

Review of the legislative scrutiny processes for Public Bills, and Member Bills:

Issues raised during Member drop-in session

June 2025

Purpose

1. On 11 March 2025, all Members of the Senedd were invited to attend a drop-in session to share their views as part of the Business Committee's review of the legislative scrutiny process for Public Bills, and Member Bills.
2. In total, six Members attended. This note summarises the themes raised. Inclusion of an issue does not mean that the issue was raised, or the views shared, by all Members.
3. Inclusion of an issue in this note does not mean that the views of participants are shared or endorsed by the Business Committee.

Scrutiny of Public Bills

Welsh Government's capacity to legislate

4. Lack of flexibility and capacity in the Welsh Government's legislative programme has resulted in a logjam of Bills and inability to take forward proposals emerging during a Senedd term. Relevant factors include the Welsh Government's internal resourcing and UK Government funding.
5. It is not always clear what commitments the Welsh Government has made about whether and when it plans to introduce or progress Bills.



Senedd's capacity to scrutinise

6. Legislative scrutiny is (and should be) a detailed exercise. The increase in the number of Members in the Seventh Senedd should provide more capacity to undertake this work.

Support from Commission officials

7. Standards of support and levels of expertise provided by Commission officials are high throughout the legislative process, and in particular during the amending stages.

Induction, training and guidance

8. While some 'learning by doing' is inevitable, greater emphasis should be placed on encouraging Members to receive training on the legislative process as a whole early in a Senedd. This would increase Members' awareness of the process and help them plan their approach to Bills.

Review mechanism

9. A mechanism is needed to ensure a Bill's technical coherence and intelligibility after the final amending stage. Suggestion that this could be achieved by tasking a committee with reviewing all Bills after the final amending stage/before Stage 4 to identify technical issues that could be resolved without affecting the relevant provisions' meaning or legal effect, and giving the Welsh Government discretion over whether or not to rectify these issues before the Bill was debated at Stage 4.

Member Bills

10. Breadth of scope, including a view that Member Bills are sometimes too broad and that smaller and more-focused Bills are more likely to attract cross-party and Welsh Government support.

11. Engagement with the Welsh Government, including a view that Members entering the ballot should seek engagement with the Welsh Government to assess potential support before they table their pre-ballot proposal.

12. The Member Bill process provides a valuable opportunity to exert influence in an area of interest to the Member, but the timing of ballots can be difficult and

the volume of work required from the Member in charge of a Member Bill is significant. View that this presents a particular barrier to Members belonging to small political groups or who do not belong to a political group.

13. Need for induction, training and guidance, including a call for the Senedd Commission to run a seminar early in the Seventh Senedd on the key criteria for Member Bills, drawing on examples from other legislatures.

14. Lack of clarity about the role of Member's Legislative Proposal debates, including the risk of unduly raising stakeholders' expectations about the potential outcomes, and frustration that support from the Senedd does not result in the right to introduce a Bill.