

Agenda – Member Accountability Bill Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 4 – Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 12 February 2026

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Sarah Sargent

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddMAB@senedd.wales

On-site

Informal private meeting

(09.00–09.15)

Public meeting

(09.15–17.00)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions, and declarations of interest

2 Papers to note

(Pages 1 – 8)

Attached Documents:

Paper 1 – Letter from the Chair of the Member Accountability Bill Committee to the Counsel General and Minister for Delivery (22 January 2026)

Paper 2 – Letter from the Counsel General and Minister for Delivery to the Chair of the Member Accountability Bill Committee (2 February 2026)

Paper 3 – Letter from the Chair of the Standards of Conduct Committee to the Chair of the Member Accountability Bill Committee (23 January 2026)

Paper 4 – Letter from the Counsel General and Minister for Delivery to the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee (6 February 2026)



Item 3 is subject to a financial resolution being agreed by the Senedd on [10 February 2026](#).

3 Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill – Stage 2 proceedings

Julie James MS, Counsel General and Minister for Delivery

Will Whiteley, Deputy Director, Senedd Reform, Welsh Government

Ryan Price, Head of Senedd Reform Policy, Welsh Government

Samuel Carr, Lawyer, Legal Services, Welsh Government

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

[Marshalled list of Amendments](#)

[Grouping of Amendments](#)

The Committee agreed on [20 January 2026](#) that the order of consideration for Stage 2 proceedings would be: sections 2 to 21, Schedules 1 and 2, sections 22 to 25, section 1, and the long title.

A lunch break will be called at an appropriate point in proceedings.

Julie James MS
Counsel General and Minister for Delivery

Dyddiad | Date: 22 January 2026

Annwyl Julie,

Pwnc | Subject: Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill – financial resolution

I am writing to request confirmation as to when you intend to table a new financial resolution motion in respect of the Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill.

During Plenary proceedings on 13 January 2026 you said it is your intention to table the financial resolution motion for debate in time for Stage 2 proceedings to take place on 12 and 13 February.

You will be aware that, as a motion to agree a financial resolution is yet to be approved, no proceedings on the Bill, including the disposal of amendments, may be undertaken by the Member Accountability Bill Committee.

To give certainty to the Committee, to all Senedd Members, and to the public, I would be grateful if you would clarify your intentions as soon as possible.

I am copying this letter to the Business Committee.

Yours sincerely



David Rees MS
Chair

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

Julie James AS/MS
Y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a'r Gweinidog Cyflawni
Counsel General and Minister for Delivery



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

David Rees MS
Chair, Member Accountability Bill Committee

2 February 2026

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 22 January 2026 regarding the financial resolution for the Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill.

As you will be aware, the debate on the Financial Resolution has been included on the Business Statement for 10 February. I will table the motion for the Senedd to agree the financial resolution tomorrow. This will allow for stage 2 proceedings to take place as planned on 12 and – if necessary - 13 February.

I did not move the Financial Resolution motion on 13 January as I wanted to consider the implications for the Regulatory Impact Assessment of the committee recommendations to remove much of the detail from Part 2 of the Bill, in relation to lay members to be appointed the Standards of Conduct Committee.

Having reviewed the financial implications I have reached the view that if the detail currently in Part 2 of the Bill was removed by way of an amendment, the costs associated with lay members would be unknown because the planning assumptions used to provide the current estimate, which already carried a low level of confidence, would become even more uncertain. If amended in that way the Bill would provide no parameters for the numbers of lay members, and as that detail would need to be developed for inclusion in Standing Orders – where a two-thirds majority for approval would be required – there can be no confidence about when the arrangements for the appointment of lay members would be in place and therefore, when costs associated with lay members would be incurred. Consequently, I will wish to give this matter further consideration ahead of Stage 2 proceedings.

I look forward to debate on the 10 February and to discussing these matters further with Members.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, the Chair of the Finance Committee, the Business Committee and all Members.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie James AS/MS

Y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a'r Gweinidog Cyflawni
Counsel General and Minister for Delivery

David Rees MS, Chair of the Member Accountability Bill Committee
By email

23 January 2026

Dear David,

The Standards of Conduct Committee met on 19 January and noted your letter relating to the Member Accountability Bill Committee and the recommendations relevant to the Committee. The Committee welcomed the work of your Committee on the Bill and noted the report and the recommendations as a whole.

The Committee previously recommended the introduction of lay members for the Standards of Conduct Committee as part of its inquiry on deliberate deception. We therefore believe it is important to be clear that these provisions have been included in the legislation as a result of our report and recommendations, even though we are not responsible for the legislation as a whole.

However, having now seen how the recommendation has been incorporated into the draft Bill, the Committee has further considered the wider benefits of the role of lay members within the broader standards landscape and are clear that the introduction of lay members is also relevant to our current work on strengthening the standards framework in relation to dignity and respect matters. Indeed, one of the key suggestions the Committee is considering is the use of sub-Committees and lay members to handle complaints from Members' support staff or to provide independent expertise.

We note that your committee is supportive of the majority of the policy provisions, subject to some improvements which you put forward, however we also note the concern expressed in Conclusion 8 of the report, that limitations on the Senedd's ability to design its own procedures must be kept to a minimum.

Whilst this is something the Standards committee can empathise with the rationale on, we are concerned about an aspect of Recommendation 8 (which is based on Conclusion 8) that removes two parameters we would ordinarily expect to find on the face of primary legislation - namely the maximum length of appointment and the restriction on the number of terms a lay member may serve. We recognise that there will be a need for additional Standing Orders provisions to be agreed in the Seventh Senedd, but we are concerned that your recommendation would result in the removal of these two valuable parameters from the appointment process and potentially risk its implementation.

The Committee is of the view these parameters are more typically found in legislation rather than in Standing Orders, in order to provide clarity during the process of such appointments. The Committee would therefore welcome, rather than the removal of these parameters, the legislation sets out that:

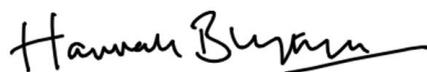
- Lay members should be appointed for a maximum term of five years, and
- an appointment should be renewable only once .

Retaining the provisions outlined above would still allow the Senedd discretion where necessary in relation to the length of appointment as an appointment could be less than 5 years if necessary. It would also provide discretion in establishing how lay members would operate while providing a clear structure consistent with other such legislation making provision for appointments by the Senedd (the National Assembly for Wales Commissioner for Standards Measure 2010).

Enabling the Senedd to appoint lay members through this legislation is important to maintaining public confidence in the Senedd's commitment to a robust and credible standards framework for the Seventh Senedd. Importantly, including a clear legislative framework will also support the next Senedd in progressing it at the earliest opportunity.

I have copied this letter to the Counsel General, Llywydd and Chair of Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee given its relevance to them.

Yours sincerely,



Hannah Blythyn MS

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Julie James AS/MS
Y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a'r Gweinidog Cyflawni
Counsel General and Minister for Delivery



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mike Hedges AS/MS
Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

6 February 2026

Dear Mike,

I write as I committed to do, in my response to the Committee's report on the Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill, specifically to provide an update on the Welsh Government obtaining Minister of the Crown consent regarding the provisions in section 4 of the Bill and to provide an explanation as requested by the Committee with regards to the detail set out in recommendations 8 and 9 of the Committee's report.

On Minister of Crown Consent, the Government has had positive engagement with the relevant UK Government departments facilitated by the Wales Office. We are continuing to work productively together at pace, in order to obtain the appropriate consents required. I will continue to update both the Committee and the Member Accountability Bill Committee as our discussions progress to a conclusion.

For recommendation 8 and 9, there is a limited relationship between the provisions in section 11 of the Bill (the regulations relating to a recall poll) and section 22 of the Bill which includes the duty on Welsh Ministers to create the offence to prohibit the making or publishing of false or misleading statements of fact. They deal with two separate powers to make secondary legislation and are about two different electoral events but, there is a link. The limited relationship between section 11 of the Bill and section 13 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 (GoWA) as amended by section 22 of the Bill arises as a consequence of section 11(3)(a)(ii), which provides a power to apply or incorporate provisions made by or under an Order under section 13 of GoWA. The effect of this is that once an offence is created and added to the existing criminal (electoral) offences set out in the Senedd Cymru (Representation of the People) Order in accordance with the duty in new section 13(2A), that offence could subsequently be applied or incorporated into regulations made under section 11 about the conduct of recall polls, by virtue of the provision in section 11(3)(a)(ii) of the Bill.

The amendment of section 13 of GoWA by section 22 of the Bill, in combination with section 11(3)(a)(ii), puts beyond doubt that regulations under section 11(1) could include provision of the kind required and authorised by section 13 of GoWA as it would be amended.

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Julie James AS/MS

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Counsel General and Minister for Delivery