



Ein cyf/Our ref RExxxx

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

8 February 2022

Dear Peredur,

I am writing to provide further information on a few issues that were raised during our recent scrutiny session on the Draft budget.

Budget Improvement and Impact Advisory Group

We would be happy to provide further details on the Budget Improvement and Impact Advisory Group once these details are formalised. I am also aware our officials have more broadly discussed the role of the group and how we can best work together on the important area of improving budget and tax processes as outlined in the Budget Improvement Plan and I look forward to further engagement on this matter.

Financial Transactions

A summary of our £1.7bn Financial Transactions capital investments has already recently been provided and copied to the Finance Committee in response to questions raised by Mike Hedges AM during Business Questions as well as during the Finance Committee scrutiny of the draft budget.

Digital Skills and Infrastructure

Digital Infrastructure investment provided for in the draft budgets supports the delivery of improved digital infrastructure throughout Wales.

The investment into this infrastructure supports the delivery of the Welsh Government's Digital Strategy which allows businesses to benefit from fast and reliable digital connectivity supporting them to gain new customers, sell their products, drive efficiency and innovate.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Capital commitments in 2022/23 to support digital infrastructure include funding to support the delivery of improved digital infrastructure, including Next Generation Access Broadband Wales; Local Broadband Fund; Access Broadband Cymru; and Trunk Road Fibre Improvement.

It should be noted however that as telecommunications policy is not devolved to Wales investment in this area is first and foremost a matter for the UK Government and UK budgets.

Business Wales provides businesses and entrepreneurs with a single point of contact for business information, advice and support from the public, private and voluntary sectors, and can be accessed digitally via <http://businesswales.gov.wales> and social media channels; the 03000 6 03000 helpline; and a network of offices located across Wales.

Business Wales provides a range of general business advice, information and signposting as well as specialist strands of advice such as equality & diversity; resource efficiency; international trade; skills; procurement; and mentoring. In addition to the Skills Gateway and Farming Connect.

Business Wales provision includes digital advice and support to businesses pan-wales through the Superfast Business Wales programme <https://businesswales.gov.wales/superfastbusinesswales/> which delivers online webinars on a range of digital topics followed up with 1-2-1 support from a team of digital advisors and a wealth of online material to support businesses digital adoption.

Business Wales offers a combination of online, telephone, 1-2-many and 1-2-1 business support which is tailored according to client need and the different regions of Wales, dependant on local requirements.

The Development Bank of Wales (DBW) helps Welsh businesses get the finance they need to start up, strengthen and grow and provides loans from £1k up to £10m as well as mezzanine, and equity funding; and helps businesses find the right finance partner to leverage in private finance with its own gap finance when necessary. The DBW has the objective of providing greater levels of funding to SMEs and improving the integration of the provision of advice and support to businesses, by working closely with Business Wales.

There was also an action to provide an update on health boards' integrated medium-term plans. This information will be available in early April, so we will arrange for the Committee to be updated then.

Yours sincerely,



Rebecca Evans AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Finance and Local Government