

Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change

Lee Waters MS, Deputy Minister for Climate Change

20 October 2023

Draft Budget scrutiny 2024-25

Dear Julie and Lee,

The Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee has started its preparations for scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft Budget for 2024-25.

We understand the draft budget will be published on 19 December 2023, so we anticipate holding a scrutiny session with you in January 2024. The Clerking team will be in touch with your office in due course to arrange a suitable date for the session.

To assist the Committee in its preparations, I should be grateful if you would provide information to address the matters set out in Annex 1 in advance of the scrutiny session. Of course, you should not feel limited by our request and are welcome to address any other matters you believe will assist the Committee in its work.

We would be happy to receive a single, co-ordinated response, or if you would prefer, separate responses addressing the issues within your individual areas of responsibility.

I have asked the Clerking team to liaise with your officials about an exact deadline.

Yours sincerely,



Llyr Gruffydd MS,
Chair, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Legislation

How the draft budget provides for:

- Delivery of newly enacted and planned Welsh Government legislation.

Environment

How the draft budget provides for:

- Delivery of the Nature Recovery Action Plan, including management and monitoring of the National Sites Network.
- Nature Networks Programme, Local Places for Nature, the National Peatlands Action programme and Natur am Byth.
- Developing legally binding nature targets and monitoring mechanisms.
- Any other outcomes of the Welsh Government's Deep Dive into biodiversity and implementation of the COP15 global agreement with budget implications.
- Implementation of the 'Green Recovery' work, including the National Nature Service.
- Biosecurity, including Avian flu.
- Replacement for EU LIFE funding.
- Development and delivery of a Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility.
- Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), including delivery of the MPA action plan.
- Water quality, including support for the Better River Water Quality taskforce.
- Implementation of the National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management, including the take up of the Coastal Risk Management Programme.

Climate Change

Detail of how the draft budget allocations support:

- Delivery of the policies and proposals in the Net Zero Wales plan which are relevant to the remit of this committee.

- The impact of UK Government net zero announcements on Welsh Government policies and budget allocations to support net zero.
- Climate adaptation action, and detail of specific allocations to support the new climate resilience strategy (due in Autumn 2024).
- Implementation of the Woodlands for Wales Strategy and recommendations of the 2021 Trees and Timber Deep Dive, including delivering the National Forest and increasing the rate of tree-planting.

Energy and energy efficiency

- Delivery of renewable energy and public sector energy efficiency programmes including the Welsh Government Energy Service, the publicly owned renewable energy developer, and Ynni Cymru.
- Allocations to support new renewable energy targets and development of the heat strategy.
- Policies and programmes to support decarbonisation in the housing sector, including allocations for the Optimised Retrofit Programme, and the next iteration of the Warm Homes Programme.

Transport

- Delivery of the 20mph speed limits policy, particularly details of any ongoing costs / allocations.
- Delivery of the rail franchise and the Welsh Government's rail infrastructure priorities.
- Delivery of the North East Wales, South West Wales and South East Wales Metros.
- The development of Transport for Wales – including an update on the work done to improve TfW's budget process following our report on the 2023-24 draft budget, and a breakdown of TfW's full budget allocation for 2024-25, itemising its corporate budget alongside allocations for delivery of specific programmes as well as rail franchise commitments.
- Investment in the trunk road and motorway network and how these have been shaped by the new roads policy statement / the outcome of the roads review.

- Delivery of active travel policy, including a summary of planned activity and a table detailing total and per capita allocations for active travel for 2024-25, compared with each of the preceding three years. Revenue and capital allocations should be clear and broken down by individual funding stream.
- Support for bus and community transport services, including a summary of planned activity and a table detailing total and per capita allocations for 2024-25 compared with each of the preceding three years. Revenue and capital allocations should be clear and the table should be broken down by individual funding stream.
- Support for EV charging infrastructure provision and the strategy / action plan delivery, including a summary of planned activity and a table detailing total and per capita allocations for 2024-25 compared with each of the preceding three years. Revenue and capital allocations should be clear and the table should be broken down by individual funding stream.
- Support for local transport priorities.

National Infrastructure Commission for Wales (NICW)

- Details of budget allocations for the NICW.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Details of budget allocations for NRW, including

- an update on NRW's 'funding gap', and
- whether this has been closed in its baseline allocations.