

Minutes – Business Committee

Meeting Venue:

Video conference via Zoom

Meeting date: 27 April 2020

Meeting time: 12.32 – 13.43

Private

Attendance

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



1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed for publication, subject to one revision to be agreed outside of the committee.

3 Organisation of Business

3.1 This Week's Business

The Trefnydd informed the Business Committee that all statements had been extended from 45 to 60 minutes each.

Feedback from last week's plenary meeting

The Llywydd reminded Business Managers that Members need to be disciplined in informing officials who will be attending plenary meetings, and in arriving half an hour before the meeting starts.

Given that plenary meetings are increasing in length, the Business Committee agreed to have a technical break part way through the meeting. This will also allow the technology to be reset midway through the meeting.

Point of Order – discourteous language

The Llywydd informed Business Managers that she has written to the Minister for Health regarding the use of discourteous language. The Minister has responded to confirm that he will address the Assembly on this matter at the next available opportunity. The Llywydd will address the point of order at the start of Wednesday's Plenary.

Length of questions

Business Managers discussed the length of contributions in last week's plenary, and agreed to set time limits for questions on statements. They agreed to allow spokespeople to ask two sets of questions, in the same manner as party leaders, and for both of these sets for party leaders and spokespeople to be limited to 2 minutes each. The Brexit Party leader and spokespeople will be allowed a single 3 minute contribution. All other contributions will be limited to one minute each. The length of Ministers' answers are expected to be proportionate to the length of the questions asked.

3.2 Three Week Timetable of Government Business

The Trefnydd updated the Business Committee on the LCMs on the Non-Domestic Rating (Lists) Bill 2020, Non-Domestic Rating (Public Lavatories) Bill 2020 and the Fire Safety Bill, which the Government had hoped to lay last week. They have been unable to do so as the same officials are working on the response to COVID-19, however the Government will keep the Business Committee updated on progress.

The government is also considering whether the Assembly's consent is required on the Finance Bill, however this decision has also been delayed.

The Trefnydd also informed the Business Committee that the NDR Lists Bill is likely to move quickly through the UK Parliament, so six weeks for scrutiny is unlikely to be possible. However, the Assembly has already scrutinised and agreed an LCM on the previous Bill which fell on prorogation.

Point of order – Oral Assembly Questions

Business Managers noted that a Point of Order had been raised concerning the use of Standing Order 34.18. Business Managers agreed that the Llywydd should continue with the practice of disapplying the requirements of Standing Order 12.56. No oral questions would be scheduled but the Committee agreed to reintroduce Topical Questions for week commencing 4 May. The Llywydd asked the secretariat to draft a

note to Members outlining the criteria that would be used to select questions. The Committee agreed to keep these decisions under regular review.

4 Committees

4.1 Committee Timetable

Business Committee considered and agreed the draft committee timetable. The Committee noted that they would consider a rolling timetable at each meeting, and that changes to some slots are already anticipated for the third and fourth weeks of the timetable. The Committee also confirmed that the time available for party group meetings remains 11.00 – 12.30 on Tuesdays.

5 Legislation

5.1 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill Timetable

Business Committee considered the letters from the ELGC committee and the Minister for Housing and Local Government and agreed to a temporary suspension of Stage 2 proceedings, including no tabling of amendments. The Trefnydd indicated that the government hopes to bring a proposal for a new timetable to the committee in the near future.