

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

COMMISSIONING PAPER FOR THE 2001 BUDGET PLANNING ROUND

Introduction

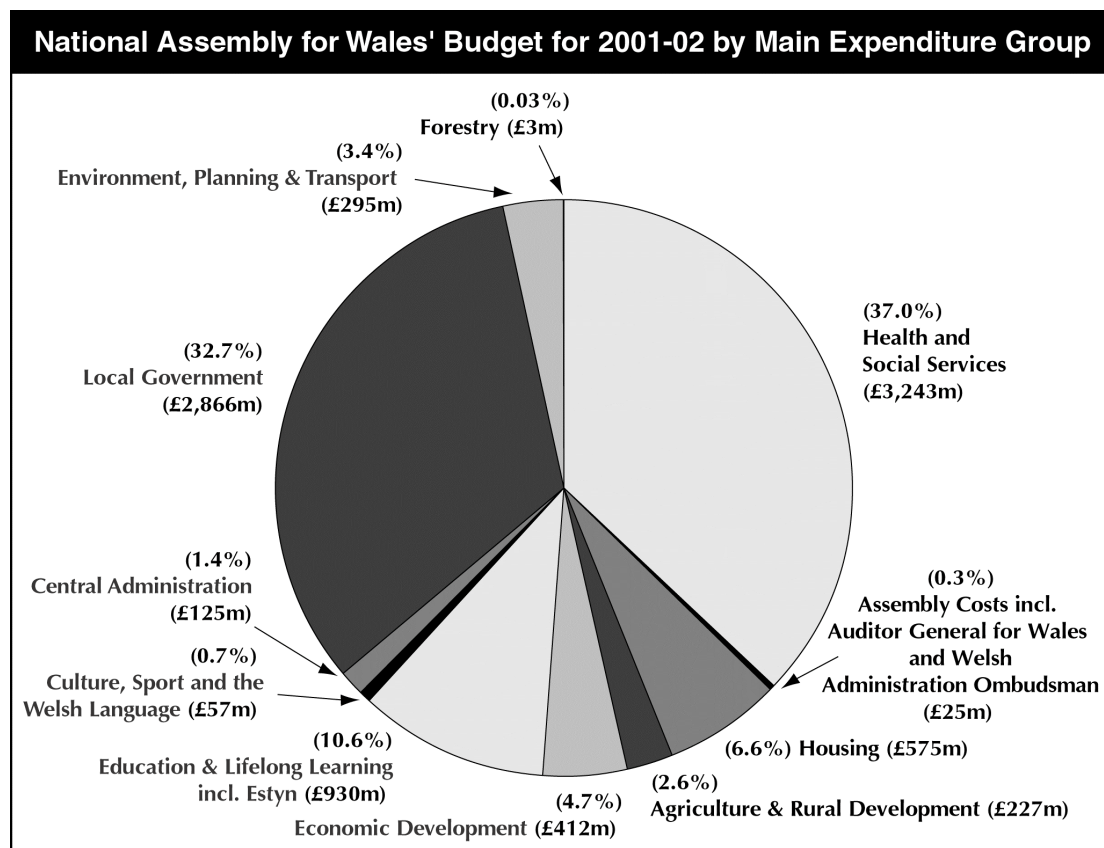
1. This paper describes the plans for the 2001 budget round and formally sets in motion the budget process under Standing Order 19.
2. **Assembly Committees and other partners are requested to respond to this, and any subsequent papers that Ministers may issue by 20 July at the latest.** This will assist the Finance Minister to draw up the draft budget in October.
3. The main aims for this round are:
 - to measure progress and focus on delivering against existing key targets, including those in *Putting Wales First: A partnership for the people of Wales* and *betterwales.com*;
 - to continue to test the effectiveness of our existing performance within existing budgets;
 - to identify emerging pressures;
 - to look ahead, and provide positive ideas for meeting medium to long terms objectives to create a better Wales.
4. This paper is arranged into the following sections:
 - the strategic context;
 - the financial background;
 - initial issues for consideration;
 - the handling of the budget planning round.

The Strategic Context

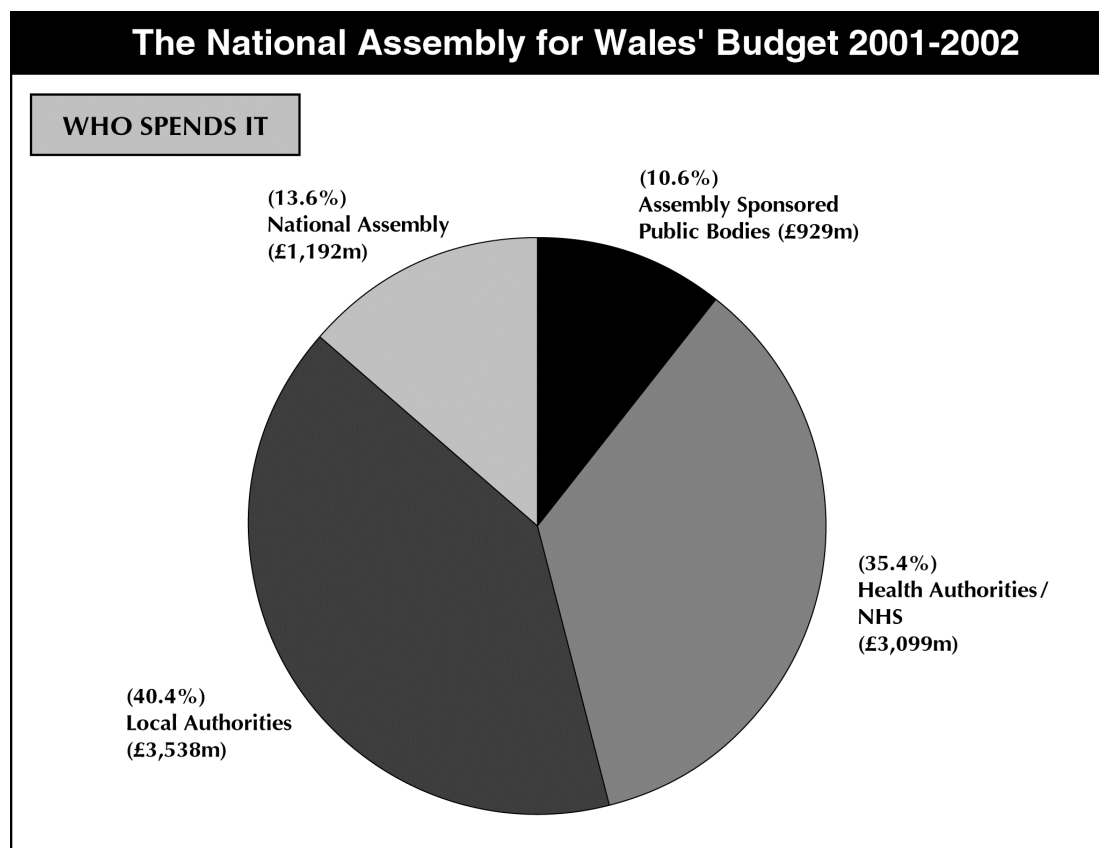
5. In November 2000, the administration launched *Putting Wales First: A Partnership for the people of Wales*. It used as its main themes
 - *Sustainable Development* - meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own
 - *Tackling social disadvantage* - developing an inclusive society where everyone has the chance to fulfil their potential

- *Equal Opportunities* - promoting a culture in which diversity is valued and equality of opportunity is a reality
6. It is agreed that the general policies and processes presently in place, set out for instance in *betterwales.com*, shall be supported unless amended by the partnership agreement. It is essential therefore in this BPR we
 - ensure that we are using our resources in the most effective way to achieve the targets;
 - make sure that our resources are aligned with our priorities
 - test the targets and consider any changes which we need to make to move towards them;
 7. To demonstrate that these matters are being addressed the following questions need to be answered -
 - **what needs to be done to achieve the outcomes in the *Partnership Agreement* and *betterwales.com*;**
 - **what are the policy and/or resource implications for any changes designed to achieve these outcomes?**

The financial background



8. In terms of the main service areas, [almost 48 per cent] of the Welsh budget is spent on health, personal social services and education.



Issues for consideration

9. We would like all committees and partners to consider the following issues as they relate to their areas of interest. In the main they follow the same main themes as last year but it is important that we continue to examine and improve these key areas of the Assembly's work -

Sustainable Development

- How well is current work contributing towards sustainable development and in particular the integration of its social, economic and environmental aspects?

Social Deprivation

- How far is current work addressing deprivation? For background see the new index of deprivation. Particular issues include:
 - how work might change to reflect the proposals for a Communities First programme which bring funding from different sources together;
 - whether there is sufficient consistent focus on the needs of children and young people; and

- the extent to which support is made available for older people.

Equality

- What progress has been made during the last financial year towards meeting the aims of the Assembly for equality of opportunity?
- What steps could be taken to improve performance?

Simplification

- Significant progress has been made over the last 12 months in reducing bureaucracy. What scope is there for further reductions?

Delivery

- Are the current delivery mechanisms the most suitable and effective to deliver the Assembly's goals? In particular:
 - could more use be made of the voluntary sector?
 - Is the role of the sponsored bodies the right one?
 - What barriers remain to effective joint working?

Position Papers from Ministers

10. This commissioning note gives committees and partners early notice of the BPR process. Ministers will bring forward position papers later.

11. The papers will give a view on:

- performance during 2000-2001;
- report on progress, barriers and issues in achieving the key existing 2003 targets, eg in *betterwales*;
- report on progress with *Putting Wales First*;

Draft Budget

12. In the light of the views received, the administration will bring forward a draft budget for consideration in October. This is required under Standing Order 19.2. This will allow Committees and other interested parties to make comments on the proposed allocations and how they meet the strategic aims in *Putting Wales First* and *betterwales.com*.

Final Budget

13. In accordance with Standing Order 19.3, the aim is to set a final detailed budget in early December. This will allow recipients of funding plenty of time to plan for their programmes.

14. Committees and formal partners should respond to the relevant Minister.

15. All other partners, individuals and organisations should respond to:

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