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Deputy Minister for Agriculture and
Fisheries
Welsh Government

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Annwyl Rebecca

Draft budget 2015-16

Thank you for agreeing to appear before the Environment and Sustainability Committee for scrutiny on 15 October 2014. In order to assist you in your preparations for this session I set out below a number of areas that the Committee has expressed an interest in discussing with you. To assist the Committee with its preparations, I have also requested some additional information that I hope you are able to provide to us in advance of the session.

The Committee would be grateful if you could provide BEL level break down for the Agriculture and Fisheries portfolio and the savings and efficiency targets 2015-16 for your department. I have also included below some specific areas which we request financial information on and we would be grateful for a response detailing information to BEL level.

Reconciliation following change to Ministerial responsibilities

Following the changes to Ministerial portfolios this year, we wish to compare 2014-15 with allocations for 2015-16 (and indicative for 2016-17). To allow us to do this, can you please provide a reconciliation showing any changes to BEL allocations, whether due to transfers or increases in allocations, between these years?

Preventative Spend

Please provide:

- The proportion of your portfolio budget allocated to preventative spending measures;
- Details of what specific policies or programmes in the portfolio are intended to be preventative; and
- How the value for money of such programmes is evaluated, with a particular focus on what the specific inputs and intended outcomes are.

We would also like information on specific preventative programmes within your portfolio area. Please provide:

- The level and location of provision in the budget for these plans/programmes;
- Arrangements for evaluating how these measures are delivering against their stated outputs and outcomes; and
- Where possible details of any such assessments/evaluations.

Programme for Government

Please provide:

- Details of the costs associated with the delivery of the Programme for Government commitments within your portfolio and/or any work being undertaken to assess such costs;
- Whether these commitments are deliverable within the available portfolio budget and details of any areas where affordability is a concern; and
- Information relating to how the delivery of the commitments in the portfolio, and their associated outcomes will be monitored and evaluated to demonstrate value for money.

Legislation

Please provide details of the allocations for the implementation of planned legislation; the implementation of existing legislation; the implementation of planned and existing subordinate legislation; and potential impacts of UK legislation.

Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill

Please provide details of the provisions that have been made in the draft budget for implementing the duties contained in the Bill relevant to your portfolio area.

Equality

Please provide details of how your Department has demonstrated that it has considered the impact on various groups of its budget plans for 2015-16, including relevant impact assessments for individual projects/legislation.

Welsh language

Please provide details of how Welsh Language provision has been considered in the budget decisions for your portfolio areas.

Children's Rights

Please provide details of how children's rights have been considered in the budget decisions for your portfolio areas.

EU Competitive spend grants/loans

We wish to see your domestic allocations alongside the European match funding that they will attract. This is in keeping with recommendations made in the Committee of the Regions' Opinion *Creating greater synergies*

between EU, national and subnational budgets (for which Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM acted as rapporteur).

Below are specific areas of interest to the Committee in this regard:

European Competitive Grant Programmes – Welsh Government

How are you taking into account the opportunities presented by competitive grant programmes in your financial planning?

We wish to see greater clarity in terms of your financial planning in instances where you anticipate bidding into competitive grant programmes.

Please identify the grant schemes you are planning to bid into, where you have allocated funding for making bids, and the proportion of relevant BELs that are allocated for making bids.

European Competitive Grant Programmes – other bodies

How are you supporting Assembly Government Sponsored Bodies, as well as other public and private sector bodies, to bid into competitive grant programmes?

As part of your financial planning, do you make any assumption about the total amount of competitive grant funding to be obtained by Wales from all sources, within your portfolio area?

Do you place any expectations on Assembly Government Sponsored Bodies, in terms of the level of grant funding they are expected to successfully bid for, when considering the funding you provide to them?

Loan financing

How does loan financing from the European Investment Bank feature in your financial planning?

Marine and Fisheries

Please provide details of allocations for delivering the Marine and Fisheries Action Plan, implications of splitting responsibilities between Ministerial portfolios and allocations for delivery of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

Kevin Roberts review

Please provide details of allocations to deliver the outstanding outcomes of the Kevin Roberts review.

CAP / RDP

Please provide details of allocations for the delivery of the CAP and RDP, including communicating changes to farmers.

Agricultural Wages Act

Please provide details of allocations made for the implementation of the Agricultural Wages Act.

Bovine TB

Please provide details of the allocations for the continuation of the Cymorth TB pilot, how the impacts of the proposed changes BTB compensation scheme have impacted on your draft budget plans, and allocations for the delivery of actions in the Intensive Action Area.

Animal Health and Welfare

Please provide details of the allocations for the delivery of animal health and welfare framework, funding local authority implementation of new animal welfare legislation, and the implementation of potential UK legislation on banning wild animals in circuses.

Agriculture Strategy

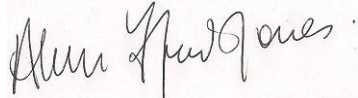
Please provide details of the allocations for the delivery of the Agriculture Strategy referred to in the Welsh Government's response the Committee's inquiry into Sustainable Land Management.

Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency

Please provide details of how budget proposals have taken account of the implications of changes to AHVLA provision and specifically the proposals for development of an Aberystwyth laboratory.

I thank you for considering these questions and would appreciate a response by 30 September 2014, to co-incide with the publication of the draft budget. I look forward to discussing the draft budget with you on 15 October.

Yn gywir



Alun Ffred Jones AM

Chair – Environment and Sustainability Committee