

Mick Antoniw AS/MS
Y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a Gweinidog y Cyfansoddiad
Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair
Finance Committee

4 March 2024

Dear Peredur

Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill

Further to my letter of 21 February regarding the Welsh Government's response to the Finance Committee's recommendations on the financial implications of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill, I am writing to provide a further update on the work which has been underway with the Senedd Commission ahead of Stage 2 proceedings.

My officials have been in regular discussion and are working closely with the Senedd Commission on the Committee's recommendations and the updated positions are included in the table attached to this letter.

I am copying this letter to the Llywydd and the Senedd Commissioner with responsibility for Budget and Governance.

Yours sincerely,

Mick Antoniw AS/MS
Y Cwnsler Cyffredinol a Gweinidog y Cyfansoddiad
Counsel General and Minister for the Constitution

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Mick.Antoniw@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Mick.Antoniw@gov.Wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



Recommendation	Updated position
<p>Recommendation 4. The Committee recommends that the Minister, in consultation with the Senedd Commission, undertakes further modelling of Commission staff costs to include the minimum and maximum pay scales to provide a range of costs, and for this information to be included in a revised Regulatory Impact Assessment..... Page 28</p>	<p>Senedd Commission officials have confirmed that a revised version of Commission staff costs will be provided, including the minimum and maximum pay scales. This will be included with the revised Regulatory Impact Assessment ahead of Stage 3 proceedings.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5. The Committee recommends that the Minister, in consultation with the Senedd Commission, undertakes modelling work to understand the impact of an increase in committees, beyond the three additional committees estimated in the Regulatory Impact Assessment, on the scrutiny benefits arising from the Bill and that this information should be included in a revised Regulatory Impact Assessment..... Page 28</p>	<p>In my response to Recommendation 2, I welcomed the opportunity to undertake further modelling to quantify the impact of scrutiny benefits arising from the Bill.</p> <p>However, I also noted that undertaking such an exercise to a robust standard will not be compatible with the timescales associated with the passage of the Bill through the Senedd.</p> <p>Consequently, scrutiny benefits arising from the Bill have not been quantified or defined at this stage, meaning the modelling recommended by the Finance Committee in Recommendation 5 cannot be undertaken in a timescale that would allow information to be included in a revised Regulatory Impact Assessment.</p>

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
 0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
 Caerdydd • Cardiff
 CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Mick.Antoniw@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Mick.Antoniw@gov.Wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

<p>Recommendation 7. The Committee recommends that the Minister, in consultation with the Senedd Commission, undertakes a review of the current configuration of Members' offices in Tŷ Hywel, to include: • an assessment and cost-benefit analysis on the use of open-plan working; • and an assessment of the energy use. Page 29</p>	<p>From discussions my officials have held with Senedd Commission officials, I understand a response to this recommendation is being prepared.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8. In light of the new electoral system which may result in uplifts to Members' travel, residential accommodation and staff costs, the Committee recommends that the Minister, in consultation with the Senedd Commission, reassesses these costs and provides a range rather than using the average costs of current Members, and for this information to be included in a revised Regulatory Impact Assessment. Page 29</p>	<p>From initial discussions between the Welsh Government and Senedd Commission officials it was agreed that Senedd Commission officials would consider what further analysis might be feasible and proportionate while acknowledging that costs will be impacted by operational decisions taken by the Seventh Senedd. There is no intention to pre-empt or undermine work to be undertaken in the future. Discussions are continuing and a further response to the Committee will be provided in due course.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9. The Committee recommends that the Minister, in consultation with the Senedd Commission, updates the cost estimates relating to Members in the Regulatory Impact Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using the financial information from the latest available Determination on Members' Pay and Allowances; and • includes the additional salary to leaders of a political group (not in the government) for each Member in their group (up to the maximum allowed for in the Determination). Page 29 	<p>A revised version of costs relating to the Determination, using the 2023-24 Determination, has been developed and shared with the Reform Bill Committee. These figures will be included with the revised Regulatory Impact Assessment ahead of Stage 3 proceedings.</p> <p>Costs for the additional salary to political group leaders (based on the 2022-23 determination to ensure consistency) will be included in the revised RIA ahead of Stage 3 proceedings.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10. The Committee recommends that the Minister, in consultation with the Senedd Commission, undertakes further work to assess the impact that different demographics of newly elected</p>	<p>From discussions my officials have held with Senedd Commission officials, I understand work to explore a response to this recommendation is underway. A further update will be provided to the Committee in due course.</p>

<p>Members will have on the Members' Pension Scheme. Page 29</p>	
<p>Recommendation 11. The Committee recommends that the Minister, in consultation with the Senedd Commission, provides further clarity on the schedule of work that will be undertaken on the Senedd and Tŷ Hywel estates, should the Bill not be agreed. Page 29</p>	<p>Were the Bill not to be agreed I, as the Member in charge, would no longer have a role in the schedule of work on the Senedd and Ty Hywel estates. From discussions my officials have held with Senedd Commission officials, I understand a response to this recommendation is being prepared.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14. The Committee recommends that the Minister undertakes further work to understand the level of volatility in membership from one Senedd to the next and associated cost implications, including the impact on the Members' Pension Scheme, in light of the move to a four-year election cycle.</p>	<p>From initial discussions between Welsh Government and Senedd Commission officials, I understand Senedd Commission officials are undertaking further internal discussions and I will update the Committee in due course.</p>