

# **The Welsh Government's draft budget for 2023-24**

February 2023



# 1. Background

## Introduction

**1.** On 13 December 2022 Rebecca Evans MS, the Minister for Finance and Local Government, published the Welsh Government's draft budget proposals for 2023-24. The proposals were accompanied by a narrative document, Budget Expenditure Lines (BELs), and tables supporting spending plans.<sup>1</sup>

**2.** Ahead of its publication, the Minister wrote to the Chair of the Finance Committee to request that it (and therefore all relevant Senedd committees) issue its report on the draft budget on or before 6 February 2023, to enable the debate on the draft budget to be held on 7 February 2023.<sup>2</sup> The Welsh Government has since scheduled the debate for this date.<sup>3</sup>

## Our remit and approach to scrutiny

**3.** The remit of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee is to carry out the functions of the responsible committee set out in Standing Orders 21 and 26C. The Committee may also consider any matter relating to legislation, devolution, the constitution, justice, and external affairs, within or relating to the competence of the Senedd or the Welsh Ministers, including the quality of legislation.

**4.** In July 2022, the Chair of the Committee spoke in the Finance Committee's debate on the Welsh Government's spending priorities for 2023-24. He explained that, following the Committee's experience of scrutiny of the draft budget for 2022-23, during the 2023-24 budget scrutiny round it would seek to explore the level of the Welsh Government's proposed spending on justice, the progress of its Delivering Justice for Wales programme,<sup>4</sup> and its progress in disaggregating spending on justice within the tables supporting the draft budget proposals.<sup>5</sup>

**5.** We therefore agreed to take evidence from Mick Antoniw MS, the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution (the Counsel General), on proposals within the draft budget relating

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government, [Written Statement: Draft Budget 2023-24 – A Budget in Hard Times](#), 13 December 2022

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government, [Letter from the Minister for Finance and Local Government to the Chair of the Finance Committee](#), 24 October 2022

<sup>3</sup> Senedd Cymru, [Business Statement and Announcement](#), 17 January 2023

<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government, [Delivering Justice for Wales](#)

<sup>5</sup> Plenary, 13 July 2022, Record of Proceedings (RoP) [350–353]

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to justice, and also the accessibility of Welsh law. On 23 November 2022, we wrote to the Counsel General to seek further detail on these aspects of the draft budget.<sup>6</sup>

**6.** In response, the Counsel General submitted a paper to us setting out that detail.<sup>7</sup> The paper's annex provides a breakdown of the draft budget proposals for 2023-24 by Main Expenditure Group (MEG), Spending Programme Area (SPA) and Budget Expenditure Line (BEL) from which planned justice-related actions will be funded. The annex also provides a narrative description of the justice-related activity resourced by each BEL, together with a comparison of the allocation in the 2023-24 financial year with the previous financial year.

**7.** We took oral evidence from the Counsel General on 16 January 2023.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, [Letter to the Counsel General, 23 November 2022](#)

<sup>7</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, [LJC\(6\)-02-23 – Paper 2 – Paper from the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, 21 December 2022](#)

<sup>8</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, [16 January 2023, RoP](#)

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## 2. The Welsh Government's draft budget for 2023-24

### The economic context

8. In Plenary on 13 December 2022, the Minister for Finance and Local Government described the Welsh Government's draft budget for 2023-24 as "one of the toughest" the Welsh Government had ever made, "reflecting the perfect storm of economic and budgetary pressures faced in Wales".<sup>9</sup>

9. The Counsel General's paper to the Committee sets out these difficulties:

*"The 2023-24 Draft Budget is underpinned by difficult choices, containing several reductions in funding. Ministers have made difficult choices and are having to pass on cuts in funding in areas where ordinarily they would not wish to do so.*

*To enable the Welsh Government to protect key areas, a reprioritisation exercise has been undertaken to release funding from within existing plans and to refocus the limited resources in the areas of greatest need. The intention is to ensure every pound invested makes the greatest positive impact. It is recognised in doing so, this will regrettably have negative impacts for those areas from which funding has been reprioritised.*

*Through using funding released from the reprioritisation exercise, together with some limited positive changes to our overall settlement as a result of the Autumn Statement, the Welsh Government has targeted additional allocations towards protecting frontline public services and delivering our Programme for Government commitments, helping those affected by the cost-of-living crisis and supporting our economy through recessionary times."*<sup>10</sup>

10. The Counsel General told us that while the Welsh Government had undertaken a spending reprioritisation exercise, the justice elements within the draft budget had "essentially been retained". He further explained:

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<sup>9</sup> Plenary, 13 December 2022, RoP [156]

<sup>10</sup> Paper from the Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, 21 December 2022, paragraphs 2.2–2.4

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*"I don't see any major impact in terms of us being able to continue what we are doing. I would love it if there was more money to be able to look at additional things we could do or how we could do things better, and it may be that there are some things that we end up doing more slowly, for example, or we can't do as much of as we wanted to, but, essentially, we've retained the core elements of the justice budget."*<sup>11</sup>

**11.** The Counsel General also stated that the Welsh Government had not been able to take into account the effect of rising inflation on future spending:

*"... what we haven't been able to do is, of course, to take into account what the impact of, for example, inflation might be, the fact of the reduction in the value of the budgets that we actually have. So, that doesn't mean that we're not going to deliver, but, undoubtedly, it may well impact in terms of how quickly we deliver or the extent to which we deliver, and that is a little bit that's unknown until you are into it."*<sup>12</sup>

**12.** When asked to set out the hardest decision he had to make in terms of the draft budget, the Counsel General said:

*"I don't think the hardest decision we've had to make has yet potentially materialised. I think the decisions may well come depending upon what the future pressures might be. ... At the moment, I don't think there are major hard decisions that I've had to take, or that other Ministers have had to take, but that will be for them to consider in due course."*<sup>13</sup>

**13.** The Counsel General cited the single advice fund as an example where the Welsh Government would need to monitor the extent to which the "debt problem" would escalate, and the corresponding effect on the usage of the fund, and stated that "the strains in terms of being able to deliver as much as we want to is going to be very, very difficult in the forthcoming year."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [7]

<sup>12</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [18]

<sup>13</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [28]

<sup>14</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [21]

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## Our view

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**14.** We note the effect of wider economic pressures on the decisions made by the Welsh Ministers in setting the Welsh Government's draft budget for 2023-24, as described by the Counsel General and the Minister for Finance and Local Government.

**15.** We also note with concern the Counsel General's comments at the possible future impact of inflation on the pace and the extent to which the Welsh Government is able to deliver its programmes.

## The Delivering Justice for Wales work programme

**16.** The Welsh Government announced its Delivering Justice for Wales work programme in May 2022,<sup>15</sup> in response to the recommendations of the Commission on Justice in Wales (the Thomas Commission).<sup>16</sup> In response to our scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget for 2022-23, the Counsel General committed to bring forward an annual report setting out the Welsh Government's progress against the programme's objectives.<sup>17</sup>

**17.** The Counsel General's paper provides that the Justice Transformation BEL allocates the budget for the Welsh Government's "activity supporting the justice transformation agenda in Wales":

*"This principally comprises of taking forward the Thomas Commission recommendations and the Programme for Government commitment to pursue the case for the devolution of policing and justice, together with coordinating leadership on justice activity across Government through supporting the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Justice."*<sup>18</sup>

**18.** The Counsel General acknowledged there was a small decrease<sup>19</sup> in the indicative allocation for the BEL, but stated that it did not signal a decrease in the priority attached to the activities it would support.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Welsh Government, [Delivering Justice for Wales](#), May 2022

<sup>16</sup> Commission on Justice in Wales, [Justice in Wales for the people of Wales](#), October 2019

<sup>17</sup> Welsh Government, [Letter from the Counsel General](#), 28 February 2022

<sup>18</sup> LJC(6)-02-23 – Paper 2, paragraph 2.7

<sup>19</sup> Allocation for 2022-23: £490k; Indicative allocation for 2023-24: £480k.

<sup>20</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [32]

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**19.** The Counsel General also stated that the devolution of justice was “an ongoing and fairly long-term project.”<sup>21</sup> He further explained:

*“Some new things that we want to see happen in terms of the devolution of justice aren't yet part of us, but, clearly, the financial aspects of them would need to be accommodated, but would be accommodated presumably as something that's devolved—that there would be a consequential to enable that to happen. So, we're in this stage where the issue of devolution of justice is an ongoing thing. Week in, week out it is consistently on my desk, but until a decision is taken that certain things are going to transfer, it is still very much the case of engaging, developing contacts with the Ministry of Justice, developing the projects that we're involved in with the MOJ, which you're aware of, some of which are accommodated within the budget already, I think.”*<sup>22</sup>

## **Our view**

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**20.** We note the small decrease to the allocation to the Justice Transformation BEL; however, we welcome the Counsel General's statement that this decrease does not signal a decrease in the priority attached to the activities it would support.

## **The Welsh tribunals**

**21.** The Counsel General's paper provides that the Tribunals BEL, which its indicative allocation for 2022-23 has decreased,<sup>23</sup> supports the Welsh tribunals<sup>24</sup> through the Welsh Tribunals Unit.<sup>25</sup>

**22.** In oral evidence, the Counsel General confirmed the “very slight reduction” in the Tribunals BEL and explained:

*“The tribunals came under budget during the last financial year, partly because of more online hearings rather than face-to-face hearings. That may change. There may, of course, be more cases. That part of the justice system has to be able to deliver. It's one of those things where you have to monitor as you go along to ensure, but the fact of the matter is that it has to be*

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<sup>21</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [32]

<sup>22</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [34]

<sup>23</sup> Allocation for 2022-23: £4.193m; Indicative allocation for 2023-24: £4.11

<sup>24</sup> A [list of the Welsh tribunals](#) is available on the Welsh Government's website.

<sup>25</sup> LJC(6)-02-23 – Paper 2, page 5

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*delivered. We do have to have those cases. They have to operate and they have to operate within the correct judicial environment, and independently of Government, et cetera. We think the budget will manage that, but it's one of those things where we have to be ongoing in monitoring it. That is clearly a priority area as well.*"<sup>26</sup>

**23.** The Counsel General also provided an outline of the possible effects the Welsh Government's planned reforms to the Welsh tribunals<sup>27</sup> could have on future allocations to the Justice Transformation BEL, which will resource these reforms:

*"Tribunal reform coming up is something that's going to be very, very important. Of course, there hasn't been an announcement formally of a tribunals Bill, but everyone is aware of the Law Commission report on tribunals—that will need to happen. There will need to be a single-tier tribunal and an appellate structure on that. That may actually result in a more efficient way of dealing with tribunals, instead of having several operating tribunals working separately. ... That having been said, there may well be increased demand as a result of that—the need to ensure that we have greater provision in the Welsh language and so on. So, those are things that, I think, we do have to look ahead to in the future."*<sup>28</sup>

## **Our view**

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**24.** We note the small reduction to the allocation provided to support the Welsh tribunals within the draft budget. We also note the Counsel General's statement that the Welsh Government would be monitoring the impact of any increase in cases, or an increase in the number of face-to-face hearings, on the resources which the Welsh tribunals require.

**Recommendation 1.** The Counsel General should provide us with timely updates of any increase in demand for cases to be heard by the Welsh tribunals, and any resulting in-year increase to the allocation to the Tribunals BEL.

**25.** We note the Counsel General's comments at the importance of planned reform to the Welsh tribunals, and although such reform may result in a more efficient structure, it may lead

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<sup>26</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [22]

<sup>27</sup> The Law Commission recommended reform of the devolved tribunals in December 2021. In *Delivering Justice for Wales* (section 9 of the document), the Welsh Government "strongly endorsed the fundamental principle emerging from the recommendations".

<sup>28</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [33]

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to an increase in demand. In addition, since such reform will be resourced by the Justice Transformation BEL, we would like to receive further information about the extent of this work.

**Recommendation 2.** The Counsel General should provide us with detail on the anticipated resources required to develop proposals for reform of the Welsh tribunals.

## **Accountability of outcomes from spending in relation to justice**

**26.** The Counsel General set out to us his overarching role within the Welsh Government's decision-making on justice-related expenditure:

*"... in terms of the budget with regard to justice, of course, I don't have, in that sense, a specific budget per se? Because my function as Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, of course, overlaps into, really, all the other portfolio areas that are impacted by justice, and in particular, the Minister for Social Justice ... So, whereas I have a sort of engagement and, of course, work very closely with the Minister for Social Justice, the budget I have is, or the areas that I work in predominantly relate to, I think, what are staffing costs and some research and policy development areas. So, there'll be areas where it's probably difficult for me to talk about, because they're questions that probably should be going to specific Ministers ..."*<sup>29</sup>

**27.** As part of our scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget for 2022-23, we recommended that the Welsh Government should work toward disaggregating spending on justice in future budgets. In response, the Welsh Government committed to explore the ways it could improve the level of information it provides on justice expenditure.<sup>30</sup>

**28.** The Counsel General's paper states that justice-related activity "cuts across portfolios and is allocated funding from within a number of BELs". It further states:

*"In many cases, expenditure will largely be on costs of staff whose time is not precisely divided between justice and non-justice related activity, or forecasts of expenditure cannot be disaggregated in this way. The granularity of detail on budget allocations for justice-related activity does not, therefore, go beyond BEL level in the Draft Budget for 2023-24. This approach is consistent*

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<sup>29</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [5]

<sup>30</sup> Welsh Government, [Letter from the Counsel General](#), 28 February 2022, response to recommendation 4

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*with the Protocol,<sup>31</sup> and the structure and presentation of the Draft Budget for 2022-23 is therefore consistent with previous years' budgets."<sup>32</sup>*

**29.** Within the paper, the Counsel General also states that the Welsh Government, as part of its annual reporting on the Delivering Justice for Wales programme, will continue to explore ways in which it can improve the level of "granular information" it can provide on justice expenditure.<sup>33</sup> An official accompanying the Counsel General told us that annual reports will "hopefully" provide an update on expenditure on justice against what was forecast, and evaluations of the outcomes of that expenditure.<sup>34</sup>

**30.** When asked about the impact of the allocation in the budget on the number of Police Community Support Officers, the Counsel General stated that while "there is no impact in the sense that we will continue to support the numbers that we have", the impact on communities "may well be coming". However, the Counsel General went on to say:

*"... these are budgets in other people's portfolios. These are not my portfolios. I engage in the broader sense on these. I know because I chair the justice Cabinet sub-committee that we do take a look at the overall picture in terms of the developments, what is happening in social justice, what are all the projects that are there. In that committee, we don't go into the budgets; those are left to the individual portfolios. And of course, you'll notice that some of those budgets go into health, they go into social services and local government issues, they go into education as well. So, in many ways, the specific budgets there are ones where I can talk generally about them, but I think any detail on them you probably need to put to the specific Ministers in terms of their portfolios."<sup>35</sup>*

**31.** When asked if he was satisfied with the transparency of the structure he set out, whereby the Counsel General has a role in co-ordinating the Welsh Government's activities on justice but other Ministers have responsibilities for allocating spending for those activities, the Counsel General said:

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<sup>31</sup> The [Budget Process Protocol](#) between the Senedd and the Welsh Government, agreed by the Senedd on 21 June 2017, sets out the understanding between the Finance Committee and the Welsh Government on budgetary related matters.

<sup>32</sup> LJC(6)-02-23 – Paper 2, paragraph 2.5

<sup>33</sup> LJC(6)-02-23 – Paper 2, paragraph 2.9

<sup>34</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [62]

<sup>35</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [26]

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*"... we do have that level of transparency, and the transparency is also growing as the work we do continues to grow. So, I'm satisfied with that. I'm also satisfied, I think, that we probably have more transparency than we've ever had within the Senedd on these areas.*

*I think what it reflects also, though, is where we are with the devolution of justice more broadly. I think, in future years—and it's probably for a future Senedd—we are moving towards the stage where you actually have a department of justice, a Minister and so on. And I think, with the tribunal reform, devolution of youth justice, probation and so on, that gets to a certain momentum where that actually becomes a necessary part of the structure.*

*I also think, probably, it was not feasible within a Senedd of 60 persons. So, I think, to do it, you actually need a larger Senedd ... because you need that broader number of persons in terms of the capacity to scrutinise."<sup>36</sup>*

**32.** When further asked if the current structure allows for sufficient scrutiny of the outcomes of spending allocations on justice-related activities, the Counsel General said:

*"When the Thomas commission met, one of the recommendations was that there should be a specific justice function within the Welsh Government. We're not quite there yet; we have a sort of hybrid arrangement. But it's the reason why I myself, and the Minister for Social Justice, have chosen to work very, very closely together ... I don't actually believe that justice can be properly delivered without embracing, also, the concept of social justice."<sup>37</sup>*

**33.** The Counsel General explained that a lack of disaggregated data on the justice system in Wales is "one of the most important things that has to be addressed" to enable evaluation of outcomes, and, in its absence, "it's very difficult to actually develop justice policy."<sup>38</sup> He went on to say:

*"This is a point that we've made—myself and the Minister for Social Justice—in all the meetings that we've had with UK Government Ministry of Justice officials, Lord Chief Justice, and so on.*

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<sup>36</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [47–49, 51]

<sup>37</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [55]

<sup>38</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [57]

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*It was a point that was made very much by Cardiff University in their recent publication on criminal justice. I was absolutely shocked when I saw the data in terms of Wales having the highest number of citizens in Europe that are actually in prison, pro rata, and also that the make-up of those and those on probation is almost, I think, two thirds or 70 per cent from non-white backgrounds. That is data that we should have, that we should know about, that we should be able to take into account in evaluating. It shouldn't be dependent upon freedom of information requests and so on. Until we have that data, it will make the development of justice policy extremely difficult and uncertain. That's why we keep pressing that point. I think we have agreement, and I know there are complications as to how you actually get it when you're starting from scratch, but it is something that we do have to have, and it's fundamentally important to the future of justice within Wales."*<sup>39</sup>

## **Our view**

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**34.** We note the Counsel General's explanation that a "hybrid arrangement" currently exists within the Welsh Government in respect of its justice functions, and that any future legislative devolution of justice will require it to have a justice department as recommended by the Thomas Commission.

**35.** We await with interest the publication of the Welsh Government's first annual report on its Delivering Justice in Wales programme. In particular, we look forward to seeing any detail it may contain on the Welsh Government's expenditure on justice against what was forecast, and evaluations of the outcomes of that expenditure. As the content of the annual report will likely touch on both our remit and that of the Equality and Social Justice Committee, we will seek opportunities for joint scrutiny of the annual report.

## **The Welsh Government's capacity to legislate**

**36.** When asked if the Welsh Government had sufficient resources to legislate in the context of the increase in the number of UK Parliamentary Bills subject to the legislative consent process,<sup>40</sup> the Counsel General said:

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<sup>39</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [61–62]

<sup>40</sup> We have raised our concerns about this increase in our [Annual Report 2021/22](#), October 2022

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*"... we have the budget that is set in terms of the functions that we have. Where the challenges come might be, for example, on the area of retained EU law. We're not quite sure precisely what that is going to mean and what the implications of that are going to be. The other thing, of course, is that much of it is actually staff and lawyer time, et cetera, looking at UK Government Bills as one element, and if those change or those increase, or new Bills are introduced—we now have, for example, the strikes (minimum service standards) Bill coming through, which raises all sorts of issues in respect of Welsh Government responsibilities. So, those are all things that are new that come in that then have to be accommodated, and they will be accommodated, as we will do with the retained EU law [Bill], it's just it's difficult to be precise about it, because you're budgeting for what you expect to be there, and you don't have an enormous amount of leeway within that."*<sup>41</sup>

**37.** The Counsel General further reiterated his belief that there are sufficient resources to sustain Welsh Government departments' legislative programmes, and that the Welsh Government "will deliver on that legislative programme."<sup>42</sup>

**38.** When asked specifically about the likely impacts of the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill<sup>43</sup> on the Welsh Government's resources, the Counsel General said:

*"It will certainly have a massive impact on giving it the attention that it needs. The question is what the scale of that attention is, what impact it has on other areas that need attention, the way resources are spread around. As I say, it's one of those things that we are continuing to work on, continuing work to identify those particular areas."*<sup>44</sup>

## **Our view**

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**39.** We acknowledge the Counsel General's assertion that the Welsh Government has sufficient resources to deliver its legislative programme. While that may be the case, in considering the increase we have seen in UK parliamentary bills subject to legislative consent memoranda, it is unclear to us if the Welsh Government does have sufficient resources to

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<sup>41</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [12]

<sup>42</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [14]

<sup>43</sup> Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill [HL Bill 89]

<sup>44</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 16 January 2023, RoP [89]

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deliver all the legislation which it may decide at any time to be necessary. As a result we are concerned that the Welsh Government may be using the UK Government's legislative programme to implement some of its policy objectives because it requires less of its own resources, which has the added effect of legislation in devolved areas being subject to less detailed scrutiny by the Senedd.

**40.** In addition, we are particularly concerned at the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill's impact – which is likely to be considerable if the Bill is enacted as currently drafted – on the Welsh Government's resources. We acknowledge the Counsel General's statement that the Welsh Government is continuing to identify which areas will need "attention" under the Bill's requirements. However, once it becomes clear to the Welsh Government what the likely impacts of the Bill will be on its ability to deliver for the people of Wales, it is imperative that a full picture of those likely impacts is shared with the Senedd.

**Recommendation 3.** Should the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill become law, the Counsel General should report to us on the Welsh Government's assessment of the impact of the Bill on its resources within a month of its passing, and at monthly intervals thereafter.

## **The accessibility of Welsh law**

**41.** In his paper to the Committee, the Counsel General states that the costs of the Welsh Government's work to deliver the accessibility of Welsh law programme<sup>45</sup> "are met from across a number of portfolios as part of the wider legislative activity of the organisation". He also states that the indicative costs of the additional costs required to increase drafting and translation capacity, and for staff to work on non-legislative projects, were set out in the Explanatory Memorandum to the Legislation (Wales) Bill.<sup>46</sup>

**42.** The Welsh Government's annual report for 2021-22 on its accessibility of Welsh law programme states that Canolfan Bedwyr is being funded by the Welsh Government "to develop domain-specific machine translation for the law and legislation by April 2023."<sup>47</sup> The Counsel General's paper confirms that an indicative sum of £350k has been allocated in the draft budget for this work.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Welsh Government, *The future of Welsh law: A programme for 2021 to 2026*, September 2021

<sup>46</sup> LJC(6)-02-23 – Paper 2, paragraph 4.1

<sup>47</sup> Welsh Government, *The future of Welsh law: annual report 2021 to 2022*, November 2022, paragraph 36

<sup>48</sup> LJC(6)-02-23 – Paper 2, paragraph 4.3

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## Our view

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**43.** We note that the indicative staffing costs to the Welsh Government as a result of the Legislation (Wales) Bill were set out in the Bill's Explanatory Memorandum, as stated by the Counsel General. Since it is now over three years since the Bill became an Act, we would like to gain an understanding of whether these indicative costs to the Welsh Government are proving to be accurate.

**Recommendation 4.** The Counsel General should, by the end for March, provide an analysis of whether the anticipated additional staffing costs to the Welsh Government set out in the Explanatory Memorandum to the Legislation (Wales) Bill are proving to be accurate.

**44.** We note the sum allocated in the draft budget to Canolfan Bedwyr to develop domain-specific machine translation for the law and legislation. We look forward to seeing the outcomes from this work in the Welsh Government's next annual report on its programme to improve the accessibility of Welsh law.