

Elin Jones AM
Llywydd, Chair of Business Committee

12 July 2019

Dear Llywydd

Budget timetable 2020–21

Thank you for your letter of 10 July 2019, consulting the Finance Committee on the proposed Budget timetable 2020–21.

The Finance Committee appreciates that the proposed budget timetable is due to the uncertainty regarding the UK Government's intentions for a spending review, and the timing of its budget. However, it is disappointing that the proposed timetable will reduce the time available for scrutiny. If the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd is able to bring forward the budget earlier in the autumn, the Finance Committee would support the Business Committee revising the timetable accordingly, and more favourably in terms of the number of sitting weeks available for scrutiny.

In terms of the current budget process, the Finance Committee is concerned that the Assembly does not have the opportunity to influence the Welsh Government's spending priorities prior to the draft budget being tabled. During our scrutiny session on the draft Budget on 27 June, the Committee asked the Minister to consider changing the oral statement on the Future Outlook for Public Spending in Wales scheduled for 16 July to a debate or a debate on a statement, similar to the approach taken on the draft Budget.

Welsh Government officials have confirmed the Minister is concerned that widening this practice could dilute the distinct approach and importance taken to the announcement of the draft Budget. However, the Minister has indicated that she



would consider bringing forward a debate in government time in the autumn if there is sufficient interest.

Whilst this is something the Committee believes should be facilitated on a permanent basis, a debate on spending priorities seems even more pressing given the implications of a potential Comprehensive Spending Review and the proposed timing of the Welsh Government's budget.

If the Minister is not willing to bring forward a debate in government time, the Finance Committee would like to seek the Business Committee's approval to hold a one hour debate in Assembly time on Wednesday 18 September.

I am copying this letter to the Minister.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Llyr', is centered on a light yellow rectangular background.

Llyr Gruffydd AM
Chair of the Finance Committee

