

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Cyllid | Finance Committee

Cyllideb Ddrafft Llywodraeth Cymru 2026-27 | Welsh Government Draft Budget 2026-27

Ymateb gan Plismona yng Nghymru / Uned Gyswilt yr Heddlu, | Evidence from Policing in Wales / Police Liaison Unit,

1. What, in your opinion, has been the impact of the Welsh Government's 2025-2026 Budget?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Welsh Government's (WG) investment into Neighbourhood Policing, GoSafe and Welsh Sexual Assault Services is valued because it makes a real difference to local communities across Wales. However, there is concern about short term decisions on sustainable funding and removal of good initiatives such as the Wales Police Schools programme which responders felt made a major contribution to future citizens and are now experiencing the negative impact of that decision. Forces have had to adapt to fill this vital gap but have other operational pressures that are also unavoidable. There is little scope for financial consequences that result from WG decisions without council tax payers filling the gap.

Cash based grants need to keep pace with police sector inflation to maintain financial sustainability and deliver on agreed objectives. The GoSafe Casualty Reduction Partnership is a prime example of this, where the lack of index linked grant settlements has been one key factor in the partnership's long term sustainability having to be revisited.

The investment by WG needs to have greater cognisance of need particularly where infrastructure has deteriorated and that then impacts on partnership delivery, i.e. climate change and resulting emergencies impacting on policing.

The 2025–26 Budget saw increasing pressures on policing and community safety work. While funding to core policing services was maintained, partner agencies and third-sector providers experienced significant financial strain, leading to:

- Reduced capacity in youth services, housing support, mental health provision and substance misuse.
- Increased demand on policing to fill gaps, particularly in crisis response and safeguarding.
- Fewer opportunities for preventative and diversionary work, meaning police dealt more with consequences rather than root causes.

This has created reactive rather than proactive demand, which could be less cost-effective and less effective in addressing long-term community safety. The Policing Partnership Board for Wales has a Forward Work Programme that has been agreed with Welsh Government with a clear focus on collaboration and prevention, in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. These priorities should be recognised in the setting of future budgets.

2. How financially prepared is your organisation for the 2026-27 financial year, how confident are you that you can deliver planned objectives, and how robust is your ability to plan for future years?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Police forces can deliver core objectives but face uncertainty regarding partnership capacity, especially in third-sector organisations and with uncertainty surrounding Police Landscape Reform (a White Paper is anticipated towards the end of the year) and the grant increase not keeping pace with inflation over the CSR period.

Without clarity on sustained investment in prevention, there is a risk of increased demand on policing budgets that cannot be offset through efficiency savings alone. Areas that we may need to pull away from may include challenges around funding for substance misuse services.

Long-term planning is hindered by short-term or unpredictable funding streams for community partners. This may be more of an issue for Central Government – but are we aligned when it comes to areas such as the safer streets mission? Could we be hampered in Wales if partnership funding into prevention is not aligned to these demands?

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WG needs to ensure that the policy objectives and implications upon partners are fully reflected in the resource allocations, especially but not exclusively in relation to:

1. Road safety – implementation of 20mph and 50mph low emission zones.

2. Welsh Sexual Assault Services that ensure appropriate health protections for victims of sex based violent crimes.
3. Core assumptions on sustainability that allow partners to plan effectively and funding that recognises partnership impact and inability to adapt the service model to potential cuts imposed by WG.
4. Decarbonisation policy currently treats policing as a non-funding body, i.e. no direct funding for policing from WG to further Greener Wales
5. Innovation funding also locks out Welsh Policing which is a partnership delivery process.
6. Right Care Right Person – the WG Mental Health Strategy should commit to fully funding phases 3 and 4 of this crucial programme. Wales is currently lagging behind England in these two areas (transportation and S136 detentions) and this is leading to unnecessary demands on front line officers who are not mental health practitioners.

3. What action should the Welsh Government take to:

- **help households cope with cost of living issues;**
- **address the needs of people living in urban, post-industrial and rural communities, including building affordable housing and in supporting economies within those communities?**

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Cost of living pressures increase vulnerability to crime, exploitation, and antisocial behaviour. WG should:

- prioritise funding to deprived areas.
- support retail businesses (including retail banking) to sustain service provision across the geography of Wales.
- Ensure sustained funding for community-based prevention projects that reduce demand on emergency services.
- Support housing stability and debt/financial advice services, reducing crises that otherwise escalate into policing matters.
- Recognise the different safety needs of urban, post-industrial, and rural communities, including rural crime and county lines issues.
- Develop a programme of reinvestment in youth work provision in line with the Programme for Government commitment to seek the devolution of youth justice
- Ensure that policing is able to bid for S106/Community Infrastructure Levy monies in a straightforward and transparent way.

4. Have Welsh Government business support policies been effective, given the economic outlook for 2026-27?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Effective business support contributes to resilient local economies, which reduces acquisitive crime.

More visible alignment between economic investment and community safety outcomes would strengthen preventative impact.

Data driven investment and performance measures on the impact of policy.

- The Wales Cyber Security Centre has developed a positive membership model that has secured in excess of 4,000 SMEs across Wales. Recent changes to the governance and management of the Centre mean that this has strategic direction through the City of London Police, but Welsh Government should ensure that the right level of support is available for businesses in Wales, especially in light of recent Ransomware attacks on major businesses.

5. Are Welsh Government plans to build a greener economy clear and sufficiently ambitious? Do you think there is enough investment being targeted at tackling the climate change and nature emergency? Are there any potential skill gaps that need to be addressed to achieve these plans?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

WG could take a much clearer public sector leadership position in driving forward efforts to decarbonise and make Wales a more sustainable nation. Excluding Welsh Policing is a detrimental step as decarbonisation is geographically and sectorial based and collective endeavour would yield greater impact.

Much more could be done to utilise the significant national assets that we have across the country in terms of tidal and wind energy as well as developing solar investment more comprehensively.

All public sector bodies are looking to decarbonise their fleet and make their estate more efficient, but this appears to be undertaken in organisational silos. There is a need to move away from the notion of devolved and non-devolved services in this space as this is a challenge that we are all responsible for and WG can take a real leadership role in this space.

Practically, there needs to be greater investment in the vehicle charging network, especially across rural areas of Wales, to increase consumer confidence in making the shift to electric/hybrid vehicles. One of the major factors holding back development in this area is the lack of confidence in knowing that sufficient charging stations are available to make longer journeys safely.

One of the few positive outcomes from the Covid pandemic was the shift in the way we do work to more agile/flexible working practices. Whilst not all roles are suited to this, we can't lose the benefits of reducing traffic on our roads and the impacts this has on reducing emissions.

Climate pressures (e.g. flooding, extreme weather) create public safety and policing challenges, as well as impact on estate – is there any capital support?

Investment in resilience and green infrastructure should include emergency preparedness and cross-agency response capability.

Skills development should also consider public safety roles — e.g. digital and cybercrime prevention, which links to a greener and more technologically advanced economy. Is there an opportunity to work together in Wales when it comes to technology developments – especially around town centre safety infrastructure?

6. Is the Welsh Government using the financial mechanisms available to it around borrowing and taxation effectively?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Consider a better alternative to National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) billing and collection – particularly when billing public sector organisations. There is potential for hypothecation of collection and investment from new businesses and related NNDR.

There should be a review of the Barnett formula to ensure fair share of National Taxation and formal recognition of needs based allocation to Wales.

Policing does not consider there to be sufficient transparency on the Barnett formula consequences for policing in Wales and therefore is unable to make an effective case with the Home Office.

Borrowing and taxation mechanisms should be used to protect core public services (health, policing, education) while ensuring investment in preventative programmes that deliver savings over time. Would need specialist advice on this.

Welsh Government should set the strategic direction for the creation of a green economy in Wales supported by green procurement processes. Public bodies including policing should be able to access cheaper borrowing for investment of this nature and creation of a 'green fund' would bolster economic activity and investment while supporting decarbonisation.

The Committee would like to focus on a number of other specific areas in the scrutiny of the Budget. Do you have any specific comments on any of the areas identified below?

7. Is enough being done to tackle the rising costs of living and support those people living in relative income poverty?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Rising costs may increase crime risks (theft, fraud, exploitation). Police may see greater demand for safeguarding vulnerable people.

Has the Welsh Government considered the likely impact of cost of living pressures on crime trends, and what resourcing will support policing and community safety responses?

8. How could the budget further address gender inequality in areas such as healthcare, skills and employment?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Sustain funding for domestic abuse and sexual violence support services that work closely with police.

9. Is the Welsh Government's approach to preventative spending represented in resource allocations (Preventative spending = spending which focuses on preventing problems and eases future demand on services by intervening early).

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

A budget that invests in early intervention and community resilience will reduce demand, support safer communities, and deliver better value for money.

There needs to be a comprehensive Crime Reduction Strategy Tackling:

1. The environment – Broken Windows theory, ASB, substance misuse, ACEs
2. Economic Prosperity
3. VAWG
4. Missing Children and Looked after Children
5. Mental health provision

Stronger representation of early intervention and prevention in budget allocations — funding cuts to partners increase long-term costs to policing.

If preventative spending is not strongly represented, there could be less funding for early intervention programmes (youth diversion, domestic abuse prevention, substance misuse support) that reduce demand on policing. Cuts or limited growth in

youth/education/community services risk pushing greater responsibility back onto police services.

Is the Welsh Government allocating sufficient resources to early intervention and preventative work to reduce long-term demand on policing and justice services?

How will funding decisions recognise the role of policing partnerships in delivering preventative outcomes (e.g. youth diversion, domestic abuse support, substance misuse)?

10. How should the Welsh Government explain its funding decisions, including how its spending contributes to addressing policy issues?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Clearer narrative on how spending on housing, health, education, and third-sector support reduces demand on justice and policing services.

11. How can the documentation provided by the Welsh Government alongside its Draft Budget be improved?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

12. How should the Welsh Government prioritise its resources to tackle NHS waiting lists for planned and non-urgent NHS treatments. Do you think the Welsh Government has a robust plan to address this issue?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Long waits for mental health and substance misuse support push people into crisis; police end up as first responders. Investment in these areas directly reduces policing demand.

Longer NHS waiting lists and reduced mental health provision could result in police picking up the gaps (e.g. responding to crisis situations where health services are unavailable). Impact on Right Care Right Person, substance misuse and prevention programmes.

Effective cross-sector response relies on balanced funding.

Will any funding be ring fenced for prevention?

13. Is the Welsh Government providing adequate support to the public sector to enable it to be innovative and forward looking through things like workforce planning?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Investment in digital infrastructure and joint hubs should include policing-community safety partnerships, enabling efficiency and collaboration.

What mechanisms will be in place to ensure joined-up investment across health, housing, education, and policing to avoid siloed funding pressures?

14. Has there been adequate investment from the Welsh Government in basic public sector infrastructure?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Many police facilities are ageing; investment in shared infrastructure with local authorities could deliver efficiency.

How will investment in public sector innovation (e.g. workforce planning, digital solutions) extend to policing and community safety partnerships? CCTV support nationally?

Has adequate investment been made in basic policing infrastructure (estate, IT systems, joint hubs with partners)?

15. How should the Budget support young people?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

Prioritise diversionary programmes, youth clubs, and mentoring to prevent criminal exploitation and antisocial behaviour.

16. How is evidence and data driving Welsh Government priority-setting and budget allocations, and is this approach clear?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

The consultation highlights the use of evidence and data in budget allocation. For policing, there's an opportunity to emphasise the cost savings of prevention (e.g. community interventions that reduce reoffending and call-outs). Something regions are trying to get better at and also aligns to response to questions raised by NPCC on running costs of police governance.

How will the Welsh Government use data to show the impact of preventative spending on reducing future policing and justice costs?

Can examples of cost-effective interventions (e.g. early youth interventions, mental health crisis alternatives) be highlighted as priorities?

17. Is the support provided by the Welsh Government for third sector organisations, which face increased demand for services as a consequence of the cost of living crisis and additional costs following increases to National Insurance Contributions, sufficient?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

These organisations deliver critical community safety services (victim support, youth diversion, crisis support). Funding instability here risks collapsing preventative partnerships.

Many community safety initiatives (victim support, mental health crisis teams, youth outreach) rely on third-sector delivery. If their funding is not sustained, police will face additional demand without equivalent budget growth.

Will the budget adequately sustain the third-sector and local authority services that police rely on to manage vulnerability, safeguarding, rehabilitation and Community Safety, plus substance misuse? Partnerships with housing, social care, and third-sector organisations may be strained if funding for them is insufficient.

18. What are the key opportunities for the Welsh Government to invest in supporting an economy and public services that better deliver against the well-being goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?

(We would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words).

A whole-system approach is required. Investment in prevention aligns strongly with the Well-being of Future Generations Act by reducing harm and future costs.

