

Minutes – Business Committee

Meeting Venue:

Video Conference via Zoom

Meeting date: 6 July 2020

Meeting time: 12.30 – 14.10

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 Lowri Hughes, Deputy Clerk Helen Carey, Welsh Government Elin Roberts, Policy Adviser to the Llywydd



1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

3 Organisation of Business

3.1 This Week's Business

The Llywydd informed Business Managers of her intention to make a statement on Srebrenica before the start of Plenary this week. The First Minister and David Melding will also be called to make short statements.

The Llywydd informed Business Managers that she will introduce Laura Anne Jones as a new Member of the Fifth Senedd and invite her to make a short speech.

Start time and break

Business Managers agreed that the Plenary start time should be 11am and the break should be at around 12.45pm, after Questions to the Minister for Education. Business Managers also agreed to an earlier start time of 10am for next week's Plenary.

Spokespeople's questions on Ministerial statements

The Llywydd consulted Business Managers and stated that the arrangements for this week will remain as they were before virtual Plenary sessions were introduced: 10 minutes or 1000 words (whichever is greater) for Ministers to make their statement and up to 5 minutes each for group spokespeople to ask one set of questions.

The arrangements for Oral Questions will also remain the same as they were before virtual Plenary sessions were introduced: Conservative and Plaid Cymru spokespeople will be called to ask 3 questions without notice to the Minister. Brexit Party

spokespeople will be called to ask 2 questions without notice to 3 Ministers of their choice. All these questions will be up to one minute each.

Hybrid plenary guidance

The Secretariat will circulate guidance to Members this afternoon.

The Llywydd reminded Business Managers of:

- a new seating plan which designates specific seats in line with social distancing, and reminded Business Managers to notify officials of the names of their Members who will be attending Plenary physically this week and who will sit where;
- should the new electronic voting system fail for any reason, the fall-back will be weighted voting. Business Managers were asked to provide the name of their nominated voter in the same way they have for previous weeks; and
- equality of participation for Members participating remotely and in the Siambr, and that no Member should have a greater chance of being called.

Independent Members

The Llywydd had received responses from Independent Members to her letter explaining the cap on attendance due to social distancing in the Siambr and asking that they nominate between them one Member to attend physically each week. Two Members expressed a wish to attend both meetings physically, while the other two would attend virtually.

Business Managers agreed that Table Office should run a ballot for any Independent Members wishing to attend physically, and create a rotational system allowing the others to attend later sessions.

Any divergence during the Plenary session from the agreed cap on numbers in line with the COVID regulations will be treated as a matter of order.

Stage 3

The Llywydd informed Members that due to the rules around remote voting, there would be a 5 minute break after the two debates during Stage 3, before the amendments were voted on.

3.2 Three Week Timetable of Government Business

The Trefnydd drew Business Managers' attention to the addition of a set of coronavirus regulations to the agenda for 15 July:

Wednesday 15 July 2020

Proposal to debate the following items together but with separate votes: (30 mins)

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 6) Regulations 2020
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) (Amendment) (No.7) Regulations 2020

The Trefnydd also explained that, following a request at last week's Business Committee, the government had postponed the debate on the Agriculture Bill LCM until after the summer. Business Committee agreed a revised reporting deadline of 24 September for the committees considering the LCM.

3.3 Three Week Timetable of Senedd Business

Business Committee agreed to schedule the following items of business:

Wednesday 15 July 2020:

- Motion to amend Standing Order 18.10: Committee Functions Relating to the Oversight of the Wales Audit Office (5 mins)

- Motion to amend Standing Orders: The Electoral Commission and the Llywydd's Committee (5 mins)

Wednesday 16 September 2020:

- Motion under Standing Order 10.5 to appoint the Chair of the Wales Audit Office (5 mins)

Wednesday 23 September 2020 –

- Time allocated to the Brexit Party (60 mins)

The Business Committee agreed that, with the introduction of remote voting enabling Members to vote individually again, the Senedd could now consider Standard Committee reports if that Committee were to make a request.

4 Legislation

4.1 Revised Timetable for the Renting Homes (Amendment) (Wales) Bill

The Business Committee agreed to consult ELGC on the revised timetable before making a decision, and to ask for a response by next week.

4.2 Letter from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee – The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill

The Business Committee noted the letter and agreed the proposed timetable for the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill with a reporting deadline for Stage 1 of 4 December 2020 and for Stage 2 of 5 February 2021.

5 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2021–2022

5.1 Timetable for the Welsh Government Budget 2021–22

Business Managers agreed to consult with the Finance Committee on the proposed timetable.

6 Committees

6.1 Committee Timetable

The Business Committee agreed the proposed dates for the CYPE, LJC and PAC committees to meet during recess.

6.2 Letter from the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

Business Managers agreed with the LJC Committee's understanding of the timing of regulations likely to be brought forward following the 3-weekly Welsh Government reviews.

The Trefnydd clarified that although LJC's letter only refers to the three-week review of restrictions, there are a wider suite of COVID-19 regulations than those relating to health (e.g. education). The Trefnydd stated that LJC will need to be prepared to report on those too.

7 Plenary

7.1 Recess Dates

The Business Committee discussed the paper.

Darren Millar raised the fact that school holidays often differ across Local Authorities and that some schools have scheduled a 2 week half term this October to compensate for opening during an extra week in July. He asked that Business Committee look further at the implications of scheduling a 2 week recess in October due to childcare issues for Members, particularly given that we reduced Easter recess this year. The Secretariat will bring forward a note on which Local Authorities have scheduled a two week October recess and clarify any impact on legislation if recess were extended.

8 Standing Orders

8.1 Establishment and proposed membership of the Llywydd's Committee

Business Managers agreed to the Llywydd's proposal that Standing Orders should allow for either the Llywydd or Deputy Presiding Officer to chair the committee so that, were the Chair of the Finance Committee and the Llywydd are of the same political group,

the DPO could be appointed chair. This would enable the chair of the Finance Committee to be an ex officio member, representing only the committee, and additional to the one representative from each political group.

The Committee agreed to table a motion to amend Standing Orders for consideration next week.

8.2 Public Audit (Wales) Act – Amendment to Standing Orders

Business Committee agreed the report, and noted that a motion would be tabled for consideration on 15 July.

9 Paper to note

9.1 Letter from the Leader of the Welsh Conservatives

Business Managers noted the letter and agreed to look at the issues raised in due course.

10 Any Other Business

Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister:

The Deputy Presiding Officer updated Business Managers on the committee's meeting last Friday where they agreed to establish a sub-committee on 'COVID-19 recovery', to report back to the SFM committee. Their initial discussions have been for a committee of 5 Members, with fluid membership, but that they would consider party balance and other factors at a later date.

As the sub-committee's proposed remit is overarching, the portfolio it scrutinises would predominantly be the Counsel General and the Minister for European Transition; however as we move out of recovery, the sub-committee may wish to expand its remit. The Trefnydd stated that should any committee wish to look specifically at COVID-19 recovery in the context of a particular portfolio (i.e. health), the Minister with responsibility for that portfolio would be best placed to undertake any detailed scrutiny.

The Committee Clerk will make a request for committee slots in the autumn on a 3 weekly basis, in addition to the slots already allocated to SFM on Fridays before recesses.

Questions to the Counsel General and the Minister for European Transition

The Llywydd noted that the Welsh Government are in discussions with the Table Office regarding his responsibility as coordinator of COVID-19 recovery. Members will be able to ask the Counsel General questions on this aspect of his role, but on the understanding that he will not be able to answer detailed policy questions that lie within a specific Ministerial portfolio.

Members who change their political party but remain without a political group

The Llywydd stated that there have been several changes over this Senedd on this issue, where she must determine how to refer to those Members in official publications. Business Managers expressed their support were the Llywydd to decide that Members can be referred to as belonging to any particular group or party that they wish, provided that it is within order.

Plenary during the autumn term

The Llywydd informed Business Managers that there will be a paper on next week's agenda on scheduling Plenary for autumn term.

LCMs

The Trefnydd updated Business Managers on the progress of the Fisheries Bill and the NDR List Bill. The Government are considering whether to lay LCMs this week.