



Elin Jones MS
Presiding Officer and
Chair of Business Committee

SeneddBusiness@senedd.wales

1 July 2021

Dear Elin,

Timetable for the 2022-23 Budget.

Under Standing Order 20, as minister with responsibility for Senedd business, I am required to write to the Business Committee two weeks before the end of the summer term to set out a timetable for when the draft budget will be laid and the annual budget motion will be tabled.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has indicated his intention to conduct a multi-year comprehensive spending review, which means we will not know our budget settlement until the CSR concludes in the Autumn. As a result, we will not be able to follow the budget timetable employed in years without a spending review, where we publish our draft budget in early October. As in 2019 and 2020, it will be necessary to publish our draft budget later in the year.

Publishing a draft Budget when learning details of our Budget settlement at such a late stage and, hopefully, providing a multi-year settlement, brings a number of challenges. The Budget Protocol was developed with deliberate flexibilities to recognise such exceptional circumstances including a UK Spending Review. On this basis I am proposing to publish our draft budget, once again, at the start of the Christmas recess, as in the two previous years.

I believe this will ensure we can effectively undertake our budget preparations and provide an appropriate level of detail in our budget documentation, while also ensuring the maximum available time for scrutiny in the Senedd.

We are providing a budget timetable based on publishing the Draft Budget on the latest possible date prior to the Christmas recess, however while unlikely, we cannot preclude at this stage the UK Government publishing a spending review at such a late date it significantly impacts our budget timetable. Should this be needed Standing Order 20.6 does make provision for the Committee to make changes to the timetable at the request of the Government. Subject to this, and on the understanding we will provide a firm timetable as soon as possible after the UK Government has made an announcement regarding the spending review and its Budget, I wish to indicate now that we are planning to publish the outline and detailed draft Budgets together on 20 December, and the final Budget on 1 March 2022.

In proposing these dates I am mindful of both Standing Order 20.5 and the arrangements agreed between the Welsh Government and the Welsh Parliament with regard to the period provide for scrutiny. Standing Order 20.5 provides, in 'normal' circumstances, for the Finance Committee to be given 8 weeks to report on the outline budget proposals and five weeks for committees to consider the detailed Budget proposals. Whilst this cannot be termed a 'normal' year, I remain committed to ensuring the fullest possible scrutiny of our spending proposals. As a result, the timetable I have set out would enable 7 weeks for scrutiny of the draft Budget, comprising 4 sitting weeks and 3 non-sitting weeks.

The Minister for Finance and Local Government is writing to the chair of the Finance Committee to seek the committee's understanding given the circumstances. I would like to take the opportunity at Business Committee to seek confirmation from my fellow Business Managers that they would be similarly supportive.

I am grateful for the Committee's understanding and trust these arrangements are acceptable given the circumstances, which are driven by external factors beyond our immediate control.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Materion Gwledig a Gogledd Cymru, a'r Trefnydd
Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd