



CABINET WRITTEN STATEMENT

TITLE: Draft Budget

DATE: 5 October 2005

BY: Sue Essex, Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services

The purpose of yesterday's debate was to lay a draft budget before the Assembly as I was required to do by Standing Orders and in compliance with those Orders.

The vote of the Assembly seeks a revised draft budget, taking into account a number of concerns.

My objectives in responding to yesterday's events are that:

- There should be confidence among the people of Wales and all organisations delivering public services that we will agree a final budget which carries forward the three year spending plans that were agreed last year;
- And that there will be in the normal way a continued dialogue in the next two months over the laid draft budget which will include the Assembly Committees and our partners in service delivery.

In order to achieve those objectives I invite the Assembly Committees to use the meetings already programmed to provide comments on the draft budget, which has been laid.

I understand that arrangements are already in hand for the budget laid by the Government to be discussed by Committees during their next round of meetings and will wish to consider carefully the views expressed during these deliberations.

Within the timetable set out below, I will also propose a provisional local government settlement within the framework of the draft budget.

Alongside the dialogue with the Committees and all others who seek to comment on the laid draft, there will be dialogue with the spokespersons of the Assembly's party groups.

On this basis I intend to consult, the Assembly on a further draft budget on or before the 15th November.

I give this advance notice in order to allow Assembly Committees to be able to organise, now, to consider the further draft budget in the period between 15th November and the laying of the final budget, which I plan to bring before this Assembly in December.
