

Minutes – Business Committee

Meeting Venue:

Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 21 May 2024

Meeting time: 09.01 – 09.40

Remote / Private

Attendance

Category	Names
Committee Members:	Elin Jones MS, Llywydd (Chair) Heledd Fychan Jane Hutt MS Darren Millar 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 Siân Wilkins, Head of Procedures and Parliamentary Skills 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



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

- Voting Time will take place as the last item of business.
- Plenary is unlikely to run past 5.30pm

Darren Millar asked why the *Statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Education: Consultation on the School Year* has been postponed from 21 May to 4 June. The Trenfydd confirmed that the Government need to take more time to consider the matter following the end of the Cooperation Agreement with Plaid Cymru.

Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

Following the resignation of the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee after her appointment to a ministerial role, Business Committee agreed that the chair of that committee should continue to be allocated to the Labour group.

Business Committee also agreed that the Llywydd would invite nominations prior to First Minister's Questions and that, should a secret ballot be required, the result would be announced at the end of today's plenary.

Darren Millar requested that a note be circulated on the current allocation of committee chairs to political groups. Heledd Fychan confirmed that Rhys ab Owen MS continues to be suspended from the Plaid Cymru group on a temporary basis.

Wednesday

- Voting Time will take place before the Short Debate.
- Plenary is unlikely to run past 7.10pm

Cooperation Agreement

Having received written confirmation from the Leader of Plaid Cymru that it has withdrawn from the Cooperation Agreement with the Welsh Government, the Llywydd confirmed that the *Additional guidance on the operation of Plenary proceedings during the Cooperation Agreement* no longer applies with immediate effect. Following consultation with Business Managers, the Llywydd also confirmed:

- Plaid Cymru spokespeople will be called to ask three questions during oral question sessions with immediate effect, starting with Questions to the Counsel General this afternoon.
- The Leader of Plaid Cymru and former Designated Members will be no longer be required to limit questions (tabled and supplementary) during ministerial question sessions to constituency or regional matters, and will be able to contribute to ministerial oral statements in the same way as other Members.

Business Committee agreed that the ratio of opposition debate time allocated to Plaid Cymru will correspond to the number of Members of the Plaid Cymru group and will no longer be reduced to take account of the Leader of Plaid Cymru and the number of Designated Members.

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 4 June 2024

- Statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Education: Consultation on the School Year (45 mins)
- ~~LCM on the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill (15 mins)~~ – *Postponed*

Heledd Fychan enquired whether it was the government's intention to add further business for future weeks. The Trefnydd confirmed that she would provide more detail to Business Committee on the timetable going forward by close of play on Wednesday.

3.3 Three week timetable of Senedd Business

3.4 NNDM8578 – The Future of Port Talbot steelworks

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

Wednesday 5 June 2024 –

- Short Debate: ~~Laura Anne Jones MS (South Wales East)~~ Altaf Hussain MS (South Wales West) (30 mins)

Wednesday 19 June 2024 –

- Motion under Standing Order 26.91 seeking the Senedd's agreement to introduce a Member Bill – British Sign Language (BSL) (Wales) Bill (60 mins)
- Member Debate under Standing Order 11.21(iv) (60 mins)
- Time allocated to the Welsh Conservatives (60 mins)
- Short Debate: Rhys ab Owen MS (South Wales Central) (30 mins)

NNDM8578 – The Future of Port Talbot steelworks

Business Committee considered a further request from Luke Fletcher to schedule a debate on NNDM8578.

Heledd Fychan declared an interest having supported the motion and expressed her support for a debate being scheduled. However, a majority of Business Committee did not agree to schedule a debate in light of the oral statement made by the First Minister on the same subject last week.

4 Legislation

4.1 Letter from the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee regarding the Supplementary Legislative Consent Memoranda on the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill

Business Committee considered a request to extend the reporting deadline and agreed a new reporting deadline for all outstanding LCMs on the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill of 21 June.

4.2 Letter from the Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee regarding the Tobacco and Vapes Bill LCM

Business Committee considered a request to extend the reporting deadline for the Tobacco and Vapes Bill LCM to 26 July, in light of difficulties the Committee had experienced in securing ministerial availability for scrutiny.

Business Committee did not agree to extend the deadline due to the potential for the Bill to complete the legislative process at Westminster prior to the summer recess. However, the Trefnydd confirmed that she would work with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to help ensure her availability to attend a scrutiny session with the Committee in that timescale.

4.3 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Welsh Language regarding the Artificial Intelligence (Regulation) Bill

Business Committee noted the letter.

5 Committees

5.1 Letter from the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee requesting a meeting slot

Business Committee agreed that the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee can meet on either Thursday 23 May or Friday 24 May.

6 Procedural Work

6.1 Primary Legislative Scrutiny Process: Amendment Tabling Deadlines

Business Committee returned to a further discussion of options for allowing more time between legislative amendment tabling deadlines and proceedings on those amendments.

Business Committee unanimously agreed that these matters should be considered as part of the scheduled full review of the legislative scrutiny process.

Darren Millar and Heledd Fychan also proposed that a temporary change should be taken forward ahead of the full review to provide additional time between tabling deadlines and proceedings. They suggested that such a change would improve scrutiny and the quality of debates.

The Trefnydd stated that the government would not support temporary changes being made ahead of the review due to concerns about the impact it might hold for Government's ability to prepare amendments and to manage the legislative timetable. She also noted that the Government was working more closely with non-Government Members during the amending stages.

Business Managers agreed to discuss the matter further outside of the Committee.