

A call for information – Welsh Government draft budget proposals for 2014–15

The Committees of the National Assembly are seeking information to inform their scrutiny of the Welsh Government's 2014–15 Draft Budget Proposals. We are interested in exploring expectations of the 2014–15 budget, including financial readiness for the 2014–15 year and the impact of the 2013–14 budget. We will also be considering the use of resource by the Welsh Government for preventative spending measures.

We do not know as yet, what the draft budget proposals will look like, as they will not be published until October 2013. However, indicative allocations for the 2014–15 financial year were published in the Final Budget 2013–14, and restated in the recent Supplementary Budget 2013–14.

In this paper we have detailed four specific questions. You can answer any/all of these, or just let us know in general terms about your views in relation to the draft budget.

The Finance Committee looks at the Welsh Government's budget from a strategic, overarching perspective. We also work with the other Assembly Committees to ensure that proposals for specific Ministerial portfolios are considered in detail. Committees will each undertake their own focussed evidence sessions with the relevant Ministers in order to examine the areas of the budget that fall within their respective remits, and then report to Finance Committee, detailing any concerns they have.

Consultation questions

1. What, in your opinion, has been the impact of the Welsh Government's 2013–14 budget?
2. Looking at the indicative budget allocations for 2014–15, do you have any concerns from a strategic, overarching perspective, or about any specific areas?
3. What expectations do you have of the 2014–15 draft budget proposals? How financially prepared is your organisation for the 2014–15 financial year, and how robust is your ability to plan for future years?

4. What are your views on the Welsh Government's approach to preventative spending and how is this represented in your resource allocation (if appropriate)?

By 'preventative spending' we specifically mean '*spending which focuses on preventing problems and eases future demand on services by intervening early,*

Disclosure of Information

Witnesses should be aware that once written evidence has been submitted to the Committee it is treated as the property of the Committee. It is the Committee's intention to place written papers on its website, and may subsequently be printed with the report. The National Assembly will not publish information which it considers to be personal data.

However, in the event of a request for information submitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it may be necessary to disclose the information that you provide. This may include information which has previously been removed by the National Assembly for publication purposes.

If you are providing any information, other than personal data, which you feel is not suitable for public disclosure, or if you do not wish your identity, as author of the evidence, to be disclosed, this must be clearly identified and it is up to you to stipulate which parts should not be published, and to provide a reasoned argument to support this. The National Assembly will take this into account when publishing information or responding to requests for information.

Providing information to the Committee

Interested parties are invited to submit written evidence to the Clerk of the Finance Committee at the above address, to arrive by Friday 13 September 2013. If you wish to contribute but are concerned that you won't be able to meet this deadline, please speak with the Clerk of the Committee on 029 2089 8409

Further information about the Finance Committee and its call for information can be found at: www.assemblywales.org

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jocelyn Davies', written in a cursive style.

Jocelyn Davies
Chair, Finance Committee

Annex 1 – Background information

Who are we?

The Finance Committee is a cross party committee of the National Assembly for Wales, made up of Members from all four political parties represented at the Assembly.

The Committee is not part of the Welsh Government. Rather, the Committee is responsible for reporting on proposals laid before the Assembly by Welsh Ministers relating to the use of resources.

Who are the other Committees involved in scrutinising the budget?

The other Committees involved in scrutinising the budget are:

- [Children and Young People Committee](#)
- [Communities, Equalities and Local Government Committee](#)
- [Enterprise and Business Committee](#)
- [Environment and Sustainability Committee](#)
- [Health and Social Care Committee](#)

What is the Welsh Government's draft budget?

The draft budget proposals must contain details of the amount of resources the Welsh Government proposes to use in the following financial year and indicative figures for the subsequent two financial years. More specifically it should set out:

- The use of resources by the Welsh Government, Assembly Commission, Auditor General and Public Services Ombudsman.
- Income to be retained by those organisations (rather than being surrendered to the Welsh Consolidated Fund).
- Cash to be withdrawn from the Welsh Consolidated Fund by those organisations.

In recent years, the Welsh Government has also provided a narrative document which further explains detailed allocations to government departments, as well as reserves and other overall allocations.

Why aren't we doing this consultation after the Welsh Government's draft budget proposals have been published?

Responding to this consultation will not preclude stakeholders from also providing information, evidence, concerns and suggested areas for scrutiny to National Assembly for Wales Committees **after** the publication of the Welsh Government's draft budget proposals (on 8 October 2013).

However, Committees will usually begin scrutinising Government Ministers on the content on the draft budget 1–2 weeks after it has been published, with a view to passing on their findings to the Finance Committee in late October. The Finance Committee is itself required to report on the draft budget by 12 November.

This means that there is usually very limited time (1–2 weeks) for stakeholders to suggest areas of concern to Committees. By doing this consultation now, we hope stakeholders will have more time to consider the potential impact of the budget.

What are the indicative allocations for 2014–15?

The Welsh Government's Final Budget 2013–14 – including indicative allocations for 2014–15 – and explanatory documents can be downloaded here:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/caecd/publications/121214finalbudgetnov2012.pdf>

The Welsh Government's most recent progress report on the Programme for Government can be seen here:

<http://wales.gov.uk/about/programmeforgov/;jsessionid=4CC7D392402B1B3C211BDB2EF6C9F19A?status=closed&lang=en>