



John Griffiths AM
Minister for Natural Resources,
Culture and Sport
Welsh Government

25 July 2014

Annwyl John

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 Natural Resources aspects of your portfolio and the relevant 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.

European funds and programmes

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?

Fuel Poverty

Please provide details of allocations for the delivery of fuel poverty schemes and assessment of the implications ECO changes.

Environment Bill

Please provide details of allocations for preparations for the forthcoming Environment Bill, including any allocations to meet Natural Resources Wales resource needs.

Wales data hub

Please provide details of allocations for the Wales data hub.

Nature Fund

Please provide details of allocations for delivery of the Nature Fund and for the implementation of any recommendations made in the Payments for Ecosystems study commissioned by the Welsh Government.

Marine and Fisheries

Please provide details of allocations for delivering the Marine and Fisheries Action Plan and implications for draft budget proposals of splitting responsibilities between Ministerial portfolios.

Flooding and coastal protection

Please provide details of revenue and capital allocations for flooding and coastal protection.

Nature Recovery Strategy

Please provide details of allocations for the delivery of the Nature Recovery Strategy.

Water Strategy

Please provide details of allocations for the delivery of the Water Strategy for Wales.

Forestry

Please provide details of allocations for the management of forestry disease and restocking.

Climate Change

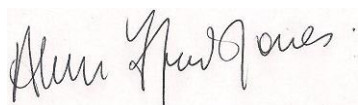
Please provide details of how budget plans have taken account of the Climate Change policy refresh.

Energy Wales Delivery Plan

Please provide details of allocations for delivery of the Energy Wales Delivery Plan.

I thank you for considering these questions and would appreciate a response by 30 September 2014, to coincide 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