



Ein cyf/Our ref: RE/205/2023

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair of Finance Committee
Senedd Cymru
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12 September 2023

Dear Peredur,

I am writing regarding the timetable for the 2024-25 Welsh Government Budget.

Before the summer recess, the Trefnydd and I indicated the Welsh Government's intention to publish the Budget on 12th December, with the proviso that the date was subject to the timing of the UK Government's Autumn Statement.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer confirmed in Parliament on 5th September that his Autumn Statement would not take place until Wednesday 22nd November. This is when we will learn details of our Budget settlement for the 2024-25 financial year. While I appreciate this will be disappointing to the Senedd, it is no longer possible for us to publish a Draft Budget within the timetable indicated previously.

We would judge that given the potential for significant changes arising from the UK Budget, it would not be possible to produce robust spending plans within the original timetable. Nor would we wish to set plans in advance of the Autumn Statement due to the risk of adverse impacts on delivery partners who may make their own plans based on incorrect assumptions.

The Trefnydd has written to Business Committee to seek the Committee's agreement to the draft Budget being published on Tuesday 19th December, which will provide Welsh Ministers with the absolute minimum of 3 weeks and 4 days needed to prepare spending plans and compile the Budget documentation and supporting tables. This timeframe seeks to achieve the most workable balance between the time required to produce the Draft Budget, for its scrutiny, and to ensure we provide funding certainty to our delivery partners and stakeholders before Christmas.

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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.

I am mindful of the impact this will have on the time available to scrutiny committees to scrutinise our spending plans. It will mean adopting a similar timeline to those in several of the years since the UK government moved to an Autumn fiscal event, with 6 weeks and 4 days being available for Members to scrutinise the Budget before Senedd Committees publish their reports on Monday 5th February. The scrutiny period will necessarily include 3 weeks of Christmas recess.

As we have discussed, the constrained timescale has a similar impact on the time available for Welsh Ministers to develop their spending plans, and this is especially relevant in a year featuring significant inflationary pressures. Nevertheless, Ministers will continue to provide the fullest explanations of their decisions and their impacts in the limited time available to them.

I intend to schedule the debate on the Draft Budget for Tuesday 6th February. The planned dates for the publication of the Annual Budget and for it to be debated will remain unchanged on 27th February and 5th March respectively.

I will make a statement as soon as possible on the Draft Budget in the first sitting week in the New Year. I would be very grateful for your cooperation in circumstances which are again influenced by factors beyond our control.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping underline.

Rebecca Evans AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Finance and Local Government