



**NORTHERN IRELAND  
ASSEMBLY**

**Committee for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs**

Matthew O'Toole MLA  
Chairperson  
Committee for Finance  
Room 323  
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27 February 2026

Dear Matthew,

**Scrutiny of the draft Multi-Year Budget for 2026-29/30**

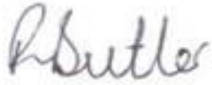
Following correspondence from the Clerk to the Committee for Finance, on 15 January 2026, regarding the scrutiny of the draft Multi-Year Budget for 2026–29/30, the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs met on 26 February 2026 to consider the issue.

The Committee was advised that Officials from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs are continuing to work through the draft budget with the Minister and, consequently, have (to date) been unable to attend an evidence session with the Committee that would have enabled Members to undertake scrutiny.

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Accordingly, the Committee agreed to write to the Finance Committee to advise that, at this stage of the process, it is unable to take a position on the draft budget.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Butler', written in a cursive style.

**Robbie Butler**  
**Chair of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**