

# Minutes – Business Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Zoom

Meeting date: 17 April 2020

Meeting time: 12.33 – 14.13

**Private**

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## Attendance

Category	Names
Committee Members:	Elin Jones AM, Llywydd (Chair) Rebecca Evans AM Darren Millar AM Siân Gwenllian 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 Bethan Garwood, Deputy Clerk Elin Roberts, Policy Adviser to the Llywydd Helen Carey, Welsh Government



## 1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

## 2 Minutes of the previous meeting

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

## 3 Organisation of Business

### 3.1 This Week's Business

The Trefnydd updated the Business Committee on the addition of two statements for Wednesday's Plenary, and that all statements had been extended to 45 minutes each.

- Statement by the Minister for Health and Social Services: Coronavirus (COVID-19) (45 mins)
- Statement by the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales: Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) (45 mins)

The Trefnydd also informed the Business Committee that the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 had been postponed to 29 April so they can be debated alongside the regulations that will amend them.

Business Committee agreed that Plenary should be held on Wednesday next week, and that it should start at 1.30pm. Business Managers also agreed that there will be no break in proceedings.

Business Committee agreed to continue with the practice of there not being any questions on the BSA.

### **Number of Members attending:**

Business Managers agreed to continue with the allocation of Members for each group from the last plenary session: 12 Labour and government, 6 Conservatives, 4 Plaid Cymru and 2 Brexit, giving a maximum of 28 attendees should all independent Members attend.

They also agreed to allow party leaders (including the First Minister) to be replaced by another member of their party after the first item.

The Llywydd asked officials to send out a note to all Members reminding them of Zoom meeting etiquette.

### **3.2 Three Week Timetable of Government Business**

The Trefnydd informed Business Managers of the following changes to the 3 Week Timetable of Government Business:

#### **Wednesday 29 April 2020**

- Statement by the Minister for Education: Coronavirus (COVID-19) (45 mins)
- Statement by the Minister for Housing and Local Government: Coronavirus (COVID-19) (45 mins)
- Proposal under Standing Orders 12.24 and 12.40 to debate the following items together and that they be subject to a single vote (30 mins)
  - The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020
  - The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

#### **Wednesday 6 May 2020**

- Statement by the First Minister: Coronavirus (COVID-19) (~~30~~ 45 mins)
- Statement by the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales: Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) (45 mins)
- Statement by the Minister for International Relations and Welsh Language: Coronavirus (COVID-19) (45 mins)
- Statement by the Counsel General and Minister for European Transition: Coronavirus (COVID-19) (45 mins)

The Trefnydd explained that after next week there would be fortnightly alternating statements by the Health and Economy Ministers.

Business Managers asked the Trefnydd for more information on the statement by the Counsel General scheduled for 6 May.

The Trefnydd drew Business Managers' attention to the fact that LCMs on the Agriculture and Fisheries Bills did not appear on the three week timetable as had been previously anticipated due to delays in the parliamentary progress of these Bills.

## **4 Legislation**

### **4.1 Legislative Consent Memorandum – The Trade Bill**

Business Managers discussed the paper and agreed in principle to refer the LCM to the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee and the LJC Committee for scrutiny, with a reporting deadline of Thursday 4 June. This is subject to Business Committee agreement of a timetable for committee business.

### **4.2 Letter from the Chair of Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee**

Business Managers discussed the letter and agreed to return to the matter at the next meeting, once the Cabinet has discussed the legislative programme next week.

Business Managers also asked officials to investigate how Stage 2 proceedings could work in the current circumstances, either virtually or in person while respecting social distancing rules.

## **5 Committees**

### **5.1 The Resumption of Committee Activity**

Business Committee agreed to the resumption of committee activity for business related to Covid-19 matters, the Welsh Government's legislative programme, and other time-critical business. A rolling four week committee timetable would be developed, in consultation with committee chairs.

Business Committee agreed that the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee should resume its responsibilities under Standing Orders 21.2 and 21.3. They also agreed that it and the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills; Children, Young People and Education; and Health, Social Care and Sport committees could start making arrangements to meet during the week commencing 27 April.

Business Managers agreed that the Llywydd will convene a Chairs' Forum meeting next week. Business Managers asked that Chairs have a discussion with committee members in advance of the meeting to ensure the widest possible input and engagement. The Llywydd encouraged Business Managers to also attend the Chairs' Forum meeting.

Business Managers noted the capacity constraints related to supporting virtual public committee meetings, restricting activity to one committee meeting at any time.

## **6 Any Other Business**

### **Legislative Consent Memoranda**

The Trefnydd explained that the LCMs on the Agriculture and Fisheries Bills do not appear on the BSA, because of delays in the Parliamentary timetable, and it is unclear when the LCMs will need to be debated. Business Committee agreed to extend the reporting deadlines for committees to 14 May for the Agriculture Bill and 21 May for the Fisheries Bill.

The Trefnydd also informed the Business Committee that Parliamentary scrutiny of the Environment Bill has been paused, so Business Committee agreed to extend the reporting deadlines for committees to 4 June.

The Trefnydd also informed the Business Committee that the laying of LCMs on the Non-Domestic Rating (Lists) Bill 2020, Non-Domestic Rating (Public Lavatories) Bill

2020 and the Fire Safety Bill have been delayed due to COVID-19 response work being prioritised. The Government hopes to lay LCMs on these next week.

### **Written Questions**

Opposition Business Managers raised issues on the timeliness and content of written answers, while the Trefnydd had concerns about the volume and content of questions, some of which asked for information already publicly available. Opposition Business Managers considered that in many cases the information was not publicly available at the time the question was asked. The Llywydd asked officials to provide her with further information to inform future Business Committee consideration.

### **Future Business Committee meetings**

Business Managers agreed to schedule future meetings of the Business Committee at the start of the week, with the day and time to be agreed out of committee.