

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS

Chair

Finance Committee

22 May 2025

Dear Peredur,

Scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2025-26: Evidence provided by the Welsh Government

Thank you for your letter and for giving the Committee the option to feed into your work on the budget process. Whilst the Committee has been broadly happy with the evidence we have received for the most recent budget rounds, we do have some ideas and comments we would like to feed in.

Timing

I am disappointed that the Welsh Government has regularly published its draft budget in a way that means the committee scrutiny period falls over the Christmas recess. I note this is a frustration your Committee shares.¹

Whilst I accept the Welsh Government's budget process is somewhat dictated by the UK Government, the timing of all of this Senedd's budget rounds – falling over Christmas – is not conducive to good scrutiny. This timing puts additional pressure on stakeholders during a time when many people are on leave and offices are closed, and it also restricts the amount of meeting time committees have to review the draft budget. For future budgets, the Welsh Government must work hard to avoid committee budget scrutiny falling over the Christmas recess.

¹ Finance Committee report: **Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25**, paragraph 17



Evidence received

The Committee is broadly content with the evidence we have received as part of the budget process. I would like to note that we have found the breakdown of actions by BEL activity tables particularly useful. In general, as well as providing budget details, we appreciate the fact that budget evidence papers provide a useful general update across portfolios and so are helpful for transparency and ongoing scrutiny.

However, in the future, we would like to see more information about the engagement the Welsh Government has undertaken with specific stakeholders and more widely with citizens on the development of its budget as part of the evidence base. This would help us both understand the thinking behind decisions and allow us to focus our work on the budget.

Limited impact

Whilst I do welcome the opportunity to carry out budget scrutiny, and as noted above it provides a core part of our ongoing scrutiny of the Welsh Government, I personally find the impact of committee scrutiny on the budget somewhat limited. Our proportional system has tended to return very small majority or minority Governments. This means political deals have to be done, usually behind the scenes, to ensure budgets pass. As a result, the budget process itself can feel somewhat like a fait accompli.

Thank you again for the opportunity to feed into this work.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew RT Davies". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Andrew RT Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English