

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 23 October 2002
Time: 9.00 am to 12.00 pm
Venue: Committee Room 2, National Assembly Building

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT BUDGET FOR ENVIRONMENT PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

Purpose

1. To provide the Committee with an opportunity to consider the Cabinet's draft budget proposals for Environment Planning and Transport.

Background

2. The draft budget proposals were published by the Minister for Finance on 8 October and the Assembly discussed them in Plenary session on 15 October. In accordance with Standing Order 19 (as revised) I am inviting your views on the proposals, which I will then pass onto the Minister for Finance. Your views will be given full consideration before the final budget proposals are presented to the Assembly next month. Details are attached in Annex 1 to this paper.

3. In considering the draft budget at our meeting on 19 June, the Committee supported the key priorities I identified, namely:

- seeking to make continued progress towards a better quality, more integrated transport system, keeping a balanced approach to the different modes – rail and road (including buses and community transport);
- continuing to provide adequate resources for our waste strategy to ensure we meet our

- challenging targets;
- seeking to ensure that flood and coast defence schemes are not delayed by lack of finance;
- ensuring sufficient provisions to deliver our obligations for biodiversity, and
- to the extent that funds are available, seeking to pursue opportunities for improvement in quality of life through:
 - further sustainable development activities;
 - developing the design initiative.

Draft Budget

4. The budget provides the resources to take forward our identified strategies and programmes and to support the agencies which we directly fund. Members will note in particular that significant extra resources have been allocated in the draft budget to:
 - take forward the Trunk Road Programme that I announced in March
 - increase the provision for concessionary fares for pensioners
 - provide increases in Transport Grant and the provision for direct support of public transport.
 - provide additional provision for enhanced flood protection, for arterial drainage and coastal protection
 - continue work on the Wales Spatial Plan
 - support community and voluntary work in local communities by increasing grant to Environment Wales.
 - continue support for the Environmental Development Fund.
 - increase funding in the important area of sustainable development to build upon the success the Assembly has already achieved in its sustainable development agenda and help deliver commitments made at the World Summit in Johannesburg.
 - provide additional funding to support our design initiative through the Design Commission.
5. On waste the UK Government will be making an announcement following the publication of the Performance and Innovation Unit Report later this Autumn, and decisions on additional expenditure on waste will follow the conclusion of the study.

Compliance

6. The funds indicated will be allocated under existing schemes or programmes where the Assembly already has functions. These have been delegated to the Minister for Environment and, where appropriate, to staff. There are no issues of regularity or propriety.

Financial Implications

7. The proposals referred to in this paper reflect the draft budget presented to the Assembly by the Minister for Finance.

Contact Point

8. Martin Evans, Director, Transport Planning and Environment Department (Ext. 5727).

Sue Essex

Minister for Environment