

The Budget Process - A case for reform

Written by Chris Robertshaw
Thursday, 26 November 2009 08:58

The proposed PAG submission is at the foot of this memorandum and concerns the Private Member's Bill by Juan Watterson MHK which seeks to reform the Budget Process.

For anyone who has not seen Juan Watterson's consultative paper on the subject entitled 'The Budget Process - A case for Reform' below is a short summary of what is wrong with the current process:

- 1. There is no opportunity for public consideration or input before the budget is approved.***

- 2. Tynwald Members receive the Budget (which is, in effect, a fait accompli) on a strictly confidential basis before it is delivered to, and voted on by Tynwald - all in the same day.***

- 3. This process does not stand up well when compared to either best practice or the procedures used by many other parliaments.***

Juan Watterson's proposals, again in summary, create modest pauses in the process to allow for:

- a) Public Input***

- b) Time for MHK's to take advice***

- c) The Budget proposals to be considered by the Public Accounts Committee***

- d) Opportunity for Members to Submit amendments***

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Anyone wishing to see the full text, or who wish to make their own submissions, should email juan.watterson@gov.im (the closing date for responses is the 18th December 2009)

The following submission has now been made by the PAG:

"The Positive Action Group has considered the paper on Juan Watterson's private member's bill 'The Budget Process - A Case for Reform' and warmly welcomes this initiative. The PAG Charter seeks open and accountable government and rigorous control of public finances and considers the proposed reforms a firm step in the right direction. Our only reservation, which lies well outside the remit of this bill, remains the size of the [Block Vote](#) which acts to suppress true consensus and the value of meaningful debate, within our parliament. That said, we trust that this bill will enjoy the support of the house"