

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee

3 June 2024

Dear Peredur,

Scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2024-25: Evidence provided by the Welsh Government

Thank you for inviting us to share views on the Draft Budget process.

On a practical level, whilst we were grateful to the Welsh Government for providing its written evidence in a timely fashion, our main concerns regarding its contents are set out in our [report](#), published in February 2024. The Committee appreciates the timing of the Draft Budget was due to the delay of the UK Budget, but fundamentally there is not enough time for effective scrutiny by Senedd Committees.

It is our view that the impact on equality, social justice and the well-being of future generations need to be taken into account much more rigorously by Ministers when making budget decisions. Every year the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment (SIIA) has failed to offer the detail we believe necessary to justify the Welsh Government's spending decisions.

Improvements

The Committee would like to see several improvements including:

- More clarity and transparency regarding the methodologies used in determining allocations and the reasons behind spending decisions;
- Better use of data including providing rigorous analysis of the impact of spending decisions particularly in respect of different demographic groups;
- Providing summary of feedback and recommendations from stakeholders and advisory groups. This would show how views have already been incorporated into the assessment process, and if not, why this has not been possible; and
- Providing a clear plan for evaluation and monitoring of the impacts over time.

Consideration given to budgetary matters throughout the year

In June, the Committee will be undertaking general scrutiny of the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice, and intends to reflect on recommendations made in previous inquiries including Draft Budget recommendations. The Committee is also considering writing to Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers following the cabinet reshuffle, asking them how their priorities are intended to contribute to the Welsh Government's commitments on equality and social justice in their respective portfolios. Current scrutiny arrangements mean that the strategic focus on equality and social justice across the Governmental departments is often lost, and we hope having a clearer overview of the priorities within each portfolio will assist us in our scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2025-26.

We hope our reflections are useful to your Committee as it conducts its work on this key area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jenny Rathbone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'J' and 'R'.

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

