

From the Minister of Finance

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Matthew, a chara

BUDGET PROCESS

Thank you for your letter of 4 March 2024.

In response to the queries from the Finance Committee,

- a) The Executive is working towards having a Budget agreed before the end of April 2024.
- b) I am fully aware of this requirement and will lay a statement in the Assembly at least 14 days before laying a Budget.
- c) Unfortunately, the short time frame does not allow for the ideal process of twelve weeks consultation before agreeing a final Budget. We need to have a budget in place as soon as possible after the start of the year to allow departments to plan effectively. Once the Executive has agreed the funding envelope for each department, individual departments will conduct Equality Screening/Impact Assessments in line with their published Equality Schemes. The result of these can be considered by the Executive as part of the first in-year monitoring round.
- d) It is impossible to give an exact date for Main Estimates as they cannot be written until the Executive has agreed its 2024-25 Budget and individual Ministers have made decisions on the allocation of the funding envelopes, set by the Budget, to departmental priorities. I aim to bring the Main Estimates to the Assembly as soon as possible.

Is mise le meas,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "C. Archibald." with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**DR CAOIMHE ARCHIBALD MLA
MINISTER OF FINANCE**