

Rt Hon Elin Jones MS,  
Llywydd and Chair of the Business Committee

25 September 2023

Dear Llywydd,

### **Budget Timetable 2024-25**

Many thanks for the opportunity to comment on the revised timetable for the scrutiny of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget for 2024-25.

The Committee remains frustrated with the limitations of the proposed timetable and, as previously expressed in our letter of 7 July 2023, we believe that the Welsh Government could do more to share its budgetary proposals with the Senedd earlier, to allow appropriate time for Committees to scrutinise the Welsh Government's spending plans and hear the views of stakeholders.

When taking Christmas recess into account, Senedd Committees will now only have three sitting weeks and four days to scrutinise and produce a report with detailed recommendations. This is simply not enough time to allow the detailed scrutiny necessary to hold the Welsh Government's spending decisions, amounting to approximately £22 billion, to account. It is also regrettable that the Draft Budget will now be laid during recess; the second time this will happen in three years. This deprives Members an opportunity to hear directly from the Minister for Finance and Local Government about the Welsh Government's plans on the floor of the Senedd.

However, we also recognise that the Welsh Government has limited discretion in this matter and that this revised timetable is made in response to decisions



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made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at Westminster, without consulting the Minister or taking into account the budgetary procedures and timescales of the devolved nations.

The Committee had hoped to hold its opening scrutiny session on the Draft Budget with the Minister at its scheduled meeting on 13 December. However, in light of the revised publication date, we request the permission of Business Committee to hold that session during the first week of recess, on Wednesday 20 December.

The Business Committee may also want to note that the issue of the timing of UK fiscal events has been an on-going concern of the Committee and was discussed at our meeting on 13 September, during an item on changes to the budget protocol.

In light of those discussions, the Committee will raise the challenges posed by a late UK fiscal event with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, following a similar approach adopted by our predecessor Finance Committee in the fifth Senedd. It was also a key feature of our submission to the House of Commons's Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry into Devolution Capability at Whitehall, and an issue that we will raise at the next meeting of the Interparliamentary Finance Committee Forum in Westminster on 30 November.

In terms of progress in updating the budget protocol, the Committee has been considering the continued suitability of the budget protocol since December 2022 and has since then held constructive meetings with the Minister and her officials on proposed changes. We aim to continue these discussions over the next budget round, in the hope of bringing forward changes to the protocol for the Senedd's consideration later this Senedd term. We will aim to provide an update to the Business Committee on these proposals in due course.

Yours sincerely



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS  
Chair of the Finance Committee



Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

