

# Minutes – Business Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 12 March 2024

Meeting time: 09.00 – 09.39

**Private**

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## Attendance

Category	Names
Committee Members:	Elin Jones MS, Llywydd (Chair) Lesley Griffiths MS Darren Millar MS Heledd Fychan MS
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Yan Thomas (Deputy Clerk)
Others in attendance	David Rees MS, Deputy Presiding Officer Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive and Clerk Siwan Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Clerk and Director of Senedd Business Bethan Davies, 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. Apologies were received from Jane Dodds

## **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**

- Voting Time will take place as the last item of business.
- Plenary is unlikely to run past 7.30pm

#### **Wednesday**

- There will be no Voting Time.
- Plenary is unlikely to run past 7.10pm

Heledd Fychan requested a Government statement this week on the situation in Hirwaun where a number of residents have been advised to evacuate their properties due to RAAC being found. The Trefnydd indicated that consideration would be given to providing a statement.

The Llywydd informed Business Managers that she will announce that the final Member Bill ballot of this Senedd will be held on 24 April at the start of Wednesday's Plenary meeting.

### **3.2 Three week timetable of Government Business**

The Trefnydd informed Business Managers of the following changes to the Three Week Timetable of Government Business:

**Tuesday 19 March 2024**

- Debate: Final report of the Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales (60 mins)
- ~~Statement by the First Minister: Resignation statement (30 mins) – *withdrawn*~~

**Tuesday 16 April 2024**

- Statement by the Deputy Minister for Social Services: The Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill (60 mins)
- Motion to vary the order of consideration of Stage 3 amendments to the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill (5 mins)
- The Infrastructure (Wales) Bill: Signification of His Majesty's consent (5 mins)
- Debate: Stage 4 of the Infrastructure (Wales) Bill (15 mins)

Business Managers discussed arrangements for acknowledging the First Minister's resignation in Plenary on 19 March and agreed that arrangements would be finalised following further discussion between the Government and the Llywydd.

### **3.3 Three week timetable of Senedd Business**

The following additions were agreed to the Three Week Timetable of Senedd Business:

**Wednesday 24 April 2024 –**

- Debate on a Member's Legislative Proposal (30 mins)
- Debate on the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee report – Performance of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (30 mins)
- Time allocated to the Welsh Conservatives (60 mins)
- Short Debate (30 mins)

### 3.4 Member Debates: Selection of Motion for Debate

Business Committee considered the proposed motions for debate and agreed to schedule the following motion on 20 March:

**Heledd Fychan**

**NNDM8505**

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Believes that:

- a) the national collections of Wales, which are under the care of the National Library of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru, belong to everyone in Wales;
- b) the collections need to be protected for future generations, while also continuing to be used to inspire and motivate people of all ages; and
- c) free access to our national museums has been an undoubted success since the introduction of the policy in 2001, and that this policy is one that should be protected.

2. Notes:

- a) warnings from the institutions that revenue and capital fiscal cuts endanger the national collections, due to unsuitable spaces and stores and also a reduction in the number of specialist staff who are now employed to care for them;
- b) the concerns that further cuts will worsen the situation; and
- c) Welsh Government responsibilities under the Government of Wales Act 2006 for our national collections.

3. Calls on the Welsh Government to:

- a) commission a panel of experts to establish what the danger is to the collections, and work with the institutions and the Welsh Government to implement a plan to protect them
- b) work with the National Library of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru, and the unions that represent the staff in these institutions, to ensure their viability for the future; and

c) work with Amgueddfa Cymru to retain the free entry policy to our national museums.

### **3.5 Procedures for the Resignation and Nomination of a First Minister**

Business Committee noted the paper and agreed guidance to be issued to Members on the procedure for nominating a new First Minister.

## **4 Legislation**

### **4.1 Letter from the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd regarding the timetable for the Senedd Cymru (Electoral Candidate Lists) Bill**

Business Committee considered further correspondence received from the Trefnydd containing additional information on the Government's reasons for proposing a timetable which includes an expedited period for Stage 1 scrutiny, as well as the views on the timetable previously expressed by the Reform Bill Committee.

On the basis of a majority view, Business Committee agreed the timetable proposed by the Government.

Darren Millar stated his strong opposition to the timetable, his view that scrutiny should not be curtailed on a Bill of this nature, and that the Government should have introduced the Bill sooner if it had concerns over the time available to implement the provisions in time for the 2026 Senedd election.

The Llywydd noted her objection to the proposed timetable and stated that where, as in this case, there is a question as to whether a Bill is within the legislative competence of the Senedd, Stage 1 scrutiny is the appropriate place for those matters to be aired. She noted that she will write to the relevant committees in order to share her views on the timetable.

The Deputy Presiding Officer, as Chair of the Reform Bill Committee, questioned aspects of the Government's justification for an expedited timetable being necessary and also expressed the view that where there is a question around competence that an expedited timetables should not be agreed.

## **4.2 Timetable for the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill**

The Business Committee agreed to refer the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill to the Health and Social Care Committee for consideration of the Bill's general principles. Business Committee agreed to consult with the Committee on the proposed timetable for scrutiny and return to the matter at a future meeting.

## **4.3 Update on LCMs**

Business Committee agreed to refer the supplementary LCM on the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill to the Local Government and Housing Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee for scrutiny, with a reporting deadline of 17 May 2024 for this and other previous LCMs on this Bill.

# **5 Committees**

## **5.1 Letter from the Chair of the Petitions Committee – request for a debate slot**

Business Committee agreed to schedule a debate on petition P-06-1392.

## **5.2 Letter from the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee requesting an alternative meeting slot**

Business Committee agreed the request for the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee to meet on the morning of Tuesday 7 May due to the Bank Holiday on 6 May.

# **6 Senedd Timetable**

## **6.1 Recess Dates**

Business Committee confirmed the provisional dates for Autumn Half Term and Christmas Recess 2024.

Heledd Fychan noted that the timing of the Christmas Recess could impact upon budget scrutiny should the Welsh Government lay its draft budget late again, as in previous years. Business Committee noted the potential for adjustments to be made at a later point if required in response to events surrounding this year's budget timetable.

The Committee also agreed provisional recess dates for Spring Half Term and Easter Recess 2025.

## **7 Tabling Arrangements**

### **7.1 Easter Recess Tabling Arrangements**

Business Committee agreed the arrangements for tabling plenary business, written questions and amendments to Bills during the Easter recess and respective bank holidays. The Committee also noted that the Ministers referred to as answering Oral Questions after Easter recess are subject to change due to the appointment of a new Government.

## **8 Any other business**

### **Stage 4 of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill**

The Trefnydd informed Business Managers of the Government's intention to schedule Stage 4 proceedings on the Bill on Wednesday 8 May.