

Minutes – Business Committee

Meeting Venue:

Video Conference via Zoom

Meeting date: 18 May 2020

Meeting time: 12.30 – 13.59

Private

Attendance

Category	Names
Committee Members:	Elin Jones MS, Llywydd (Chair) Rebecca Evans MS Darren Millar MS Siân Gwenllian MS Caroline Jones MS
Committee Staff:	Aled Elwyn Jones (Clerk)
Others in attendance	Ann Jones MS, Deputy Presiding Officer Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Senedd Siwan Davies, Director of Senedd Business Siân Wilkins, Head of Chamber and Committee Service Julian Luke, Head of Policy and Legislation Committee Service, Head of Policy and Legislation 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 for the meeting were agreed by the Committee for publication.

3 Organisation of Business

3.1 This Week's Business

The Trefnydd informed the Business Committee that the government intends to table a motion to suspend Standing Orders to allow a debate on 'Unlocking our society and economy: continuing the conversation' to take place on Wednesday. In order to do so, the statements by the First Minister and the Minister for the Economy, Transport and North Wales will be reduced to 45 mins, and the Minister for Housing and Local Government's statement withdrawn.

Business Managers expressed their disappointment at no longer having an oral statement by the Minister for Housing and Local Government, and the Trefnydd agreed to feed this back to the Minister.

The Llywydd informed Business Managers that the deadline for tabling amendments to the motion will be 6pm on Tuesday, and that she would be selecting amendments on the basis of encouraging the orderly conduct plenary business in a virtual context. She therefore encouraged groups to consider the number of amendments they would be tabling.

The Llywydd also informed Business Managers that in place of interventions, before the First Minister responds to the debate she will take one-minute contributions from Members who want to respond to something that has been said during the course of the debate. That could include Members who had already spoken. Business Managers asked the Secretariat to circulate a note to Members explaining this.

Grouping of regulations

Darren Millar asked that the two sets of Covid-19 regulations be debated together but with separate votes, and so the proposal to group will be amended accordingly.

BSA

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

3.2 Three Week Timetable of Business

Business Committee agreed a provisional start time of 11am for the meeting on 3 June.

The Committee agreed to continue to schedule Topical Questions for the next three weeks.

4 Plenary

4.1 Plenary Business and the Covid-19 Emergency

The Business Committee agreed to increase the number of Members able to attend plenary meetings up to the full 60 from the week after half term. The Llywydd highlighted the need for Business Managers to continue to inform officials in advance of which Members will be attending the meeting.

The Business Committee also agreed to continue to use the weighted voting system, and to split plenary meetings into morning and afternoon sessions if there is a significant increase in business. Business Managers agreed that they will decide the start time of plenary on a weekly basis.

The Business Committee agreed that it was important to lead by example and to follow social distancing guidelines until such time as those guidelines change. They agreed to return to such issues as physical or hybrid meetings only after any changes to Welsh Government guidance.

The Business Committee also agreed to schedule one additional hour of non-government business a week, starting from the week after half term, and to schedule one opposition debate a week for the next three weeks. Business Managers noted that under the schedule that was being followed before normal business was suspended, the next debate would be a Brexit Party debate, but the Committee decided to schedule the next three debates in the order of group size, and to follow the usual ratio after that. Caroline Jones objected to this decision. Business Managers agreed that the debates would have to be related to Covid-19 issues.

The Business Committee discussed the letter from the Leader of the Welsh Conservatives proposing the establishment of a dedicated Covid-19 committee. There were differing views on the desirability of the proposal, and the Committee asked the secretariat for a scoping paper on the process for establishing such a committee.

5 Legislation

5.1 Legislative Consent Memorandum on the Finance Bill

The Committee agreed to refer the LCM on the Finance Bill to the Finance Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, with a reporting deadline of Thursday 2 July.

5.2 Letter from the Chairs of the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committees

Business Managers agreed to extend the reporting deadline on the LCM on the Environment Bill to 2 July.

5.3 Letter from the Chairs of the External Affairs and Additional Legislation and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committees

Business Managers agreed to extend the reporting deadline on the LCM on the Trade Bill to 2 July.

5.4 Letter from the Chair of the Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee

Business Managers agreed the Stage 2 deadline of 9 October 2020, and that tabling for amendments should re-open in the last week of summer recess as proposed by the committee.

6 Committees

6.1 Committee Timetable

Business Committee considered the letter from the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee and agreed in principle to their request to have a weekly broadcast slot. Business Managers asked officials to investigate whether and how that could be accommodated, and agreed to return to the matter at the next meeting.