

Suzy Davies AM
Assembly Commissioner

24 May 2017

Dear Suzy,

Thank you for your letter of 28 March in relation to recommendation 3 of our report, Scrutiny of the Assembly Commission Draft Budget 2017–2018, regarding how the underspend in relation to money drawn down to fund the Remuneration Board Determination is utilised by the Assembly Commission. The letter was discussed by the Finance Committee on 17 May 2017.

The Committee were concerned by some of the details included within your response, particularly that the Commission seem to be relying on the expected underspend to fund investment increasing demands on the Commission. The Committee is also concerned that this money was allocated for funding the Remuneration Boards determinations and being informed of this significant spending, after the investment has occurred, does not allow for clear scrutiny and transparency. Whilst appreciating that the Commission needs autonomy in managing changes to budget in response to in-year demands, on this occasion the sums are not insubstantial and related to a project that was not highlighted as a significant call on resources in the Commission's Draft Budget document.

The Committee would like to invite you, and the new Chief Executive, to attend a meeting of the Committee to discuss this issue. I believe the Committee Secretariat are liaising with your officials regarding your attendance.

Prior to your attendance, the Committee would find it helpful to receive an update in relation to the refurbishment of the ground floor. The Committee were surprised by the significant cost of these refurbishments and did not feel the letter provided a sufficient breakdown of these costs to consider whether this



delivered value for money in terms of the total cost of the project. The Committee would be grateful to receive:

- a detailed breakdown of exactly how the £1.185m identified within your letter was used to cover this project;
- what further costs have been, or will be, incurred in the ground floor refurbishment, and how much of this has already been allocated to this project from the 2017-18 budget.

Additionally, the Committee would welcome additional details on the current projected underspend for 2017-18, and how this is expected to be utilised.

For your information, in order for the Committee to understand the process of budgeting for Members allowances both within the Commission and in other public sector organisations, we have written to the Auditor General for Wales to clarify good practice approaches with regards to budget presentation and allocations of underspend.

I would be grateful to receive the additional information we have requested by 16 June.

Yours sincerely



Simon Thomas AM

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

