

Rebecca Evans MS
Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and the Cabinet Office

27 June 2024

Dear Rebecca,

Draft Budget 2025-26 Timetable

As you are aware, the Finance Committee agreed to consult other Senedd Committees on their experiences of scrutinising the Draft Budget shortly after the budget process for 2024-25 had concluded.

Building on our approach last year, we wrote to Committees Chairs on 22 March 2024 and received responses from the following Committees:

- Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee
- Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee
- Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee
- Local Government and Housing Committee
- Equality and Social Justice Committee
- Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

The views expressed in those responses have been summarised below under three main headings.

Time available for scrutiny

All of the 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 budget had on policy areas within their remit. Committees also called for the Welsh Government to follow the two stage process when publishing the Draft Budget in future, as a matter of principle, and to avoid setting out minimum timeframes for scrutiny.

In addition, calls were made again for ministerial evidence papers to be published at the same time, or close to, the publication of the Draft Budget. Whilst these are matters for the Business Committee, others called for flexible scheduling options to be developed in the Senedd to maximise opportunities, including increasing the number of committee meeting slots, extending the time available for meetings, and increasing the overall number of days dedicated to Senedd business during the scrutiny period.

Transparency of information included in Draft Budget documents

In line with comments made last year, most Committees felt that the documents published alongside the Draft Budget, particularly the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment, could be clearer in explaining spending outcomes and processes used by the Welsh Government to evaluate spending over time, as well as details of where any budget cuts would fall and their impact on services.

Concerns were also raised about the clarity of funding provided to specific portfolios, including the Welsh Language, International Relations, and Justice. Some Committees also noted the negative impact the recent reconfiguration of cabinet responsibilities has had on their ability to scrutinise budgetary proposals, given their remits now cut across a number of ministerial portfolio areas.

Quality of evidence

Although some Committees noted improvements in the quality of the written evidence provided by the Welsh Government in certain policy areas, and would like this to continue for future budget rounds, others noted that the evidence produced remains unsatisfactory and that it is often inaccurate or incomplete.

As you know, these are matters on which the Committee has consistently pressed the Welsh Government for action, most recently in our [report on the Draft Budget 2024-25](#). We call again for you to consider the issues above when proposing a timetable and preparing documentation for the 2025-26 budget round.

We look forward to being consulted on the proposed timetable for the 2025-26 budget and to engage with you further on these issues over the coming months, both when you set your initial

timetable prior to the summer recess, and should you need to propose changes to that timetable, once the date of the UK Government's autumn fiscal event is known.

A copy of this letter has been sent to the Business Committee and the Trefnydd and Chief Whip.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peredur Owen Griffiths', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

