



Ein cyf/Our ref MA-L/ARD/0334/17-2

Assembly Members
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

6 June 2017

Dear Assembly Members,

I am writing to inform you about my intention to postpone the financial resolution for the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill until after the summer recess.

The financial resolution had been tabled for a vote in the National Assembly today (June 6). However, following a request from the chair of the Finance Committee, I have decided to delay the procedure.

My officials are currently working on revisions to the Bill's regulatory impact assessment (RIA). I do not believe it would be appropriate to proceed with the financial resolution at this stage. I expect a revised RIA to be available by the end of the summer recess and I will re-table the financial resolution at the earliest opportunity in the autumn. This will allow all Members to scrutinise the RIA before a vote on the financial resolution.

The original RIA calculated the projected costs of the new additional learning needs system. These were based on figures provided by SNAP Cymru. SNAP Cymru subsequently questioned the accuracy of the figures in its evidence to the National Assembly's Children, Young People and Education Committee during its stage 1 scrutiny of the Bill.

My officials have been working closely with SNAP Cymru on revised financial information, including the implications to the cost of the legislation and changes to the RIA.

The RIA is a comprehensive and complex document and Members will appreciate the detailed work undertaken in response to the new information from SNAP Cymru has also been comprehensive and complex. Ensuring the revised figures in the RIA are robust is an absolute priority.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We have provided indicative, high-level costings to the Children, Young People and Education Committee and to the Finance Committee.

The revised indicative costings do not lead to an increase in the overall cost of running the new system; however, there is a reduction in the projected level of savings from those estimated in the original RIA. The changes do not increase the cost of implementation of the Bill.

The new system is anticipated to be less expensive to run than the current SEN system. This is the experience of the local authorities, which are operating aspects of the new system, such as Carmarthenshire County Council, which has made efficiency savings and has reinvested the savings into innovative, learner-centred approaches.

The high-level costings we currently have for the Bill show that, taking into account the ongoing and implementation costs, the balance is a cost of £8,279,250 over the four-year period on which the figures are calculated.

Once implemented, the revised indicative figures estimate savings of £3,675,240 over the four-year period.

Implementation of the system will incur a cost. We have been clear we will invest in transition to ensure services are supported to move to the new additional learning needs system. The Welsh Government has committed to invest more than £20m in the implementation of the Bill and the wider additional learning needs transformation programme.

The Welsh Government will cover the full cost of moving from the SEN system to the new additional learning needs system.

I fully accept the importance of robust financial projections and planning. Detailed work on these costings and the RIA is ongoing and will be subject to a thorough quality assurance process.

I am committed to working with Members and stakeholders over the summer to ensure the Bill, and the supporting information available to Members, is robust and comprehensive, to enhance scrutiny and ensure a thorough and informed debate on all aspects of the legislation.

I will ensure Members are updated about developments as the Bill and the additional learning needs transformation programme progresses.

Yours sincerely



Alun Davies AC/AM

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language