

Elin Jones MS
Llywydd, Chair of Business Committee

11 July 2024

Dear Llywydd,

Welsh Government Budget Timetable 2025-26

Thank you for your letter of 9 July seeking our views on the proposed deadline for reporting on the Draft Budget 2025-26, as required by Standing Order 20.4. I am also grateful that our letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Cabinet Office was noted at the Business Committee's meeting on 2 July.

I fully appreciate that the Welsh Government's budgetary position remains unclear until the UK Government confirms the date of its fiscal event. I also recognise that publishing a Draft Budget earlier, based on indicative figures, would be problematic, and should only be done as a last resort.

Furthermore I welcome that the Draft Budget will be laid this year during term time. This is an important principle and ensures that Members of the Senedd has an opportunity to consider the Welsh Government's proposals in Plenary as soon as they are published.

However, I am disappointed that the proposed timetable does not address the concerns raised by Committees following the scrutiny of last year's Draft Budget, as outlined in our letter of 27 June. In particular, several Committees called for more time to be made available to scrutinise the Draft Budget, with many noting that the shortened timescales last year made it extremely challenging to meaningfully assess the impact the Draft Budget has on policy areas within their remit and, in

particular, to incorporate views from stakeholders. We ask for further justification from the Welsh Government on why a longer scrutiny window was not considered, particularly as bringing forward the publication date of the Draft Budget to enable more evidence sessions to take place this side of the Christmas recess would be highly beneficial.

Calls were also made by Committees for the Welsh Government to adhere to the two stage budget process, and it is regrettable that this is being circumvented once again this year; the sixth year in a row. As a result, we call for a two stage approach to be prioritised this year, if there is time available after the UK Government's fiscal event takes place.

In addition, flexible scheduling options in the Senedd was suggested by Committees as a way to maximise scrutiny opportunities and I call on the Business Committee to explore options to maximise the opportunities for the Senedd to scrutinise the budget, and to discuss this at a meeting early in the autumn term once the timetable is finalised. Suggestions include:

- automatically enabling Finance Committee to hold additional meeting slots during Christmas recess, should the need arise;
- providing more meeting slots for committees during the budget scrutiny window, including extending the business week and providing more slots for committees to take evidence from stakeholder; this could include allowing committees to meet during Plenary meetings in January, especially if meeting slots fall on Wednesdays; and
- allowing more time for the consideration of committee reports during Plenary meetings to enable detailed policy discussions on each aspect of the Draft Budget.

In summary, whilst the Committee has sympathy with the uncertainties faced by the Welsh Government in understanding its financial position, we strongly feel that this should be balanced by the need of the Senedd to scrutinise detailed proposals and that adequate time should be provided to reflect the magnitude of the tasks facing committees.

We welcome the Welsh Government's willingness to revisit the proposed timetable once the date of the UK Government's fiscal event is known, and look forward to progressing the issues outlined above in the autumn term.

Yours sincerely,



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

