

**Leighton Andrews AM**  
Minister for Public Services

2 November 2015

Dear Minister

**Welsh Government Draft Budget 2016-17**

I would like to invite you to attend a meeting of the Committee on Wednesday 13 January 2016 to give evidence in connection with the Welsh Government's draft budget 2016-17.

The evidence session is scheduled for an hour and a half, beginning at 9.00. The meeting will be held in Committee Room 2 at the National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay. It would be helpful if you could provide the Committee with a bilingual paper in relation to the draft budget by **Tuesday 15 December**. The Committee would be particularly grateful to receive information on the budgetary matters highlighted in the annex to this letter.

Yours sincerely



**Christine Chapman AC / AM**  
Cadeirydd / Chair



## Annex

### **Request for information from the Minister for Public Services from the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee to inform scrutiny of Draft Budget 2016-17**

#### ***Last year's budget report***

During scrutiny of the draft budget 2014-15, the Finance Committee welcomed the improvements to the presentation of the budget, which built on work begun the previous year. However, it recommended that this work should continue to further improve the transparency of how the budget allocations are aligned to the Programme for Government commitments.

As was the case last year, the Committee would like to be provided with the individual Budget Expenditure Lines for your portfolio which are relevant to this Committee.

#### ***Programme for Government commitments***

With regard to the Welsh Government's Programme for Government commitments within your portfolio, and which are relevant to the remit of this Committee, the Committee would appreciate information in relation to:

- details of the costs associated with the Programme for Government commitments for the period covered by the draft budget and/or any work being undertaken to assess such costs;
- whether these commitments are deliverable within the available portfolio budget and details of any areas where affordability is a concern; and
- information relating to how the delivery of the commitments in your portfolios and their associated outcomes will be monitored and evaluated to demonstrate value for money.

#### ***Key policies***

Following on from its scrutiny of the draft budget last year, the Committee would particularly like to receive information on the following:

- the nature of the dialogue you have had with local government this year on the settlement that local authorities are likely to receive in 2016-17, including details as to when those discussions took place;



- how the delay in announcing the 2016-17 draft budget will impact on local authorities' budgeting processes, and what you are doing to mitigate this;
- how the Programme for Government commitment to improve the 'understanding of the links between local government performance and the provision of funding' has been used to 'allocate money more effectively' this year;
- given that many local government services could be described as being preventative in nature, how this was taken into consideration in deciding on the allocations for local government in comparison with allocations under other Main Expenditure Groups;
- whether the local government reform process has influenced your budget allocations in any way, and if so, how;
- clarification on the Welsh Government's plans for council tax reduction schemes in 2016-17;
- how your draft budget allocations reflect Welsh Government commitments on community safety and youth justice.

For each policy, as appropriate, the Committee would like to see:

- details of the costs and/or any work undertaken to assess the cost of delivering these policies during the period of the draft budget;
- information relating to how the delivery of the policy, and its associated outcomes, will be monitored and evaluated to demonstrate value for money.

The Committee is also keen to see how equality, sustainability and consideration for the Welsh language have influenced budget allocations.

### ***Preventative Spending***

As it was last year, the Committee is interested in considering preventative spending as part of its scrutiny of the draft budget 2016-17. The definition of preventative spending which is being adopted for this purpose is:

*...spending which focuses on preventing problems and eases future demand on services by intervening early, thereby delivering better outcomes and value for money.*

With this definition in mind the Committee requests information on:

- the proportion of the Minister for Public Services's budget allocated to preventative spending measures;
- details of specific policies or programmes in your portfolio, relevant to the remit of this Committee, that are intended to be preventative; and



- how the value for money of such programmes is evaluated, with a particular focus on what the specific inputs and intended outcomes are.

### ***Provision for Legislation***

The Committee would also like to see:

- information on the extent to which any Welsh legislation which has been passed, is currently being passed, or is planned in the legislative programme, is likely to have any direct or indirect impact on your portfolio in the 2016-17 financial year, in particular the Local Government (Wales) Bill and the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.
- information on the impact on the budget of any UK legislation in your portfolio area.

