

Agenda – Member Accountability Bill Committee

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| Meeting Venue: | For further information contact: |
| Hybrid – Committee Room 4, and videoconference via Zoom | Sarah Sargent Committee Clerk |
| Meeting date: 2 December 2025 | 0300 200 6565 |
| Meeting time: 09.30 | SeneddMAB@senedd.wales |

Hybrid

Public meeting

(09.30 – 10.50)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions, and declarations of interest

09.30

2 Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill – evidence session

09.30–10.45

(Pages 1 – 43)

Julie James MS, Counsel General and Minister for Delivery

Will Whiteley, Deputy Director, Senedd Reform, Welsh Government

Ryan Price, Head of Senedd Policy, Welsh Government

Anna Hind, Senior Lawyer, Legal Services, Welsh Government

[Senedd Cymru \(Member Accountability and Elections\) Bill](#)

[Explanatory Memorandum](#)

[Statement of Policy Intent](#)

Attached Documents:

Paper 1 – Briefing paper



3 Papers to note

10.45–10.50

(Pages 44 – 47)

Attached Documents:

Paper 2 – Letter to the Counsel General and Minister for Delivery from the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee: Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill (24 November 2025)

Paper 3 – Letter to the Business Committee: Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill – impact of the timetable on scrutiny (26 November 2025)

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 (vi) and (ix) to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of the meeting, and from the committee's meetings on the 3rd, 9th and 16th of December

Private meeting

(10.50 – 11.00)

5 Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill – consideration of evidence

10.50–11.00

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Julie James MS

Counsel General and Minister for Delivery

24 November 2025

Dear Julie

Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill

At our meeting on 17 November 2025, we took evidence from you on the Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill.

The Committee would welcome further information and clarity as regards a number of matters as set out in the questions in the attached Annex. Given the short reporting deadline, we would be grateful to receive a response by Thursday December 4 2025.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Member Accountability Bill Committee, David Rees MS.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Hedges

Chair

ANNEX

1. The Welsh Ministers have a duty to make provision prohibiting the making or publishing of false or false and misleading statements of fact (see paragraphs 113 to 116 of the [transcript](#)). Please can you clarify the exact timescale within which the Welsh Ministers must make this provision and identify where in the Bill/explanatory materials this is stated? As part of your response, please can you confirm whether or not a further section 13 Order must be made by the next election in 2030.

2. The Bill does not contain a definition of what constitutes a “false statement of fact” or a “misleading statement of fact”. As these terms are crucial to the formulation of the proposed offence, is it desirable to have them on the face of the Bill without being defined?

3. In your statement in Plenary on 4 November you stated, in relation to Members: “there's no reason why, in certain circumstances, if they've committed the basic tenets of the offence, they wouldn't be able to be held to that”.

- (i) Can you outline what consideration has been given to this point?
- (ii) Would extending the scope of the offence to cover Members create an element of double-jeopardy where Members are sanctioned through the standards process and separately subject to the new offence?

4. In that same statement on 4 November you mentioned that there were some competence issues relating to extending the offence to Members that you would need to discuss in committee. Can you expand on what these issues are?

5. The Welsh Government’s Statement of Policy Intent states that: “Given the time available for the passage of this Bill in the current Senedd term, it has not been possible to undertake the necessary engagement in the development of an offence at this time.”

Can you confirm what engagement has already taken place up to this point and, looking forward to the next Senedd, what would you say is a realistic timescale within which such engagement could take place?

The Rt Hon Elin Jones MS
Llywydd
Chair, Business Committee

Dyddiad | Date: 26 November 2025

Annwyl Lywydd

Pwnc | Subject: Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill – impact of the timetable on scrutiny

When I wrote to you on 31 October 2025 regarding the Welsh Government's proposed timetable for the scrutiny of the Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill, I expressed the Committee's concerns that the timetable will mean our work scrutinising this proposed legislation will be challenging.

At our meeting yesterday, we conducted our fourth evidence session; later this week we will be meeting for a second time to hold a further two evidence sessions. Despite our efforts to seek to gather evidence on the Bill, we are increasingly concerned that there is insufficient time available to us to fully consider the Bill's provisions and its implications should it be passed into law.

The timetable set for us means that only a little over two weeks were available to the public to share their views on the Bill. We have received only sixteen consultation responses, none of which reflect the views of the ordinary Welsh citizen and we believe this is due to the incredibly short consultation period. Furthermore, several of the submissions we have received have highlighted concerns with the pace at which the Bill may progress through the Senedd.

While we will continue with our work, the Committee wishes to make it clear that the introduction of the Bill so late into this Sixth Senedd and the consequential timetable set by the Business Committee is challenging our ability to discharge our responsibility to report to the Senedd on the general principles of the Bill.

I am copying this letter to the Finance Committee and to the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David F. Rees." The signature is written in a cursive style with a dot over the 'i' in David and a dot over the 'e' in Rees.

David Rees MS
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.