

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

15 June 2017

Dear John Griffiths AM

Scrutiny of the draft Budget

I am writing following the Business Committee's consideration of their draft report on changes to Standing Orders in relation to scrutiny of the draft Budget, prior to the Standing Order changes and the Budget Process Protocol being considered in Plenary next week.

The changes to the Budget process are the culmination of a piece of work started by the Finance Committee in the Fourth Assembly; the devolution of fiscal powers in the Wales Act 2014 have meant that the Assembly's scrutiny now has to consider not just Welsh Government spending plans, but how these plans will be financed, through taxation and borrowing.

The main changes which are being proposed are that the budget scrutiny becomes a two stage process, whereby the higher level information which would be scrutinised by the Finance Committee is published prior to the detail needed by the policy committees, and more time is allowed for scrutiny. Specifically, it is hoped this additional time will allow the policy committees to undertake more detailed scrutiny of the spending in your portfolios, and you will no longer be required to report to the Finance Committee, you are able to report in your own right should you so wish.

I have requested a discussion on these changes at the next Chairs' forum, to enable us to talk through the changes in more detail and we can consider how:

- the Committee scrutiny will work in practice,
- the Finance Committee can maintain an oversight role,
- we can work together to maximise public engagement,
- any training and development needs for committees can be met

Prior to consideration in Plenary the [proposed changes to Standing Orders have been tabled](#), as has the [revised protocol](#).

Should you have any queries on this please do not hesitate to let me know, and I look forward to discussing these changes further at the Chairs' Forum meeting on 12 July 2017.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Thomas'.

Simon Thomas AM

**Chair of the Finance Committee**