

Huw Irranca-Davies MS

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and
Rural Affairs

Julie James MS

Counsel General and Minister for Delivery

21 March 2025

Dear both

The Delivering Justice for Wales programme

Thank you for your [letter of 3 March 2025](#) enclosing the Government response to the Committee's report on its scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget for 2025-26.

The Committee considered the response at its meeting of 10 March 2025, and while it acknowledged the additional information provided about planned justice-related activity in 2025-26, it found the Government's rejection of recommendation 4 to be disappointing. As you are aware, this recommendation called on the Welsh Government to commit to issuing another progress report on its Delivering Justice for Wales programme before the end of this Senedd.

As the Committee found during its scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget for 2022-23, we believe that it is fundamentally important that there is regular reporting in this area, given the challenges of ensuring that there is a collaborative, co-ordinated and joined-up approach between all relevant organisations to delivering and improving justice-related services. We also believe that there should be a way for the Committee and other key stakeholders to regularly monitor the progress made by the Welsh Government in partnership with other relevant parties – including the UK Government – towards responding to the recommendations of the Commission on Justice in Wales.

You will be aware that, as a result of that scrutiny, the Welsh Government [committed](#) in February 2022 to bring forward an "annual report setting out progress against the objectives in the programme". A "progress report" is what was issued in February 2024, and no explanation was given



at the time for why the Government appeared to roll back on its 2022 commitment to reporting annually on its progress.

It is therefore disappointing that the Welsh Government appears to have rolled back even further on its commitment by rejecting the Committee's recommendation. We note that the Government's decision appears to be based on the degree of engagement with the progress report previously published; however, we believe that as the Welsh Government continues to prepare for the devolution of justice, there is now a greater imperative for there to be regular reporting on progress, which would hopefully act as means to attract increased engagement by all relevant stakeholders.

The Government's response also states that it will be "happy to undertake updates through Written or Oral Statements at key points". Such an undertaking, we believe, while customary in the relationship between the executive and legislature, does not reflect the level of engagement and scrutiny required of a key Government initiative such as the Delivering Justice in Wales programme. As stated in the programme itself, a fair and effective justice system is fundamental to any country.

We would like to impress on you the importance of this regular reporting to the Senedd, and ask you to reconsider your position as a Government in relation to this matter.

I would be grateful to receive a response by 23 April 2025.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Hedges". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Mike Hedges
Chair