

Jane Hutt AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Busnes y Llywodraeth  
Minister for Finance and Government Business



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Jocelyn Davies AM  
Chair, Finance Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

24 September 2015

Dear Jocelyn,

When we met on 15 September we discussed the implications of the late Spending Review on the 2015 Budget timetable and the potential constraints on the scrutiny process. I confirmed then that I was looking to publish our plans as soon as possible following the Spending Review in order that we could get a Final Budget approved in early March.

I have now written to the Presiding Officer with a revised timetable. I attach a copy of my letter for your information. I have confirmed my intention to publish the Draft Budget 2016-17 on 8 December and the Final Budget on 1 March. The timeline is predicated on the key dates reflected in the Annex to the letter. I have also confirmed my intention to publish plans for 2016-17 only.

Publishing a Draft Budget two weeks after receiving the settlement will be challenging. However, the circumstances this year may serve to provide a useful stepping stone in the transition to a two-stage budget process as recommended in the Finance Committee's report on Best Practice Budget Process. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you.

Best wishes,  
Jane

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Dame Rosemary Butler AM  
Presiding Officer  
Chair, Business Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

24 September 2015

*Dear Rosemary,*

I wrote to you on 6 August highlighting the challenges associated with the late timing of the Spending Review and the impact on the 2015 Budget timetable. I indicated then that we would need to revisit the Budget timeline to take account of the fact that we will not know our settlement until late November. We also discussed this matter at Business Committee recently and I agreed to provide you with a firm timetable at the earliest opportunity.

As we have acknowledged previously, the challenges associated with the late Spending Review are unprecedented. Not only must we prepare for a further period of as yet unconfirmed budget reductions, we must balance the need to provide sufficient time for the Assembly to complete a meaningful scrutiny of our spending plans while seeking to provide our partners, in particular local authorities, health bodies and third sector organisations, with early funding certainty. This is a difficult balance to achieve when faced with such a late Spending Review and when there are still so many uncertainties.


While the UK Government has set out its headline plans for further fiscal consolidation, we do not know yet the trajectory of the UK Government's plans and the impact on our Budget in future years. We also do not know the period for which the UK Government will publish its plans in the Spending Review. These are all factors we need to consider in determining the Budget timeline and the period for which we publish plans.

It is against this backdrop that I am writing to confirm that I intend to publish the Draft Budget 2016-17 on 8 December and the Final Budget on 1 March. While we would normally provide indicative plans for a three year period when publishing our Budget, the challenging timescales, together with the uncertainties that exist, mean I propose to publish plans for 2016-17 only.

Publishing the Draft Budget within two weeks of knowing our settlement will be challenging, but it does ensure that the Final Budget is moved before the deadline by which local authorities need to set their Council Tax requirements. This timeline is predicated on the key dates set out in Annex A. In order to achieve these

timescales, it will require adjustments both in terms of the Government's operational processes and for the Assembly scrutiny process.

As we have acknowledged previously, the circumstances this year are exceptional and in this context, I hope these arrangements are acceptable.

Best wishes,  


**Jane Hutt AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Busnes y Llywodraeth  
Minister for Finance and Government Business

**Budget Timetable 2016-17**

25 November	Spending Review
8 December	Draft Budget 2016-17 published
2 February 2016	Deadline for publication of the Finance Committee Report
9 February	Draft Budget 2016-17 debate
w/b 15 February	Recess
1 March	Final Budget 2016-17 published
8 March	Move Final Budget 2016-17