew Goodall was stepping down after four years as Chair of the Effective Services for Vulnerable Groups (ESVG) Work Programme and thanked him for his leadership and contribution to the ESVG Programme and public service reform more widely. She confirmed Jeff Farrar, Chief Constable, Gwent Police had accepted the invitation to become the new ESVG Chair.

1.4 Apologies had been received from Peter Vaughan, Chief Constable, South Wales Police; Colin Everett, Chief Executive, Flintshire County Council and SOLACE representative; Mark James, Chief Executive, Carmarthenshire County Council; Graham Benfield, Chief Executive, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) (Phil Jarrold deputising); Sian Davies, Managing Director, Vale of Glamorgan Council; Owen Evans, Director General, Education and Skills (Brett Pugh deputising) and David Sissling, Director General, Health, Social Services and Children (Leighton Phillips at the meeting).

2 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising [PSLG (12)-17-02 Paper 1]

2.1 The minutes were agreed with no amendments.

2.2 Cllr Bob Wellington confirmed he had written to all Local Authorities in relation to fleet and passenger management services and whereas there had been a limited number of responses, he did not see what more the WLGA could do. He noted the link between the National Procurement Service and Asset management.

2.3 Helen Paterson said several Local Authorities had volunteered directly to take part in a pilot fleet management project including Carmarthenshire; Vale of Glamorgan, Flintshire, Swansea, Wrexham and Neath Port Talbot. She advised the project, which had been discussed at the National Assets Working Group (NAWG) on 30 January was seeking approximately £40,000 - £50,000 to support the diagnostic reviews. The Minister asked Helen to provide a paper setting out the proposal for her to consider.

2.4 Will Godfrey said a letter would issue shortly concerning the governance arrangements of the Procurement Board in order to ensure senior level staff attendance at the Board.

2.5 Helen Paterson confirmed the National Procurement Service Fleet Category Manager (Diana Frances) had attended the last meeting of the NAWG and a standing invitation for her to attend future meetings had been extended. Helen also advised she would be speaking at an Asset Transfer seminar on 15 May.

Action 1: Helen Paterson to provide a paper covering the need for funding and support on the fleet management project for the Minister’s consideration.
3 The Future Generations Bill – national conversations [oral]

3.1 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty provided an update on The Future Generations Bill, which would place a duty on public services in Wales to put sustainable development at the heart of their work. A Written Statement was due to be issued the following day (to be circulated to the Group), which would set out more information about the Bill and the proposed long term goals for the public service. The draft goals were:

- Wales is prosperous and innovative
- Wales is a more equal nation
- Wales uses a fair share of natural resources
- People in Wales are healthier
- Communities across Wales are safer, cohesive and resilient
- People in Wales participate in our shared culture, with a thriving Welsh language.

3.2 He advised the Bill was on course to be introduced into the Assembly in July 2014. Subject to achieving Royal Assent by April 2015, organisations would be subject to the proposed duty in 2016. The Minister said he was happy to discuss any issues raised by the Bill.

3.3 Peter Davies confirmed a pilot national conversation to enhance the understanding of the long term issues which future generations might face would be launched the next day. A number of engagement exercises would take place over three months, which would feed into an interim report to be published prior to the introduction of the Bill. He encouraged the Group to consider how existing networks could be used to assist with the national conversation.

3.4 Jack Straw reported on the pilot work being undertaken in Swansea, and said a vision for public services was needed. He reflected the goals appeared non controversial but the bigger challenges would be around culture and the need for systemic change.

3.5 Andrew Goodall highlighted the collaborative work on preventative approaches already underway, for example through the ESVG Board and the Greater Gwent Collaboration Board ‘G7’. He noted the importance of ensuring the NHS participated with the work.

3.6 The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty thanked Jack Straw for the work undertaken in Swansea and advised the Bill would put Local Service Boards and Single Integrated Plans on a statutory footing with the aim of making collaboration the norm. He advised the Third and private sector were supportive of the principles of the Bill, though there would be no duty placed on them.

3.7 Peter Davies advised he chaired a reference group, whose membership included representatives from all public services. He offered to provide details if members required them.
4 Final Report of Childhood Obesity Steering Group [PSLG (12)-17-02 Paper 2]

4.1 Iwan Davies reported Wales had the highest level of childhood obesity in the UK, and highlighted the implications of this both for the personal quality of life and wellbeing, but also for public service finances. He said the Preventing Childhood Obesity Steering Group, which he had led, had looked to identify practical steps the public service as a whole in Wales could take to address this issue.

4.2 He advised the Steering Group’s final report identified six changes the Group considered were essential, along with practical recommendations of how these could be implemented locally. The proposal was for the Local Service Boards (LSBs) to take the agenda forward, which Iwan noted chimed with the recommendations from the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery around LSBs, prevention and demand management.

4.3 The Group strongly welcomed the Report. The discussion focussed on the recommendation that the LSBs take the work forward, and a range of views were expressed on how LSBs could engage with this work. The need to focus on outcomes was highlighted as was the need to consider the role of LSBs alongside the role of collective leadership in other forms and at other levels. In particular the role of schools was noted and the wider wellbeing role they could play. Mohammed Mehmet suggested schools should be praised by Estyn when they had done well in this area. Brett Pugh agreed to take the point up with colleagues, and noted Estyn already had a responsibility to report on wellbeing as well as attainment.

4.4 Phil Jarrold welcomed the references to Sports Ambassadors and its peer led approach. He suggested the profile of peer led approaches should be raised across all six themes.

4.5 Andrew Goodall noted the success in reducing teenage pregnancy when a broader focus was placed on the issue and suggested the learning from this should inform the work on childhood obesity, and illustrate change is possible.

4.6 The Group endorsed the report and its recommendations.

Action 2: Brett Pugh to feedback the discussion in relation to Estyn’s role to colleagues.
5 Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery [PSLG (12)-17-02 Paper 3]

5.1 In introducing the item, the Minister emphasised the Welsh Government had not made decisions yet on the Commission’s recommendations. Although the Commission’s recommendations on structures and boundaries were getting most of the media and political attention, she said it was important to remember only 4 of the Commission’s 62 recommendations related to structures.

5.2 The Minister advised she had opened discussion on the Report with political leaders at the Reform Delivery Group at the end of January, and welcomed discussion with PSLG members. She said the paper tabled gave a flavour of views offered at the recent Leading Delivery event, which some of the Group had attended.

5.3 June Milligan gave an overview of the conversations at the Leading Delivery event, which had focussed on the main themes of the Report. A practical exercise to gain the view of the attendees and test those views in groups had been undertaken. On the whole there was consensus with the “crowd sourcing” view. A key issue raised at the event was the role of audit, regulatory and inspection bodies. June also highlighted presentations given by Sarah Payne, Director National Offender Management Services in Wales and Jeff Farrar, Chief Constable Gwent Police as examples of prevention and demand management approaches.

5.4 In discussion of the Commission’s Report, the key messages which emerged were: the need for early clarity and pace in making decisions on implementing reforms; the lack of current capacity to deliver change; the importance of a clear vision and common purpose and values for the public service; and the necessity for strong, clear communication to the public service workforce and the public, recognising the uncertainty raised by the Report. There was consensus much of the Report was non-contentious and could in principle be progressed quickly.

5.5 In specific comments, Huw Vaughan Thomas reflected on the impetus for change created by increasing demands from health whilst resources were reducing. He also cautioned about adding duties which would subsequently have to be monitored by the Wales Audit Office. Martin Mansfield highlighted the importance of early and open engagement with social partners to help, and seek to avoid resistance, to deliver change. Andrew Goodall noted the NHS saw the Report as significant and there was learning on reorganisation which the NHS could share.

5.6 Cllr Bob Wellington reported the mood among Local Authorities was changing with some of the initial resentment of the Report waning. Bob Wellington said the need to retain and recruit the best staff, as outlined in the Report, was being recognised amongst councillors, and he acknowledged the need for strong leadership. He highlighted a paper “Taking Talent Forward” which he said he would send to the Minister.
5.7 Other discussion points included the scale of the challenges posed by some of the recommendations, for example a national shared service. The need for further work on costs and benefits and for early clarity on the impact on current collaborative initiatives such as integration of heath and social care service and merger of regulatory services were also emphasised.

5.8 In summing up, the Minister said the First Minister had the lead on the Report, which related to a number of Ministerial portfolios. She recognised the need pace and momentum and the importance of clear communication. The Minister acknowledged the cost benefit analysis work the WLGA was doing. The Minister also said there were lessons to be learnt from the restructuring processes which the Local Health Boards and the Police Service had gone through. She recognised the crucial role the trade unions would have in implementing any change and highlighted the work undertaken by the Expert Group on Local Government Diversity led by Professor Laura McAllister (which would be published in early March). The Minister confirmed she would take the comments made at the meeting back to her Cabinet colleagues.

**Action 3: Cllr Bob Wellington to send the paper “Taking Talent Forward” to the Minister.**

6 Any Other Business

6.1 The Minister highlighted two papers to note: The Guidance on the Intermediate Care Fund; and the Local Authority Services Performance Publication.

6.2 Reg Kilpatrick gave an overview of the Local Authority Services Performance Publication, which was the third publication of its type. The intention was for as many people as possible, including Local Authority councillors and the public, to look at the publication in order to review the performance of their Local Authority and prompt questions as part of the scrutiny process. He encouraged those attending to make use of it in this way.

6.3 No additional business was raised.

6.4 The Minister advised arrangements for the next meeting would be confirmed in due course, and finished by thanking Andrew Goodall again for his contribution to PSLG.