

Elin Jones MS,
Llywydd, Chair of the Business Committee

Copy to: Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Rural
Affairs and North Wales and Trefnydd; and
Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and
Local Government

July 2022

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2023-24

Dear Llywydd,

Thank you for your letter consulting the Finance Committee on the proposed timetable of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2023-24.

It is disappointing that the Welsh Government is considering delaying the publication of its Draft Budget again this year; the fourth consecutive year that the proposed timetable has reduced the time available for scrutiny.

Although the Committee accepts that the Welsh Government is facing uncertainties in terms of its own funding position, we believe that the impact of a truncated process is severe: It hampers the ability of all Senedd Committees to hold evidence sessions and influence governmental decisions on the budget and makes it very difficult for stakeholders to engage with the scrutiny process.

For that reason, if faced with a later Draft Budget, the Committee wishes to push the Committee reporting deadline back by a week, to Monday 13 February, with the Draft Budget debate taking place the following day on 14 February. We consider this to be a reasonable and proportionate request, which would still allow time for the Welsh Government to incorporate the views of Committees into the Final Budget before it is laid on 28 February.

However, the Committee also recognises the assurances provided by the Trefnydd and Minister for Finance and Local Government alongside the budget timetable this year. In particular, we welcome commitments made by the Trefnydd to change the budget timetable, in accordance with Standing

Order 20.6, as soon as possible after it becomes clear whether the UK Government will hold an autumn fiscal event. We also welcome the guarantee to publish the Draft Budget within four weeks of that event taking place.

Although Standing Order 20.6 does not provide a role for the Committee when changes are made to the timetable, we call on the Trefnydd and Minister to keep the Committee abreast of any developments relating to any changes as soon as possible- including the date of the UK Government's autumn fiscal event and its likely impact on the time available for scrutiny of the budget in the Senedd.

The Committee also looks forward to exploring pre-budget scrutiny opportunities with the Minister in the autumn. With that in mind, we would like to formally invite the Minister for Finance and Local Government to attend a pre-budget session with the Committee on 29 September and the Clerk will be in touch with the Minister's officials to discuss practical arrangements. Additional sessions with the Chief Economist and others, as suggested, will also provide the Committee with context ahead of its formal consideration of the Draft Budget later in the year.

Furthermore, we believe that such additional sessions will provide opportunities for Members to explore how the Minister is responding to the issues raised during the budget priorities debate on 13 July, and at the Committee's summer engagement events, as well as a chance for the Minister to provide an update on the Welsh Government's current funding position and the impact of inflationary pressures on its budget plans.

Yours sincerely



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS

Chair of the Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

