

7 October 2015

Dear Colleague,

The **Business Committee** consists of Assembly Members from each of the political groups representing the four political parties who make up the Assembly, along with the Presiding Officer as chair. The Committee is responsible for the organisation of Assembly Business and facilitating the effective organisation of Assembly proceedings.

The Committee has decided to produce a legacy report to review the work carried out by the committee over the past five years. The Committee is now gathering views from people across Wales about work carried out by the Business Committee, including the structures it has put in place, the procedural reforms it has introduced, and its ways of working. The final report will help inform the successor committee in making a number of key decisions at the start of the Fifth Assembly, following next May's election.

The Committee wants to hear views from everyone who would like to comment, **in particular on the questions set out in Annex A to this letter**. Please make sure that your submission arrives by **13 November 2015**. It may not be possible to take into account responses received after this date.

If you wish to submit evidence, please send an electronic copy of your submission to **SeneddBusiness@Assembly.Wales**. Alternatively, you can write to: Committee Clerk, Business Committee, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay, CF99 1NA. Please feel free to forward this letter on to anyone else that might like to contribute. A copy of this letter will also be available on the Committee's website.

Disclosure of information

You can find further details about how we will use your information at **www.assembly.wales/help/privacy/help-inquiry-privacy.htm**. Please ensure that you have considered these details carefully before submitting information to the Committee. A hard copy of this policy can be requested by contacting the Clerk.



Best wishes

Rosemary Butler

Dame Rosemary Butler AM

Chair, Business Committee



Annex A

The terms of reference for the inquiry:

During the current Assembly, the Presiding Officer and Business Committee have introduced a number of procedural reforms, including changing the deadlines for tabling Oral Assembly Questions, introducing regular Individual Member Debates, and leaders' and spokespeople's questions.

- What impact have these changes had in enabling Members to represent their constituents and hold the government to account?

For the first time, the committee structure of the Fourth Assembly, combined policy and legislative scrutiny within the same committees.

- How effective has this approach been and how have committees achieved a balance between their policy, financial and legislative scrutiny?
- What changes could be made to committee size and structure in future to make them more effective?

The Business Committee is responsible for setting the Assembly timetable, including scheduling committee meetings. Currently, Plenary meets on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, with committees meeting mostly on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, and Thursdays.

- Does the current Assembly timetable, including the structure of the working week and committee/Plenary slots provide the correct balance in terms of the use of the Assembly's time, allowing it to effectively perform its functions of making laws, representing the people of Wales, and holding the government to account?



The Business Committee is responsible for establishing timetables for committees to consider Bills, and LCMs, in line with Standing Orders.

- Do the current processes for timetabling legislation – including Bills and LCMs – allow for proper scrutiny and engagement by Members and stakeholders? Could it be made more effective?

Unlike its equivalents in many other legislatures, the Assembly's Business Committee combines the role of scheduling Assembly business with that of a 'procedures committee' responsible for considering and proposing changes to the Assembly's Standing Orders and procedures.

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of this dual role, and is there a case for reviewing it?

