

Adjourn the implementation of the 36 extra members of the Senedd until 2030

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 14 Gorffennaf 2025
Petitions Committee | 14 July 2025

Reference: SR25/11480/6

Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1529

Petition title: Adjourn the implementation of the 36 extra members of the Senedd until 2030.

Text of petition:

By delaying the implementation of the act, there would be time to fully consult with the public and see what they really think of the cost and the benefits. The Welsh Government has admitted that, "in the timescale available for developing the legislation it was not possible to undertake its own open public consultation on either the general concepts of Senedd Reform or a draft Bill." - Page 91 of the Explanatory Memorandum to the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill <https://senedd.wales/media/ixjdywtx/pri-ld16037-em-e.pdf>

Implementing the additional members will cost upwards of £80 million. All information costing etc has come from the act all 352 pages, which I have read. I have looked at the Reform Committee work and have emailed the chair Mr Rees with my observations. I have quoted the observations in the act by Sir Bernard Crick, "Too many members risks becoming bloated and inefficient". I



have noted that the only benefit of the act is improved scrutiny mentioned 78 times and the sharing of ministerial cars mentioned once.

I have sat on many scrutiny meetings and I am of the view that the whole scrutiny system needs overhauling and a complete root and branch review needs to be carried out in every form of government.

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.

1. Background

The [Senedd Cymru \(Members and Elections\) Act 2024](#) made several reforms to the Senedd through amending [the Government of Wales Act 2006](#). As part of these reforms, there will be an increase in the number of Members elected to the Senedd in May 2026, from 60 to 96.

More information on Senedd reform can be [found here](#).

2. Welsh Government action

While the Welsh Government [did state in the explanatory memorandum to the Bill that](#) “it was not possible” to undertake an open public consultation on either the general concepts of Senedd Reform or a draft Bill, it did note that it undertook:

- Targeted bilateral engagement with external stakeholders to ensure officials were cognisant of their views on key issues; and
- Early and detailed engagement with the electoral administrator community, ensuring that administrative concerns could be fed into the legislation design process.

The explanatory memorandum [further notes that](#) “while the Welsh Government was not able to undertake its own public consultation, in developing the legislation it has considered the wealth of information on the public’s views on Senedd Reform, as expressed in a series of consultations undertaken over the last twenty years”. These consultations include work undertaken for:

- The 2004 [Commission on the Powers and Electoral Arrangements of the National Assembly for Wales](#) (the Richard Commission);
- The 2014 [Commission on Devolution in Wales](#) (the Silk Commission);
- The 2017 [report of the Expert Panel on Assembly Electoral Reform](#);
- A 2018 [consultation undertaken by the Senedd Commission](#);
- The 2020 [report by the Committee on Senedd Electoral Reform](#);
- The 2022 [report by the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform](#); and
- A 2022 [consultation undertaken by the Senedd’s Business Committee](#).

In addition, the Member in charge of the Bill, the former Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution, Mick Antoniw MS, [noted that](#) parties had made commitments to Senedd reform in their manifestos. On whether manifesto commitments provided enough detail on what reform would look like, he said:

...I think the public support that we seek is for the reform. The precise detail of the mechanics is one that I think you have to work out within a constitutional structure, and this is what this Bill does—it creates a constitutional structure that delivers, I think, a recognition that there was a need for reform, there was a need to change, a need to increase the size...

When asked whether the Welsh Government would take additional steps to assess public support for the proposals in the Bill, the Member in charge again referred to manifesto commitments from Welsh Labour, Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Liberal Democrats. He added that “consideration had been given during the development of the Bill to previous consultations undertaken by other bodies”.

2.1. Welsh Government response

In response to the petition, the First Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, repeated the aforementioned comments found in the explanatory memorandum to the Bill – that in developing its legislation, the Welsh Government “considered a wealth of information on the public’s views on Senedd Reform, as expressed in a series of consultations undertaken over the last twenty years”. She also noted the consultation undertaken by the Senedd’s Reform Bill Committee on the Bill’s proposals (see below).

With regards to the petitioner’s comments on the need for review of the scrutiny system, the First Minister noted the recent report of the Future Senedd Committee on parliamentary business in the next Senedd.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The Senedd scrutinised proposals in the then Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill. The Reform Bill Committee led the Stage 1 scrutiny of the Bill.

As part of its scrutiny, the Committee held a public consultation between 21 September and 3 November 2023, which received nearly 500 responses. The Committee also held oral evidence sessions with a range of stakeholders including the Member in charge of the Bill, elections academics and electoral administrators.

In its report on the Bill, the Committee acknowledged the views of the public who responded to its consultation and noted the petition signed by (then) over 15,000 people opposing the Bill (the final number was over 21,000).

In light of the upcoming changes to the Senedd, the Future Senedd Committee has considered how a bigger Senedd could improve scrutiny, strengthen accountability and broaden representation.

The Committee published its final report in May 2025, making a series of recommendations to the Senedd's Business Committee.

3.1. Review of the Act

The reforms to the size of the Senedd and its voting system will likely be reviewed during the next Senedd. The *Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024* requires the Llywydd to table a motion within 6 months of the first meeting of the next Senedd, to propose that the Senedd establishes a committee to review Parts 1 and 2 of the Act, as well as the “extent to which the elements of a healthy democracy are present in Wales”.

4. Delaying the implementation to 2030

In order to delay the increase in Senedd Members to 2030, primary legislation would need to be introduced to amend the *Government of Wales Act 2006* accordingly. Such legislation would need to be passed before the end of this Senedd term.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.