

Rt Hon Mark Drakeford MS

First Minister of Wales

10 December 2021

Dear Mark

Welsh Government's draft budget proposals for 2022-23

As part of our work to scrutinise the Welsh Government's justice policy and legislative activities, we would be grateful if you could provide us with the following information, to aid our scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget proposals for 2022-23.

Justice

We note that the Welsh Government has re-established the Cabinet Sub-committee on Justice and is pursuing a programme of work on the recommendations of the Commission on Justice in Wales which are within our devolved competence. The Counsel General has indicated to us that a justice work programme will be published in the near future. You also shared a work programme with our predecessor Committee last year, setting out priorities across five workstreams.

Whilst the Counsel General chairs the Cabinet Sub-committee, we are aware that he is not a budget holder and that funding for the delivery of the Welsh Government's justice programme appears to be divided across several government departments. We are therefore seeking information on funding from you.

Could you please provide us with information on:

Any resources within the draft budget proposals for delivery of the planned justice work programme, in which departmental Main Expenditure Groups (MEG) they reside and the related Spending Programme Area (SPA) and Budget Expenditure Line (BEL) figures.



Any other resources within the draft budget proposals associated with the Welsh Government's justice priorities, including on access to justice; civil and administrative justice; criminal justice (including policing); family justice; and the legal sector. In relation to this information, please could you provide information on within which departmental MEG they reside and the related SPA and BEL figures.

Legislative capacity

In evidence to us, the Counsel General has drawn to our attention the current 'scale of the legislative demands' on the Welsh Government in relation to: its own-legislative work programme, including its programme for improving the accessibility of Welsh law; legislating for Brexit; legislating for Covid; and responding to the UK Government's legislative programme. The Counsel General also drew our attention to the high skilled nature of expertise needed to deliver on these demands. We would therefore welcome information on:

Any resources within the draft budget to increase capacity within the Welsh Government to meet these legislative demands, including recruiting new staff, increasing expertise and retaining existing staff, and potentially buying-in, seconding or otherwise acquiring additional expertise.

Any resources within the draft budget for delivery of the Welsh Government's programme for improving the accessibility of Welsh law.

We would welcome a response from you by 10 January 2022 to ensure we have time to consider the information, and raise any relevant issues, ahead of the planned Plenary debate on the draft budget.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Huw Irranca-Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a thick black line.

Huw Irranca-Davies

Chair

