

Minutes – Business Committee

Meeting Venue:

By Video Conference

Meeting date: 27 March 2020

Meeting time: 13.30 – 14.13

Private

Attendance

Category	Names
Committee Members:	Elin Jones AM, Llywydd (Chair) Rebecca Evans AM Darren Millar AM Siân Gwenllïan Caroline Jones AM
Committee Staff:	Aled Elwyn Jones (Clerk)
Others in attendance	Ann Jones AM, Deputy Presiding Officer Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly Siwan Davies, Director of Assembly Business Siân Wilkins, Head of Chamber and Committee Service Gwion Evans, Head of the Llywydd's Private Office Helen Carey, Welsh Government Elin Roberts, Policy Adviser to the Llywydd Bethan Garwood, Deputy Clerk



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1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the meetings were agreed by the Committee for publication.

3 Organisation of Business

3.1 This Week's Business

Business Committee agreed that plenary would take place next Wednesday at 2pm, subject to confirmation from Welsh Government regarding Ministers' availability. The meeting would take the form of an 'Emergency Senedd' with reduced attendance as per agreements between groups. They agreed that the meeting would take place virtually, via video-conference, and that it would be kept as short as possible. To this end, the Trefnydd agreed that the time for each statement would be reduced to 30 minutes. Any votes that needed to take place would be via weighted voting and a roll-call. It was agreed that this would be a formal meeting of the Assembly, subject to Standing Orders as usual, and so constitute Assembly proceedings for the purposes of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

Business Managers agreed to identify which Members will attend as soon as possible, so that ICT testing can take place. They asked the Llywydd to contact the four independent Members about the meeting.

3.2 Three Week Timetable of Government Business

Darren Millar asked the Trefnydd for a Statement by the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs on her department's response to Covid-19. The Trefnydd confirmed that one would be scheduled for next week's Plenary

4 Assembly Business

4.1 Decisions arising from emergency procedures

At last week's meeting, Business Managers agreed to recommend that a new Standing Order 34 be created, to provide for emergency procedures relating to the continuity of

business during the current situation. The Assembly agreed to the new Standing Order on Tuesday, and the Business Committee made the following decisions in accordance with the new provisions:

Voting in Plenary and Quorum:

Standing Orders 34.9 and 34.10 provide for weighted voting in Plenary, and a reduced quorum of 4. Business Committee agreed that any votes in Plenary should proceed on this basis until further notice.

Business Committee agreed that where weighted voting is used, the votes will be conducted by roll-call, for reasons of practicality and transparency.

Accessibility of Plenary Meetings:

Business Committee agreed that, for virtual meetings, the requirement to broadcast be relaxed in accordance with SO 34.16. However, Business Managers agreed that a recording of the meeting should be made available via the Assembly's usual broadcast channels as soon as possible after the meeting, and a record of proceedings published as usual.

Oral Assembly Questions:

In accordance with Standing Order 34.18, Business Committee agreed that no Oral Assembly Questions should be scheduled until further notice.

Consideration of SIs:

Business Committee agreed that Standing Orders 21.2 and 21.3 would be disapplied and that any relevant functions would be undertaken by the Assembly until further notice. Officials will provide a note on how this will work in practice for the next meeting.

5 Legislation

5.1 Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020

Business Committee decided not to set a timetable for the consideration of these regulations.

6 Any other business

Written Assembly Questions

In light of the increase in the number of tabled written questions, the Llywydd stated that she intended to exercise her discretion on the number of Written Assembly Questions accepted, in accordance with Standing Order 14.4, and that WAQs per Member would be limited to a weekly maximum of 10 with immediate effect.