

Lesley Griffiths AM
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

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 Thursday 21 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 **Wednesday 6 January**. 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 Communities and Tackling Poverty from the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee to inform scrutiny of draft budget 2016-17

Presentation of the budget

The Finance Committee has welcomed the improvements made to the presentation of the budget in recent years, and recommended that 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 during the period of 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 policies and issues:

- how the Tackling Poverty Action Plan has shaped budget allocations this year;



- details of funding for tackling poverty across government departments and the value for money of the Communities First programme;
- welfare reform and the long term impact of UK Government policies on Welsh Government budgets;
- third sector, particularly around advice services funding;
- the outcome of the consultation on future arrangements for the Equality and Inclusion Grant for 2017-2020; financial inclusion, including implications of revising the strategy by April 2016, and the sustainability of credit unions;
- gypsy travellers, particularly capital demands as a result of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014;
- the Welsh Government's programmes that contribute towards increasing housing supply in both the public and private sectors;
- homelessness services and the Supporting People programme;
- the 'Vibrant and Viable Places' regeneration framework;
- funding for Care and Repair and home adaptation services and implementation of the review published in January 2015;
- improvement of conditions in the private sector, in particular Home improvement loans;
- tenant participation services;
- progress on achieving and maintaining the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and, in particular, an update on the latest evaluation of the programme.

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 for the period covered by 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 Communities and Tackling Poverty 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 the Minister's portfolio in the 2016-17 financial year, in particular implementing Parts 1 and 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the Renting Homes (Wales) Bill, the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.
- information on the impact on the budget of any UK legislation, and in particular welfare reform, in the Minister's portfolio area.

