

Elin Jones AM
Llywydd and Chair of the Business Committee

2 April 2020

Annwyl Lywydd

I am writing to you in connection with the recent decisions of the Business Committee (on 24 and 27 March 2020) regarding the functions and meetings of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution (LJC) Committee.

While we can no doubt all agree that, in these difficult circumstances, modifications must be made to the way we work in the Assembly, I believe there is a strong case for enabling the LJC Committee to continue to undertake its scrutiny function, specifically as it relates to subordinate legislation made by the Welsh Government (and indeed subordinate legislation made by the UK Government in devolved areas, with the consent of the Welsh Government).

The Welsh Government has been provided with extensive executive powers, unparalleled outside of times of conflict, to address the serious nature of the Coronavirus pandemic. It must also not be forgotten that the Welsh and UK governments are in the midst of preparing Wales and the UK for exiting the European Union. This task is largely being actioned through an extensive programme of subordinate legislation. It is important that, even in these most challenging times, the parliaments of the UK are providing the necessary level of scrutiny and that the actions of the executives remain subject to a thorough and robust system of checks and balances – this is a long-standing and fundamental constitutional principle.

Following Plenary's decision on 24 March 2020 to create new Standing Order 34, which will allow (following the necessary decision of the Assembly Commission) committee meetings to be held without broadcasting access, I see no reason why the LJC Committee could not continue to meet 'virtually' to perform its duties. I consider this to be particularly important as there appears to be a growing sense that the measures requiring us to limit our social interactions will be in place for longer than was originally expected.

You will be aware that the LJC Committee undertakes other work which relates to its function of scrutinising important constitutional matters. I am mindful that, in these



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exceptional circumstances, it would be prudent for the Committee to pause its work related to its inquiries into Wales' Changing Constitution and Making Justice work in Wales, and to focus on the scrutiny of legislation. However, the demand for the LJC Committee to continue these important work strands will need to be reviewed as time progresses.

I am copying this letter to members of the LJC Committee.

Before closing, may I take this opportunity to wish you well.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mick Antoniw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Mick Antoniw
Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

