
Y Fonesig Rosemary Butler AC
Dame Rosemary Butler AM



Jocelyn Davies AM
Chair
Finance Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Your ref:
Our ref: PO1131/RB/NC

2 December 2015

Dear Jocelyn

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your Committee's role in delivering budget scrutiny. I will focus in my response on your scrutiny of the Assembly Commission's budget.

As you know, the Commission takes its governance responsibilities very seriously in delivering our commitment to transparency, financial probity, stewardship and value for money for the service we provide. We benefit from having multiple strands of oversight. This starts with our own comprehensive approach to governance, is supported by the independent advice and assurance we receive, and is continually improved through scrutiny provided at Assembly committees such as yours.

There is no doubt that the Commission has enhanced its accountability and transparency as a direct result of your Committee's work. The development of our corporate performance indicators and the additional evidence sessions about two of our key strategic priorities, ICT and Official Languages, are examples of this. We found these targeted evidence sessions particularly valuable as they provided engagement opportunities for the public, involved a range of Commissioners, and reflected our respective accountabilities and responsibilities.

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Llywydd
Presiding Officer



I also believe that the Committee's support for the Commission's multiple year budget approach has been hugely important and enabled us to take a strategic approach to our budget planning throughout the course of the Fourth Assembly. We will be recommending in our own legacy report that the new Commission should continue this approach in the Fifth Assembly.

The timescales for laying the draft budget and the evidence session, whilst challenging at times, do work effectively as both the Committee's clerking team and the Commission have established good practices. Reaching agreement on the Commission's budget at an early stage, and in advance of the Government's proposals, is an important principle and one which also enables us to plan well ahead for the delivery of services. One change the committee might wish to consider concerns Standing Order 20.14 where we would suggest that the responsible committee must consider and report to the Assembly on the draft budget for the Commission no later than 22 October.

Finally, I would like to add a personal thank you for the professional and welcoming approach of your Committee whenever I or my fellow Commissioners have presented evidence.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rosemary".

Dame Rosemary Butler AM
Presiding Officer