Jocelyn Davies
Chair
Finance Committee

9 December 2015

Dear Jocelyn,

Finance Committee's legacy – Budget process and financial scrutiny of legislation

Thank you very much for your letter of 17 November asking for feedback on the effectiveness of the overall approach to budget scrutiny by the Enterprise and Business Committee. The Enterprise and Business Committee considered it at our meeting on 9 December.

Budget timetable

Committee Members have previously noted that the Assembly's current process – as set out in Standing Orders – does not allow sufficient time to take considered views from stakeholders based on a thorough analysis of the detail, and feed this back to the Finance Committee.

As changes are made to the Assembly's budget process, we would hope that extra time will be made available for subject committees to engage with stakeholders over areas of concern, and to allow this to happen so that we can properly feed in to Finance Committee's broader consideration of the draft budget.
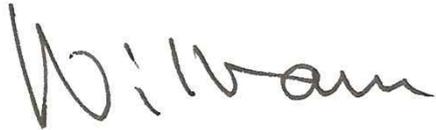
Budget Information

The quality of information that Welsh Government makes available for committees to scrutinise the draft budget has increased notably during this Assembly. The committee hopes this process of continuous improvement – which allows us to more easily assess value for money considerations, and whether projects are delivering the intended outcomes – will be sustained.

However, there remains a lack of consistency between departments in budget layout.

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Financial Scrutiny of Legislation

Members of this Committee have scrutinised only one bill during this Assembly – the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013. In January 2016 the Committee will be speaking to stakeholders and scrutinising the Minister about progress since the Act came in to force. This will include scrutiny of whether the estimates of the financial impact of the bill have been borne out. Should we have further comments following that work, I will write to you again.

William Graham

Chair, Enterprise & Business Committee