

Peredur Owen Griffiths, MS
Chair, Finance Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

28 March 2025

Dear Peredur

As part of the Llywydd's Committee's scrutiny of the Electoral Commission's Main Estimate for Wales in 2025/26 we discussed the timing and alignment of the submission process to our three funding bodies, the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body and the Senedd.

The Committee in its [report on our 2025/26 estimate](#), said it was *“sympathetic to the challenges posed by the timing of the UK and Welsh Government Budgets and the impact this has on all Directly Funded Bodies to provide their Estimates by the statutory deadline. The Senedd's Finance Committee is currently conducting a review of the Budget Process Protocol in consultation with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, and we would urge the Commission to put forward its views on this matter.”*

You also suggested in our informal meeting of 19 February that we write to you, in your capacity as Chair of the Finance Committee on this issue.

As discussed previously, the Commission has a statutory obligation to present its estimate to the Llywydd's Committee (and to the Scottish Parliament) on its relevant devolved work by 30 September each year. This is six months before the end of the financial year, as outlined in the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020. This is significantly earlier than the deadline for submission of the UK Main Estimate which is provided to the Speaker's Committee of the UK Parliament around February/March in the year following the estimate submission in Wales. This poses a number of challenges to the Commission, including the following:

General lack of alignment and its impact on accurate financial planning / processes

Internal discussions about budget requirements must start taking place around May in order for us to have sufficient time to build these into our costing model and present the resulting estimate to the Llywydd's Committee for approval by 30 September. Similar discussions then take place later in the summer on UK Parliament budget requirements.

Establishing budget requirements, and providing accurate current-year forecasts, (as requested by the Llywydd's Committee) a year in advance of the budget request year is particularly challenging. There is a high risk that circumstances will change between May, when the internal discussion process starts for the Wales estimate and February, the following year, when we finalise the UK Parliament's estimate – possibly making the Llywydd's Committee's voice in the process less impactful.

Difficulty in accurately planning for elections over 18 months away

Operational planning this far ahead will tend to be reasonably high-level and subject to change, and so financial forecasting will typically involve high inherent levels of uncertainty.

Consistency across Parliaments given cost apportionment

As the estimate figures for Wales and Scotland are allocated from that of the UK, presenting the estimates at the same time would ensure consistency in approach.

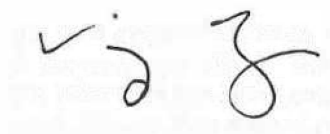
Inefficiency (and cost) of carrying out multiple budgeting processes

As noted above, we effectively have to carry out two budget exercises ahead of the following Financial Year, largely replicating the same process and effort. In our view it would be considerably more efficient to run a single budget-setting process.

We would be keen to work with you, as part of the Finance Committee's review, to explore how the deadlines could be amended so that the estimates, are prepared and submitted at the same time to each Parliament, or at least that the gap between submissions is reduced. This should not only assist the Commission in preparing accurate submissions but should also be beneficial to the Llywydd's Committee and other relevant Committees in ensuring consistent and coordinated scrutiny of what is submitted across the three Parliaments.

We welcome your engagement on this matter and look forward to hearing from you again shortly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vijay R', is positioned above a light grey rectangular box.

Vijay Rangarajan
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer