

Minutes – Business Committee

Meeting Venue:

Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 14 February 2023

Meeting time: 09.00 – 09.47

Private

Attendance

Category	Names
Committee Members:	Elin Jones MS, Llywydd (Chair) Lesley Griffiths MS Darren Millar MS Siân Gwenllian MS
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Yan Thomas (Deputy Clerl)
Others in attendance	Jane Dodds MS David Rees MS, Deputy Presiding Officer Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive and Clerk Siwan Davies, Director of Senedd Business Siân Wilkins, Head of Chamber and Committee Service Julian Luke, Head of Policy and Legislation Committee Service, Helen Carey, Welsh Government

1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

The Llywydd welcomed Members to the meeting



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed for publication

3 Organisation of Business

3.1 This week's business

Tuesday

The Trefnydd drew Business Managers' attention to the following change:

- ~~The Packaging Waste (Data Collection and Reporting) (Wales) Regulations 2023 (15 mins)~~ *Postponed until 14 March*

The Trefnydd confirmed that she will be answering FMQs on behalf of the First Minister this week.

- Voting Time will take place as the last item of business.
- Plenary is unlikely to run past 6.15pm.

Wednesday

- Voting Time will take place before the Short Debate
- Plenary is unlikely to run past 7.40pm.

3.2 Three week timetable of Government Business

The Trefnydd drew Business Managers' attention to the following changes:

Tuesday 28 February 2023

- Statement by the Minister for Economy: Net Zero Skills Strategy (30 mins)
- Statement by the Minister for Social Justice ~~Education and Welsh Language~~: Wales: a community of communities (30 mins)
- ~~Debate: The Estyn Annual Report 2021–22 (60 mins)~~ - *postponed until 21 March*

Tuesday 7 March 2023

- The Non-Domestic Rating (Alteration of Lists and Appeals) (Wales) Regulations 2023 (15 mins)
- Debate: Welsh Rates of Income Tax (~~15–30~~ mins)

3.3 Three week timetable of Senedd Business

Business Committee agreed to move the Member Debate on 1 March to 8 March due to Ministerial availability and, subsequently, agreed to make the following changes:

Wednesday 1 March 2023 –

- ~~Member Debate under Standing Order 11.21(iv) Biometric data in schools (60 mins)~~ *moved to 8 March*

Wednesday 8 March 2023 –

- Member Debate under Standing Order 11.21(iv) Biometric data in schools (60 mins) *moved from 1 March*
- ~~Time allocated to Plaid Cymru (60 mins)~~ *Moved to 15 March*

Wednesday 15 March 2023 –

- Time allocated to the Welsh Conservatives (60 mins)
- Time allocated to Plaid Cymru (60 mins) *Moved from 8 March*
- Short Debate: James Evans (Brecon and Radnorshire) (30 mins)

Business Committee held an initial discussion around the potential impact of industrial action announced for 15 March and noted that further information will be provided at the Committee's next meeting on the implications for committee meetings, Plenary business and tabling deadlines.

4 Legislation

4.1 Correspondence from the Chair of the Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee regarding the Food (Wales) Bill timetable

Business Committee agreed the requested extension to the timetable for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Food (Wales) Bill from 28 April to 12 May and that, subject to the general principles of the Bill being agreed by the Senedd, Stage 2 proceedings should be completed by 14 July 2023.

4.2 Update on LCMs

Business Committee received an update on current LCMs and:

- agreed to refer the LCM on the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill laid on 9 February to the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee for scrutiny, noting that the Bill may also be of interest to a number of other committees, with a reporting deadline of 30 March 2023; and
- noted the positions on LCMs considered by Business Committee on 7 February 2023.

5 Review of proxy voting

5.1 Parental leave: matters for consideration

As part of its review of proxy voting arrangements, Business Committee considered the responses to its consultation with Members and a range of matters relating to the temporary Standing Orders on proxy voting for parental leave.

Business Committee agreed, on the basis of a majority view, to propose that the current provisions on proxy voting for parental leave should be made permanent.

Darren Millar stated the opposition of the Conservative Group to retaining the current provisions.

Business Committee agreed to propose that the maximum durations should be revised to seven months for the mother or father of a baby, the partner of a person giving birth, an adoptive parent or carer in a surrogacy arrangement, of which a maximum of one month shall be taken before the due date or adoption date and a maximum of six months after the due date or adoption date. The Llywydd noted that it should not be for the Presiding Officer to determine which parent is the lead carer. Siân Gwenllian asked for consideration to be given to the arrangements that would relate to premature births when the guidance is drafted.

Business Committee agreed that, in the event of any ambiguity, the Presiding Officer should continue to be able to use their discretion in determining matters around the eligibility of individuals to be granted a proxy vote and the duration of such arrangements. However, the Committee agreed that when a Member or their partner suffer a miscarriage or stillbirth that discretion should only be used to determine the length of a proxy voting arrangement and not the Member's eligibility.

Business Committee agreed to return to the issue of what information is published when a proxy voting arrangement is agreed once it has considered the possibility of extending proxy voting provisions at a subsequent meeting.

Business Committee agreed to propose that proxy voting should be permitted in all types of voting in Plenary and a Committee of the Whole Senedd, including those that require a resolution or motion to be passed on a vote in which the number of Members voting in favour is not less than two-thirds of the total number of Senedd seats, or when the proxy vote would count toward the number required for quorum.