

Minutes – Business Committee

Meeting Venue:

Meeting Room 4B, Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 29 April 2025

Meeting time: 08.58 – 09.49

Hybrid / Private

Attendance

Category	Names
Committee Members:	Elin Jones MS, Llywydd (Chair) Paul Davies MS Heledd Fychan MS Jane Hutt 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 Matthew Richards, Interim 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.



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 informed Business Managers of the following changes:

- Statement by the First Minister: The Steel Industry (Special Measures) Bill (45 mins)
- Statement by the ~~First Minister~~ Counsel General and Minister for Delivery: The Legislative Programme (60 mins)
- Statement by the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs: Community Food Strategy (45 mins)
- ~~Statement by the Minister for Further and Higher Education: International Education (45 mins)~~ *Postponed until 3 June*
- Voting Time will take place as the last item of business.
- Plenary is unlikely to run past 7.20pm.

Heledd Fychan expressed the view that a debate on The Steel Industry (Special Measures) Bill would have been preferable to a statement. The Trefnydd responded that an oral statement was considered more appropriate on this occasion.

Heledd Fychan asked whether an oral statement to mark the tenth anniversary of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 will be brought forward. The Trefnydd confirmed that an oral statement will be scheduled in June.

Wednesday

The Llywydd informed Business Managers of the following change:

- Questions to the Senedd Commission (~~30~~10 mins)

Business Committee agreed to table motions for consideration in Plenary on Wednesday to change the Conservative members on the following committees:

- Tom Giffard to replace Samuel Kurtz on the Standards of Conduct Committee
- Samuel Kurtz to replace Laura Anne Jones on Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee.

Under item 6.1, Business Committee considered the vacant Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee agreed that this should continue to be allocated to the Conservative group. Business Committee agreed that the Llywydd will invite nominations at the start of Plenary on Wednesday, with a secret ballot to be held during the meeting if required.

As a result, the following additional changes to Wednesday's agenda were agreed:

- Nominations for a Committee Chair (5 mins)
- Motions to elect Members to committees (5 mins)
- Voting Time will take place before the Short Debate.
- Plenary is unlikely to run past 7.15pm.

Siambwr Hywel

The Llywydd requested that Business Managers ensure that Members of their groups have familiarised themselves with the guidance on the operation of Plenary meetings held in Siambwr Hywel, prior to this afternoon's meeting.

3.2 Three week timetable of Government Business

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

Tuesday 6 May 2025

- Statement by the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing: The Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (45 mins)

At the request of the Trefnydd, Business Managers agreed to swap the Oral Questions for the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language from 21 May to 4 June. Consequently, Oral Questions to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip will move from 4 June to 21 May.

3.3 Three week timetable of Senedd Business

The following items were agreed to be scheduled on the Three Week Timetable of Senedd Business:

Wednesday 21 May 2025 –

- Debate on the Local Government and Housing Committee report: The role, governance and accountability of the community and town council sector (60 mins)
- Debate on the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee report: International Relations Annual Report 2024 (60 mins)
- Time allocated to Plaid Cymru (60 mins)
- Short Debate: Mick Antoniw MS (Pontypridd) (30 mins)

4 Legislation

4.1 Timetable for the Homelessness and Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill

The Business Committee discussed the proposed timetable for scrutiny of the Social Housing Allocation (Wales) Bill and agreed to refer the Bill to the Local Government and Housing Committee for consideration of the general principles.

The Business Committee agreed to consult with the Local Government and Housing Committee on the proposed timetable for scrutiny and return to the matter at a future meeting.

4.2 Letter from the Chair of the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee to the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs regarding the approach to consideration of the Environment (Governance, Principles and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill

Business Committee noted the letter and the request that the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure (CCEI) Committee has made of the Welsh Government, in advance of its own consideration of the timetable for the Environment (Governance, Principles and Biodiversity Targets) (Wales) Bill at a future meeting.

The Trefnydd confirmed that the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs will consider the letter and will respond to the CCEI Committee in due course.

4.3 Update on LCMs

Business Committee considered an update on Legislative Consent Memoranda and agreed to:

- refer the LCM on the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill to the Health and Social Care Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee for scrutiny, with a reporting deadline of 27 June 2025;

- refer SLCM (No.3) on Employment Rights Bill to the Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee, the Equality and Social Justice Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee for scrutiny, with a reporting deadline of 13 June 2025;
- refer SLCM (No.3) and (No.4) on the Data (Use and Access) Bill to the Culture, Communication, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, the Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee, the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee, the Equality and Social Justice Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee for scrutiny, with a reporting deadline of 2 May 2025. Business Committee noted that, due to late amendments to the Bill and the timetable for its consideration at the UK Parliament, it would be difficult for Senedd committees to consider the SLCMs in advance of the Plenary debate;
- refer SLCM (No.2) on the Tobacco and Vapes Bill to the Health and Social Care Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee for scrutiny, with a reporting deadline of 6 June 2025;
- refer the SLCM (No.3) on the Mental Health Bill to the Health and Social Care Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee for scrutiny, with a reporting deadline of 27 June 2025;
- extend the reporting deadline for the LCM on the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill to 11 July 2025.

5 Welsh Government Supplementary Budget 2025–26

5.1 Letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language to the Chair of the Finance Committee regarding the approach to the publication of supplementary budgets during 2025–26

Business Committee noted the letter.

6 Committees

6.1 The effect of a Member leaving a political group: committee chairing and representation

Business Committee considered implications arising from Russell George's suspension from the Conservative group and agreed:

- that the Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee should continue to be allocated to the Conservative group and that the Llywydd will invite nominations at the start of Plenary on Wednesday 30 April;
- that the vacant position on the Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister would be filled by the new Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee; and
- to return to consider how to offer Russell George a place on a Senedd committee at a later meeting.

Business Committee also noted the implications for representation of those Members who are not members of political groups on the Business Committee, which now arise under Standing Order 11. Business Managers agreed that the Llywydd would write to the three Members concerned, in order to explain their rights under Standing Order 11.3 and that the Llywydd would consider any views received in determining any future course of action.

Business Committee also noted that it will be asked to consider Standing Order requirements relating to the formation of political groups and representation on the Business Committee, as part of its procedural work to review thresholds contained within Standing Orders in the light of Senedd Reform.

6.2 Wales COVID-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee: Chairing Arrangements

The Business Committee discussed options for filling the co-chair and member vacancies on the Wales COVID-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee.

Paul Davies indicated that the Conservative group's position remained unchanged. Heledd Fychan stated that the Plaid Cymru group is in favour of a single Chair model for the Committee and removing the requirement for it to have two Co-chairs.

The Trefnydd stated that she would need to give further consideration to the matter. Business Committee agreed to return to the matter at a future meeting.

7 Procedural Work

7.1 Letter from the Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee regarding their report on public appointments

Business Committee noted the recommendation made by the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee in its report on public appointments and agreed to consider its response as part of its forthcoming consideration of its procedural work programme for the time remaining in the current Senedd term.

7.2 Business Committee Procedural Work Programme: next steps

Business Committee considered its Procedural Work Programme and agreed to meet in a series of additional meetings to consider procedural matters, and that the first of the additional meetings will be used to prioritise the procedural work to be taken forward in the time remaining in this Senedd term.

The Committee agreed that the secretariat would bring forward a proposed schedule for the additional meetings.