



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a
Chymunedau](#)

[The Equality, Local Government and
Communities Committee](#)

05/10/2017

[Agenda'r Cyfarfod](#)
[Meeting Agenda](#)

[Trawsgrifiadau'r Pwyllgor](#)
[Committee Transcripts](#)

Cynnwys Contents

- 5 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau
Introductions, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest
- 5 Bil Diddymu'r Hawl i Brynu a Hawliau Cysylltiedig (Cymru): Trafodion
Cyfnod 2
Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill: Stage
2 Proceedings
- 6 Grŵp 1: Dileu'r Ataliad Dros Dro Presennol ar yr Hawl i Brynu
(Gwelliannau 21, 32, 26, 28, 16, 19)
Group 1: Removal of Existing Suspension of the Right to Buy
(Amendments 21, 32, 26, 28, 16, 19)
- 13 Grŵp 2: Cyfnod Diddymu (Gwelliannau 22, 31, 17)
Group 2: Abolition Period (Amendments 22, 31, 17)
- 19 Grŵp 3: Technegol a Drafftio (Gwelliannau 2, 3, 4, 15)
Group 3: Technical and Drafting (Amendments 2, 3, 4, 15)
- 21 Grŵp 4: Cyfyngiad ar y Pŵer i Amrywio'r Disgownt (Gwelliannau
23, 19, 18)
Group 4: Restriction on Power to Vary Discount (Amendments
23, 29, 18)
- 24 Grŵp 5: Gwybodaeth i Denantiaid a Darpar Denantiaid:
Gofynion ar Weinidogion Cymru (Gwelliannau: 24, 5A, 5, 25,
33, 9, 1)
Group 5: Information for Tenants and Prospective Tenants:
Requirements on Welsh Ministers (Amendments: 24, 5A, 5, 25,
33, 9, 1)
- 29 Grŵp 6: Gwybodaeth i Denantiaid a Darpar Denantiaid:
Gofynion ar Landlordiaid (Gwelliannau 6, 7, 8, 34)
Group 6: Information for Tenants and Prospective Tenants:
Requirements on Landlords (Amendments 6, 7, 8, 34)
- 32 Grŵp 7: Pwerau Gwneud Rheoliadau (Gwelliannau 27, 10, 11,
12, 13, 14)

Group 7: Regulation Making Powers (Amendments 27, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

36 Grŵp 8: Y Darpariaethau Diddymu yn Dod i Rym (Gwelliannau 30, 20)

Group 8: Coming into Force of the Abolition Provisions (Amendments 30, 20)

43 Papurau i'w Nodi
Papers to Note

44 Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd
Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd. Lle y mae cyfranwyr wedi darparu cywiriadau i'w tystiolaeth, nodir y rheini yn y trawsgrifiad.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included. Where contributors have supplied corrections to their evidence, these are noted in the transcript.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Gareth Bennett	UKIP Cymru
Bywgraffiad Biography	UKIP Wales
John Griffiths	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor)
Bywgraffiad Biography	Labour (Committee Chair)
Sian Gwenllian	Plaid Cymru
Bywgraffiad Biography	The Party of Wales
Bethan Jenkins	Plaid Cymru
Bywgraffiad Biography	The Party of Wales
David Melding	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (yn dirprwyo ar ran Janet Finch–Saunders)
Bywgraffiad Biography	Welsh Conservatives (substitute for Janet Finch–Saunders)
Rhianon Passmore	Llafur
Bywgraffiad Biography	Labour
Jenny Rathbone	Llafur
Bywgraffiad Biography	Labour
Joyce Watson	Llafur
Bywgraffiad Biography	Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Carl Sargeant	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gymunedau a Phlant)
Bywgraffiad Biography	Assembly Member, Labour (The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children)
Emma Williams	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr, Adran Polisi Tai, Llywodraeth Cymru
	Deputy Director, Housing Policy Division, Welsh Government
Katie Wilson	Cyfreithwraig, Yr Adran Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol, Llywodraeth Cymru
	Lawyer, Legal Services, Welsh Government

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Jennifer Cottle	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Chloe Davies	Dirprwy Clerc Deputy Clerk
Stephen Davies	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Naomi Stocks	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:15.

The meeting began at 09:15.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datgan Buddiannau Introductions, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

[1] **John Griffiths:** May I welcome everyone to this meeting of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee? Item 1 on our agenda today is introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest. David Melding is substituting today for Janet Finch-Saunders. Are there any declarations of interest? No.

Bil Diddymu'r Hawl i Brynu a Hawliau Cysylltiedig (Cymru): Trafodion Cyfnod 2 Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill: Stage 2 Proceedings

[2] **John Griffiths:** We'll move on to item 2 on our agenda today: Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill—Stage 2 proceedings. I'm very pleased to welcome the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children to the meeting today. Cabinet Secretary, would you like to introduce your officials for the record, please?

[3] **The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children (Carl Sargeant):** Thank you, Chair. Good morning, committee. Can I ask Emma to start, please?

[4] **Ms Williams:** I'm Emma Williams, head of housing policy.

[5] **Ms Wilson:** Katie Wilson from legal services.

[6] **John Griffiths:** Okay. The purpose of this item is to undertake Stage 2 proceedings on the Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill. In relation to this item, Members should have before them the marshalled list of amendments and the groupings of the amendments for debate. The marshalled list of amendments is the list of all amendments tabled, marshalled into the order agreed by the committee at its meeting on 21 September. So, for this meeting, the order in which we will consider amendments will be as follows: sections 2 to 6, Schedule 1, sections 7 to 12, section 1 and then the long title.

[7] You will see from the groupings list that amendments have been grouped to facilitate debate. The order in which amendments are called and moved for a decision is dictated by the marshalled list. I will advise Members when I call them whether they are being called to speak in the debate or to move their amendments for a decision. There will be one debate on each group of amendments. Members who wish to speak in a particular group should indicate this in the usual way. I will call the Cabinet Secretary to speak on each group.

[8] For the record, in accordance with the convention agreed by the Business Committee, as Chair, I will move amendments in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. For expediency, I will assume that the Cabinet Secretary wishes me to move all his amendments, and I will do so at the appropriate place in the marshalled list. Cabinet Secretary, if you do not want a particular amendment to be moved, please indicate this at the relevant point in the proceedings.

[9] In line with our usual practice, legal advisers to the committee and the Cabinet Secretary are not expected to provide advice on the record. If Members wish to seek legal advice during proceedings, please do so by passing a note to the legal adviser or by requesting a short break to obtain that legal advice.

**Grŵp 1: Dileu'r Ataliad Dros Dro Presennol ar yr Hawl i Brynu (Gwelliannau
21, 32, 26, 28, 16, 19)**

**Group 1: Removal of Existing Suspension of the Right to Buy (Amendments
21, 32, 26, 28, 16, 19)**

[10] **John Griffiths:** Group 1 relates to the removal of existing suspension of the right to buy. The lead amendment in the group is amendment 21 in the name of David Melding. I call on David Melding to move amendment 21

and speak to his amendment and other amendments in this group.

Cynigiwyd gwelliant 21 (David Melding).

Amendment 21 (David Melding) moved.

[11] **David Melding:** Thank you, Chair. Good morning. The purpose of amendment 21 is to remove the suspension of the right to buy and associated rights in the areas that are currently designated as suspended under the Housing (Wales) Measure 2011: currently, Cardiff, Anglesey, Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Flintshire and Denbighshire. This will allow qualifying tenants in those areas to exercise their rights like other qualifying tenants across Wales up until the abolition comes into effect, if that's the decision of the Assembly.

[12] Amendments 32, 26, 28, 16 and 19 are all consequential amendments that are required to make the lead amendment effective. Chair, I've submitted amendment 29 for the simple reason of how unfair the abolition of the right to buy would be if it were to be implemented as it currently stands. If the Government is intent on completely removing the right to utilise the right to buy for those tenants in the six suspended authorities, whilst extending the grace period to tenants in the remaining 16 local authorities, then, effectively, the Government will be creating two categories of tenants. In my view, there could be serious human rights implications to this and I don't think the Government has adequately addressed the spirit of these.

[13] In his evidence to our committee during Stage 1 of this Bill, the Cabinet Secretary said, I quote:

[14] 'we are satisfied that even if A1P1 were to apply, that the provisions of the Bill, insofar as they work in the context of suspended areas would be compliant with A1P1 and tenants' Convention rights.'

[15] However, this interpretation was a very controversial issue when we examined at Stage 1 and took evidence from our stakeholders. Some of the contributors highlighted that, in areas where a suspension was currently in place, not allowing tenants the opportunity to purchase their home prior to abolition could be seen as unfair, and this is exactly what is proposed by the Welsh Government.

[16] During those evidence sessions, the representatives of the City and

County of Swansea stated that they had already experienced tenants who were voicing their complaints over the unfairness of not being given the opportunity to buy their home before abolition came into effect.

[17] In the past few months, I have received many e-mails from constituents in Cardiff—who I, of course, represent—who share a similar concern now that Cardiff has suspended the right to buy—effective from July this year. A number of respondents, including Shelter Cymru, stressed that more consideration should be given to this issue and I don't think the Cabinet Secretary has done that.

[18] I believe that this amendment is vital if we are to be fair to all tenants across Wales in offering them one last opportunity to purchase their home, and I hope that the committee bears this in mind when they are considering the amendment. I so move.

[19] **John Griffiths:** Okay. Are there other Members who wish to speak? Jenny Rathbone.

[20] **Jenny Rathbone:** As somebody who represents a Cardiff constituency, I'd just like to put the other side of the story. You said in your presentation that you wanted to be fair to all tenants, and we have to include all tenants, current and prospective tenants. At the moment, we have such an acute housing situation that we are simply unable to house adequately all the people who need to be housed. We're having to put them in incredibly expensive temporary accommodation, which is costing the local authority huge sums of money, which is obviously a drain on other services that the council wishes to provide. So, I do not think it's possible. I understand the logic of your argument, but I do not think it is possible for us to delay on this matter, simply because of the acute problem that is likely to get worse as a result of universal credit's introduction.

[21] **John Griffiths:** Bethan Jenkins.

[22] **Bethan Jenkins:** I just wanted to take this opportunity in the first group to outline our intentions as a party towards the Bill. We won't be supporting the amendments put forward by David Melding, as they substantially change the Bill in a direction that we are not comfortable with as a party, and we don't feel that it strengthens the Bill. So, the ones that we've put forward, we feel, work in a positive way to try and strengthen the concept of what we are trying to do here, which is to alleviate the problems in regard to social

housing.

[23] During the discussions, I heard and I felt the feelings of those who said that they would like to be able to buy their own homes in suspended areas, but I've since been convinced that they're suspended for a reason, because there are acute shortages of housing. If we make the exception for those areas, then it goes back to square one where those respective councils will have to reconsider their options, will have to re-scope their decisions in relation to social housing, and that doesn't help Wales in relation to the problems that we face.

[24] We've had an announcement from the UK Government of more social housing to be built, but it seems to me, if you're going to be building more social housing, to sell that off defeats the object of creating it in the first place. We need to keep those houses in the social domain, because there will always be a demand for those houses from people who simply cannot afford to buy them. Subsidising them to that effect will not allow for that stock to stay in the social housing sector where they should be. I think that's something that is fundamental to this discussion as we pass this legislation. So, I just wanted to say that we support the intentions of the Bill and, where we have tried to make some changes, it's in the most positive way possible.

[25] **John Griffiths:** Okay, I'll just remind Members that we've dealt with the general principles of the Bill and the purpose of today is to deal with the particular amendments and to speak to the amendments in the particular group that we're discussing at any one time. Joyce.

[26] **Joyce Watson:** I want to speak to amendment 21. The amendment that David has put forward will clearly remove from the Bill the whole intention of the Bill, which is the suspension of the right to buy and the right to acquire. So, I represent mid Wales, and Carmarthenshire, which has been named, was the first county in Wales to temporarily remove the right to buy under the then Labour-led council and also the very first one to start building council-owned properties. There are huge pressures, and we've already heard those—we heard them through the evidence session—on people who really need social housing, whichever form that social housing is. We can't meet those needs now. That was recognised by Carmarthenshire when they moved to suspend the right to buy and right to acquire. We also know that reduced budgets and universal credit will put pressure on those social landlords that might prove untenable for those tenants as well as those associations. So, I cannot support David Melding's amendment and grouping thereafter in any

way whatsoever, knowing full well what that would mean—it would destroy the Bill—and also having supported absolutely the Labour-led Carmarthenshire council at the time when they suspended.

[27] **John Griffiths:** Okay. I call on the Cabinet Secretary to speak.

[28] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you, Cadeirydd. Can I first of all thank committee members for their scrutiny of Stage 1 and the continued support for the Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Bill as we move forward? In regard to group 1 and David's amendments, and I listened very carefully, we re-rehearsed the arguments from Stage 1, in effect, and I absolutely understand the reasoning of his amendments, both in the aspect of making representation for individuals, albeit a small number of individuals that I'm aware of—. I also have received correspondence from people in the sphere of where they are seeking to purchase properties.

[29] However, I believe that we've acted appropriately and by fact not by emotion. The Bill has been drafted accordingly, on the basis of evidence provided to us by all the six authorities of the pressures that they are under. They went through intense public consultation and evidence gathering. Carmarthenshire, as Joyce Watson says, has around seven people, for every one social house, waiting on the list. I cannot and will not seek to remove the suspension of the right to buy. Of course, both group 1 and group 2, as we'll come on to, Chair, as amendments that have been placed by David Melding, are evidence of the fundamental opposition to the Bill in the first place. So, we will not be seeking to support David Melding's amendments in section 1.

[30] **John Griffiths:** Okay. I call on David Melding to reply to the debate.

[31] **David Melding:** Thank you, Chair. I thank Members that have taken part in this discussion. Can I say to Jenny that the real problem with this Bill is that it creates two categories of tenants when you look at abolition? Abolition is categorically different to suspension. That's obviously my underlying argument. I think that is profoundly unfair, given how dramatically rights are now going to be affected, and those rights have existed for over 30 years.

[32] The imperative that you see in terms of housing shortage is caused by the lack of house building, which is something I am very, very concerned about and have consistently, since I've been the housing spokesman for the Welsh Conservative Party, raised in the Chamber and said we need a cross-

party approach to building more houses, many more affordable houses. I even, last year, offered to support the building of more council houses, if the Minister wanted to do that and bring in measures to that effect. Happily, my party's caught up with me on that particular proposal.

09:30

[33] So, I think it confuses the two issues, frankly: the fundamental right to buy that has existed for several decades and the low number of homes that Governments of both political parties have built in the last 20 or 30 years. I know Bethan has a principled objection to the right to buy, and obviously we have aired that, but I do come back to this point that what this Bill does is create two categories of tenant, and I just don't think that is an appropriate way to go forward on such a radical change.

[34] Joyce says that I'm undermining the intentions of the Bill and seek to destroy the Bill. Well, we've had the debate in principle. I wouldn't be allowed to lay an amendment that destroyed the Bill, and the abolition of the right to buy would proceed if all my amendments were accepted by the Government. Now, it shapes the way that would work, obviously, and I want to do it so that it fully respects the rights and interests of tenants as I see them. So, it does come down to this issue of fairness, and I would say to the Cabinet Secretary, who, in a very courteous way, indicates that he's not going to give any ground whatsoever, that, when tenants were consulted on the suspension, they were done so with the comfort, really, of thinking of thinking that the suspension would be temporary and not permanent. Now, it's a dramatically different situation to move to permanence without any chance of a grace period.

[35] Additionally, some of those areas didn't even have the two-year notice period, as regularly mentioned in previous committee proceedings. For instance, Cardiff council first consulted on the suspension in November 2016, and the suspension has only just come into effect. So, I think those tenants will feel particularly hard done by that this has just got in under the radar, as far as they're concerned. The Tenant Participation Advisory Service for Wales Cymru told the committee that some tenants that are living in areas where suspension is in place are under the impression that it would have to be lifted at some point in time when they could then exercise their right if they wanted to. Well, obviously, they're sorely mistaken in that expectation, and I think we should remember what many people out there would think the commonsense position to be. TPAS also said that when the right to buy was

suspended in those areas, the abolition discussion wasn't there then.

[36] So, in terms of fairness and consistency across Wales, some consideration should be given to that 12-month period to equally apply to all tenants. Ultimately, Chair, this is a question of fairness, and, where these decisions on suspension have been taken, it was for five years, and not to abolish the right completely. And I do think that it would be a very brutal form of law making if we overrode those interests.

[37] **John Griffiths:** David, do you wish to proceed to a vote on amendment 21?

[38] **David Melding:** I do.

[39] **John Griffiths:** If amendment 21 is not agreed, amendments 26, 28, 16 and 19 fall. The question is that amendment 21 be agreed. Does any Member object? [*Objection.*] I will therefore take a vote by show of hands. The question is that amendment 21 be agreed. Those in favour, please raise your hands. Those against, please raise your hands. There is no room for any abstentions.

[40] **David Melding:** Chair, can I just say for clarity that there'll be no purpose in me moving amendment 32 as a result of that decision?

[41] **John Griffiths:** No, okay. So, in relation to amendment 21, there voted two in favour and six against. The amendment is therefore not agreed.

*Gwelliant 21: O blaid 2, Yn erbyn 6, Ymatal 0.
Amendment 21: For 2, Against 6, Abstain 0.*

O blaid:
For:

Yn erbyn:
Against:

Ymatal:
Abstain:

Bennett, Gareth
Melding, David

Griffiths, John
Gwelllian, Sian
Jenkins, Bethan
Passmore, Rhianon
Rathbone, Jenny
Watson, Joyce

*Gwrthodwyd gwelliant 21
Amendment 21 not agreed.*

Methodd gwelliannau 26, 28, 16 ac 19.
Amendments 26, 28, 16 and 19 fell.

Grŵp 2: Cyfnod Diddymu (Gwelliannau 22, 31, 17)
Group 2: Abolition Period (Amendments 22, 31, 17)

[42] **John Griffiths:** Group 2 relates to the abolition period. The lead amendment in the group is amendment 22 in the name of David Melding. I call on David Melding to move amendment 22 and speak to his amendment and other amendments in this group.

Cynigiwyd gwelliant 22 (David Melding).
Amendment 22 (David Melding) moved.

[43] **David Melding:** Thank you once again, Chair. Amendment 22, the lead amendment in this group, has been submitted with the intention of limiting the Act's operation to 10 years, following which Welsh Ministers may lay regulations proposing that the abolition is made permanent. Those regulations would be made subject to the affirmative resolution, and so would require a vote in the Assembly. Both amendments 31 and 17 are consequential to the lead amendment and its implementation.

[44] Chair, the Welsh Conservatives have submitted several alternatives and have given constructive options regarding reforming the right to buy, because we recognise that it has provided valuable opportunities for many thousands of families throughout Wales, but it is a policy that's several decades old, so some form of reform, which is being followed in England, of course, would be appropriate. Such alternative options have included reforming the receipts system so that it operates on a like-for-like basis—I think that would be very welcome—or, indeed, even amending the right to buy so that new builds are exempt from the policy until they've had social rented tenancies for a certain minimum time.

[45] I've not been able to persuade the Government—that I very much regret—so the purpose of this amendment is at least to urge the Government to reflect after a 10-year period. It's a form of hard-wired post-legislative scrutiny, in many ways, Chair, and we've designed this so that the law doesn't lapse, but it would require a positive vote, which I think is a constructive way of doing it. So, you wouldn't have to legislate again; you would just make the case and bring in the regulations.

[46] I do believe it's only after we've had a full period of evaluation, and those that believe it's going to have a profound effect on the housing stock—then we can work through the evidence. I mean, I have my doubts on that, but obviously I accept the sincerity of the Members that have raised that point as being decisive in their view. We could then examine the actual position and whether the right to buy should be abolished for a longer period or permanently.

[47] Indeed, in fairness to him, in the Stage 1 discussions, the Minister himself said he was not in principle or ideologically against the right to buy, and that he would even consider some sort of sunset clause. He did slightly undermine that by suggesting 30 or more years, which is a pretty long day as far as I'm concerned and would defeat the purpose of this amendment. So, that's why I've brought in a 10-year period after which we would have that profound post-legislative scrutiny and then a vote in the Assembly as to whether we want the Act to continue or not. I believe this is a very sensible safety valve, given how radical the proposals are, and I've already referred to the fact that we're likely to create two categories of tenants, which I think is very regrettable: big, big changes to people's life chances, and therefore I think a 10-year period is appropriate for reflection. I so move.

[48] **John Griffiths:** Are there other Members who wish to speak? Joyce Watson.

[49] **Joyce Watson:** I respect the eloquence and thought that David has put into his statement, but I'm not going to support him. The reason that I'm not going to support him is because there are other avenues. I understand that people want to own their home, where that is possible, and there are other avenues that we've put forward for individuals to do that. As somebody who does represent a very, very large area of Wales, what I see around me, very often, under the exercised right to buy and right to acquire are private landlords now sitting in those properties, and the rents being proportionately higher than their neighbours'. I don't think that that is fair or that is equal either.

[50] My principal objection to almost stating that you're going to put this legislation in for 10 years is to give the same false hope that David is arguing against by his first group of amendments—that it was time limited. And here we are again proposing to do something that could be time limited. I think, really, that is the main reason why I can't, in any way at all, support this

amendment.

[51] **John Griffiths:** Sian Gwenllian.

[52] **Sian Gwenllian:** Nid wyf i, chwaith, yn gallu derbyn y gwelliant yma. Mewn gwirionedd, mi fyddai'n bosibl newid y ddeddfwriaeth unrhyw bryd drwy ddod â deddfwriaeth wahanol i mewn. Mewn ffordd, mae hynny'n gryfach na gosod rheoliadau, achos mi fyddai yna fwy o gyfle i graffu ar y ddeddfwriaeth yn hytrach na dod â rheoliadau i mewn. Felly, nid wyf i'n gweld, hyd yn oed os ydych chi yn erbyn y Bil yma, fod hwn yn cryfhau'r sefyllfa.

Sian Gwenllian: I can't support this amendment either. In reality, it would be possible to amend the legislation at any point by introducing alternative legislation. In a way, that would be stronger than making regulations, because there would be further opportunities to scrutinise that legislation rather than doing it through regulations. So, I don't see that, even if you are opposed to this Bill, this strengthens the position in any way.

[53] Jest gair ynglŷn â chreu dau gategori o denantiaid. Wel, un categori o denantiaid fydd yna ar ôl i'r Ddeddf yma fynd drwodd; bydd pawb yn yr un un sefyllfa, felly nid wyf i'n deall y ddadl yna chwaith. Diolch.

Just a few words on the creation of two categories of tenants. Well, there'll be a single category of tenants once this legislation is passed; everyone will be in the same situation, so I simply don't understand the rationale there, either.

[54] **John Griffiths:** Rhianon Passmore.

[55] **Rhianon Passmore:** Thank you, Chair. Notwithstanding David Melding's right of advocacy around the points that he made earlier, I think this amendment purely seeks to delay and diminish the abolition. In terms of what that means, as has already been stated—I don't wish to repeat previous points—that obviously then hampers and adds to a diminishing social housing stock. Thank you.

[56] **John Griffiths:** Okay. I call on the Cabinet Secretary to speak.

[57] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you, Chair. Amendment 22 undermines the Bill's aim to abolish the right to buy permanently, which the National Assembly approved in the general principles debate in July. Our manifesto and that,

indeed, of Plaid Cymru's were very clear in relation to permanent abolition and not a temporary suspension across Wales.

[58] Can I address the points of David Melding's comments? While David is absolutely right that he's unable to table any wrecking amendments to a Bill—it would be out of scope—he can certainly get close to that, and I would suggest that his group 1 and group 2 actually fly in the face of each other. David argued the case that he would require a temporary suspension in certain areas and, in this argument here, he's completely the opposite; he's trying to lift this. Well, is he suggesting, from group 1, if they'd have been successful, we'd have lifted the temporary abolition and then had a 10-year grace period for people to still purchase properties? Taken as a whole, this amendment doesn't work and seeks to undermine the Bill as a whole.

[59] Can I just pick up on some of the language that David uses as well in terms of fairness? Surely, it's not fair to be unable to access a decent home for people in our communities, and this is what this Bill would protect. Also, as to the words that David used, from the heart, of 'hard-done-by tenants', again, I think the tenants who have properties are probably the lucky ones. Actually, it's the people who can't access properties who are the ones who are hard done by. Therefore, I will continue, with the support of the Plaid Cymru group and Labour Members, to ensure that, as set out in our manifesto, we complete the process of the abolition of the right to buy and the right to acquire.

[60] **John Griffiths:** I call on David Melding to reply to the debate.

[61] **David Melding:** Thank you, Chair and I thank Members who've taken part in the discussion. Joyce thinks that the 10-year period that the Act—if it were an Act—would operate before there needs to be an affirmative vote and a resolution in the Assembly would create false hope. So that, I think, undermines the other arguments that we heard that, somehow, I'm trying to wreck the Bill, because abolition clearly would occur and it would continue if it was the will of the Assembly. I'm asking the Assembly to reflect on the operation of this Act, should it become an Act, and then have an affirmative vote. I do not think that that is unreasonable on such a fundamental piece of law, which has such a direct effect on so many people.

[62] I do politely point out that it is what happens in the suspension legislation under the 2011 Measure, so there is a huge precedent there for this approach to apply. So, I don't have much sympathy with some of these

criticisms.

09:45

[63] Sian said that the appropriate approach would just be to repeal the right to buy Act if it was viewed after 10 years, or whenever, that it no longer fulfilled the public interest. That would require the full legislative process and would be open to a Government, but why not have wired into really important legislation this ability to adapt, change our mind potentially, take evidence, without then having to go through a full and heavy load of repealing legislation? It is a more flexible approach in this very, very vital and changing area, and there is a lot of precedent that legislation is time limited or then requires an affirmative vote. I mean, this is not an irregular or peculiar procedure, and therefore I think it ought to be seriously considered.

[64] Sian did then refer back to my earlier arguments about two classes of tenants. There are two classes of tenants regarding abolition: one has never had any right of exercising for a short period their right before it ends; and then one, albeit a larger category, would have that right. That is a fundamental difference, and it clearly creates two classes of tenants. And, you know, I think it is a very brutal argument, frankly, to say that once abolition comes into force everywhere, then they're all in the same category. Well, they are then, but in the lead up to it, when their rights are being removed, they are not, and I would have thought that's the material factor.

[65] Rhianon says the amendment delays and hampers. Well, it doesn't delay it. The abolition would occur if this was the will of the Assembly and the Act came in. It doesn't hamper it at all; it would proceed under the terms of the Act, only, after 10 years, there would be, as I said, the review.

[66] Now, the Minister thinks this is a wrecking amendment. Well, I do have precedent on my side in terms of it being an approach that is used on fundamental legislation often involving people's rights. And there's been a whole shift to post-legislative scrutiny. Many, many reports have urged these approaches, both here and in Westminster—the House of Lords, et cetera. So, I think, in terms of good law making, efficient law making, I have very powerful arguments.

[67] Then, the rest of the response, really, from the Minister, is about the bigger need, which is the right to housing. Well, I completely agree that is the bigger need, and I have challenged you to accept the alternative

projection and raise our house building to around about 12,000 new homes a year from the current target of 8,700, which we haven't met for many years—10 years, I think, from memory. You know, that's the problem. And I do accept that it's not just the Labour Party that stands to be criticised here. The previous administrations have also not kept up, really, with housing projection or demand, and that's what we need to be doing. We need to be building more homes, and to confuse that vast amount of housing need that we need to make good by house building with the 300 or 400 right-to-buy purchases each year at the moment is incongruous, in my view.

[68] Can I just say that my approach has had some support, I think. During Stage 1, Steve Clarke stated,

[69] 'In our consultation of 2015, and our joint statement with TPAS Cymru...100% of tenants agreed that Welsh Government needed to do more to increase social housing supply.'

[70] I completely agree with that. He went on:

[71] 'In those consultations, 60 per cent of tenants stated they did not want to see an end to RTB but'—

[72] in fairness—

[73] 'supported restrictions on discounts and temporary suspension where there was a demonstrated need.'

[74] So, I think a temporary approach clearly would find support amongst some tenants at the very least. These tenants want more house building and, I think, would prefer alternative solutions that really radically affect the number of family homes and other homes that we are likely to provide between now and 2030, which is the period of the current projections. I do not see the Government's approach as being very, very effective, but I realise that you have proceeded through Stage 1 and, in principle, that this appears to be the view of the Assembly, that they want to go in this direction. But there are many, many arguments on the other side. Therefore, I urge a period of 10 years after which there would be a review. We could then see the evidence and make our final conclusion. I so move.

[75] **John Griffiths:** Okay. I think David has indicated that he wishes to proceed to a vote on amendment 22. If amendment 22 is not agreed,

amendment 17 falls. The question is that amendment 22 be agreed. Does any Member object? [*Objection.*] I will therefore take a vote by show of hands. The question is that amendment 22 be agreed. Those in favour, please raise your hands. Those against, please raise your hands. And there are no abstentions. In relation to amendment 22, there voted two in favour and six against. The amendment is, therefore, not agreed.

*Gwelliant 22: O blaid 2, Yn erbyn 6, Ymatal 0.
Amendment 22: For 2, Against 6, Abstain 0.*

O blaid:	Yn erbyn:	Ymatal:
For:	Against:	Abstain:
Bennet, Gareth	Griffiths, John	
Melding, David	Gwenllian, Sian	
	Jenkins, Bethan	
	Passmore, Rhianon	
	Rathbone, Jenny	
	Watson, Joyce	

*Gwrthodwyd gwelliant 22.
Amendment 22 not agreed.*

*Methodd gwelliant 17.
Amendment 17 fell.*

**Grŵp 3: Technegol a Drafftio (Gwelliannau 2, 3, 4, 15)
Group 3: Technical and Drafting (Amendments 2, 3, 4, 15)**

[76] **John Griffiths:** Group 3 is technical and drafting amendments. The lead amendment in the group is amendment 2 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary.

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 2 (Carl Sargeant).
Amendment 2 (Carl Sargeant) moved.*

[77] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 2 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary and call on the Cabinet Secretary to speak to his amendment and the other amendments in this group.

[78] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you, Cadeirydd. These amendments are technical amendments. The effect of amendment 15 is to make a minor technical change to wording in section 11. The amendments do not make a

substantive change to the provisions, and I ask Members to support these amendments.

[79] **John Griffiths:** Are there other Members who wish to speak? There is no debate to reply to, Cabinet Secretary, but is there anything further you would wish to say?

[80] **Carl Sargeant:** No.

[81] **John Griffiths:** No. You wish to proceed to a vote on amendment 2.

[82] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes, please.

[83] **John Griffiths:** The question is that amendment 2 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 2 is therefore agreed.

*Derbyniwyd gwelliant 2 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.
Amendment 2 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.*

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 3 (Carl Sargeant).
Amendment 3 (Carl Sargeant) moved.*

[84] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 3 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 3 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 3 is agreed.

*Derbyniwyd gwelliant 3 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.
Amendment 3 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.*

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 4 (Carl Sargeant).
Amendment 4 (Carl Sargeant) moved.*

[85] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 4 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 4 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 4 is agreed.

*Derbyniwyd gwelliant 4 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.
Amendment 4 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.*

[86] **John Griffiths:** David, I believe you indicated that you do not now wish to move amendment 31.

[87] **David Melding:** That's correct.

[88] **John Griffiths:** That's correct—

[89] **David Melding:** I think I said, maybe in error—32 I said, but I should have said after the vote on 22 that 31 is—. There is no point in me moving that, so I don't so move.

[90] **John Griffiths:** Okay. Does any Member wish to move amendment 31, in accordance with Standing Order 26.65? No. The amendment is not moved.

Ni chynigiwyd gwelliant 31 (David Melding).

Amendment 31 (David Melding) not moved.

[91] **John Griffiths:** So, David, you also indicated then you do not wish to move amendment 32. Does any Member wish to move amendment 32, in accordance with Standing Order 26.65? No. Well, the amendment, then, is not moved.

Ni chynigiwyd gwelliant 32 (David Melding).

Amendment 32 (David Melding) not moved.

Grŵp 4: Cyfyngiad ar y Pŵer i Amrywio'r Disgownt (Gwelliannau 23, 19, 18)

Group 4: Restriction on Power to Vary Discount (Amendments 23, 29, 18)

[92] **John Griffiths:** Group 4 relates to a restriction on the power of Welsh Ministers to vary the discount available under the right to buy. The lead amendment in the group is amendment 23 in the name of David Melding. I call on David Melding to move amendment 23 and speak to his amendment and other amendments in this group.

Cynigiwyd gwelliant 23 (David Melding).

Amendment 23 (David Melding) moved.

[93] **David Melding:** Thank you, Chair. Amendment 23 is the lead amendment, as you said, and its purpose is to protect the discount that is available to tenants when they're purchasing their home under the right to buy. Tenants that are exercising the right to buy and the right to acquire may currently receive a maximum discount of £8,000 on their purchase. This amendment ensures that the Welsh Ministers may not reduce the discount

below this level during the period of grace when tenants may still exercise the right to buy. Additionally, amendments 29 and 18 are both consequential to that lead amendment.

[94] In proposing this amendment—. Obviously, if this Bill does become law, I do think it's appropriate for the Welsh Government to show good grace during the period of grace and not alter the current level of the discount, which has already been substantially reduced anyway. And then I do think that would leave those who are in a position and have formed an intention to exercise their right to do so. Unless we do this, I feel it would be a further erosion of the current option that some people may have to exercise for the last time their right to buy. I so move.

[95] **John Griffiths:** Okay. Are there other Members who wish to speak? Jenny Rathbone.

[96] **Jenny Rathbone:** I'd just like to probe David Melding for the thinking behind this amendment, because I'm not aware of any proposal to reduce the discount by any amount, so to stick with the status quo. But, were that to be the case, you could see the circumstances in which councils desperate for additional revenue might argue that this was another way in which they could raise revenue. But, given that the price of the house is going to be considerably more than £8,000, the discount is there, but under what circumstances do you think that we would need to protect this in law?

[97] **John Griffiths:** Okay. There are no other Members indicating. I call on the Cabinet Secretary to speak.

[98] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you, Llywydd. Of all the amendments David Melding has put down, this is one I'm more relaxed about in terms of the principle, even though I will not be supporting it today, and I'll explain why to the Member. Obviously, the Welsh Government set out its approach to this—a two-stage approach on the right to buy—in the White Paper of 2015. The first was reducing the discount from £16,000 to £8,000 via secondary legislation made in July, and the second stage was to bring forward primary legislation on abolishing right to buy and right to acquire via this Bill.

[99] The whole process of reduction is a lengthy period of consultation, and therefore, subject to this Bill moving forward, the consultation time to consider a reduction would be probably matched by the implementation of the Bill, so therefore irrelevant. Actually, if there was a purpose for doing

this, we probably wouldn't have time to do it in the first place on the basis of the introduction of the Bill.

[100] I am certainly sympathetic to Jenny Rathbone's concerns regarding the issue of further reductions. David, in his comments earlier, suggested that the principle of selling a property and building one was something that he would support. Indeed, I wouldn't have objections to that either. However, what we do know is that the sale of a property under the right to buy, including discounted properties, does not give us the amount of money to build a new property like for like. And indeed, in England, the provision has been evidenced that many properties are sold before one is rebuilt, and therefore the financial aspect of this doesn't stack up either. So, timeline and financial difficulties do not lend themselves to this amendment, but I am not opposed to what the Member is trying to do, but, in practical terms, it wouldn't work either.

[101] **John Griffiths:** Okay. I call on David Melding to reply to the debate.

[102] **David Melding:** First of all, I infer from what Jenny said that she doesn't think it's likely that the current discount will be removed. I'm slightly confused as to what the Minister has said, because he started by saying that he was very relaxed about the amendment, and I thought he was then going to say that the Welsh Government has no intention of reducing the discount. And if he's—

[103] **Carl Sargeant:** That's right.

[104] **David Melding:** Well, as he's said that, I think I can withdraw the amendment, then, if that—. If it's on the record.

[105] **John Griffiths:** It would be helpful I think if there was clarification of that—

[106] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes, I'm happy—. We have no intention of making a reduction in the period up to abolition.

[107] **David Melding:** I withdraw the amendment.

[108] **John Griffiths:** Okay. Does any Member object to the withdrawal of amendment 23? Okay, no Member objects—the amendment is withdrawn.

10:00

Tynnwyd gwelliant 23 yn ôl gyda chaniatâd y pwyllgor
Amendment 23 withdrawn by leave of the committee.

Methodd gwelliannau 29 ac 18.
Amendments 29 and 18 fell.

**Grŵp 5: Gwybodaeth i Denantiaid a Darpar Denantiaid: Gofynion ar
Weinidogion Cymru (Gwelliannau: 24, 5A, 5, 25, 33, 9, 1)**
**Group 5: Information for Tenants and Prospective Tenants: Requirements on
Welsh Ministers (Amendments: 24, 5A, 5, 25, 33, 9, 1)**

[109] **John Griffiths:** Group 5 relates to information provisions and the requirements on Welsh Ministers. The lead amendment in the group is amendment 24 in the name of David Melding. I call on David Melding to move amendment 24 and speak to his amendment and other amendments in the group.

Cynigiwyd gwelliant 24 (David Melding).
Amendment 24 (David Melding) moved.

[110] **David Melding:** Thank you, Chair. Amendment 24's purpose is to incorporate the recommendations made in the report of the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee, on which I serve, incidentally, namely that section 8 of the Bill makes provision for the information to be provided to landlords and tenants about the effects of the Bill, which then will be an Act. This amendment imposes an absolute duty on the Welsh Ministers to notify all qualifying landlords in Wales. As currently drafted, the duty to do so is qualified. Amendment 5A is a consequence of amendment 24 and makes a pre-emptive adjustment to the Cabinet Secretary's amendment 5, so that his amendment accounts for amendment 24, should that be agreed here today. Amendment 25 is a consequential amendment of 24, which ensures that the substantive amendment is effective. I will also be supporting all four of the other amendments in this group, being both the Cabinet Secretary's and Bethan Jenkins's.

[111] The purpose of this lead amendment is simple, and, I hope, a lot less controversial. Indeed, I hope to build on the consensus that emerged on group 4. I do believe that if there is one aspect throughout Stage 1 that got universal agreement with the committee, it was that the information for

tenants and prospective tenants needed to be in-depth and widely circulated. This was also the view of the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee, as shown in its recommendations, which I'm putting forward in this grouping. It's also the reason that I'm supporting Bethan Jenkins's amendment, which requires the financial inclusion steering group to be consulted with on the document that is referred to in section 8.

[112] I note the Cabinet Secretary's evidence to the CLAC committee was that he was unwilling to commit to an absolute duty because, in his words,

[113] 'There may be some landlords who are England-based and therefore operating with one or two tenancies in Wales that we're not aware of.'

[114] But I feel, in not making it an absolute duty, we reduce the pressure and the demand, really, to get that information out, and any de minimis exclusions that are beyond the reasonable action of the Welsh Government are not going to end up in court or judicial review anyway. And so I do feel that this amendment sets the appropriate level, so raises the bar a bit and establishes the duty in terms of that information. I so move.

[115] **John Griffiths:** Are there other Members who wish to speak? Bethan Jenkins.

[116] **Bethan Jenkins:** I just wanted to speak to my amendment in relation to consulting with the financial inclusion steering group. I put this in as an amendment because the Cabinet Secretary will know that I have a long-standing interest in ensuring that people are aware of the resources that they can access if they so need, and this group is made up of many different groups in Welsh civic society that have the expertise that you and others can rely on. Obviously, I put forward a financial inclusion Bill that didn't pass, but I was trying there to embed financial inclusion and its importance into future law. And what I'm trying to do here is to ensure that Ministers of any colour—. I appreciate that this is a time-sensitive Bill, but the principle speaks the same, where groups like this can be utilised, and should be utilised, and, therefore, if it's in the law, there's a guarantee of that happening.

[117] Now, I know you'll say that this is an advisory group, and we will differ on whether it should be advisory or not, I'm sure, and, in future, I may put stronger amendments down to make sure that that group is on a sounder footing. But I think this is a really important area where tenants need to have

as much information as possible and be as empowered as they possibly can be. When you've got people like the Money Advice Service, when you've got people like the Citizens Advice service sitting around the table together, making it essential to consult with them is something that I feel is quite natural and should be there for you to utilise, going on from putting this Bill into place, so that that document is as tight and as robust as it possibly can be.

[118] **John Griffiths:** Okay. If there are no other Members wishing to speak, I call on the Cabinet Secretary to speak.

[119] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you, Chair. Again, I share the committee's broad principles to ensure that clear and appropriate information is given to tenants and other bodies as we move forward with this Bill. The Government amendments revise the Bill, following our acceptance of recommendation 2 of the ELGC committee's scrutiny report. The amendments concern section 8 of the Bill about the provision of information to tenants and prospective tenants. We've listened to your committee carefully.

[120] Can I pick up on David Melding's amendments? He sort of responded for me as well in his contribution. My argument remains the same in terms of my response to the CLAC committee. We rely on a third party for the information from English owners, registered social landlords, in order for them to give us that information. Therefore, an absolute duty would not be appropriate for that, where, given that we know our tenants and know our RSLs, we will provide that information with the statutory provisions within the Bill. But the fact still remains that this is third-party information and therefore we can't enforce this.

[121] On the other area in terms of amendment 33 by Bethan Jenkins—a long-standing member of financial inclusion and appropriate support for that group—can I place on the record, Chair, that I'm very happy to work with the financial inclusion group in order for them to give us advice on the information, moving forward? However, I'm unable to accept the amendment on the basis that this isn't a statutory body and the Member is right to raise that issue in terms of future provisions. It may be another question that this committee may wish to explore in terms of making that body a statutory body, but at the moment it isn't, and, therefore, as a moment in time, this Bill is time-limited, and we would be unable to accept the amendment in order to seek advice from the group on that basis. So, other than to give a commitment to work with this group on this Bill and information provided, I

cannot support the amendment as laid by Bethan Jenkins.

[122] **John Griffiths:** Okay. I call on David Melding to reply to the debate.

[123] **David Melding:** Just to say that I will support Bethan. I'm disappointed that the Minister's not minded to support this as an absolute duty. I don't think it's an undue burden and I don't think it's impracticable. There are ways of working around the odd omission, when that's clearly beyond your control. I just think it sends such a strong message to say, 'This is a duty', and I remain of that opinion, as did the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee.

[124] **John Griffiths:** So, David, do you wish to proceed to a vote on amendment 24?

[125] **David Melding:** I do.

[126] **John Griffiths:** If amendment 24 is not agreed, amendments 5A and 25 fall. The question is that amendment 24 be agreed. Does any Member object? [*Objection.*] I will therefore take a vote by show of hands. The question is that amendment 24 be agreed. Those in favour please raise your hands. Those against please raise your hands. There are no abstentions. In relation to amendment 24, there voted two in favour and six against. The amendment is therefore not agreed.

Gwelliant 24: O blaid 2, Yn erbyn 6, Ymatal 0.

Amendment 24: For 2, Against 6, Abstain 0.

O blaid:

For:

Bennett, Gareth

Melding, David

Yn erbyn:

Against:

Griffiths, John

Gwenllian, Sian

Jenkins, Bethan

Passmore, Rhianon

Rathbone, Jenny

Watson, Joyce

Ymatal:

Abstain:

Gwrthodwyd gwelliant 24.

Amendment 24 not agreed.

Methodd gwelliannau 5A a 25.

Amendments 5A and 25 fell.

Cynigiwyd gwelliant 5 (Carl Sargeant).

Amendment 5 (Carl Sargeant) moved.

[127] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 5 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. If amendment 5 is agreed, amendment 25 falls. If amendment 5 is not agreed, amendments 9 and 1 fall. The question is that amendment 5 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 5 is agreed.

Derbyniwyd gwelliant 5 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.

Amendment 5 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.

[128] **John Griffiths:** Bethan, do you wish to move amendment 33?

Cynigiwyd gwelliant 33 (Bethan Jenkins).

Amendment 33 (Bethan Jenkins) moved.

[129] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes, please.

[130] **John Griffiths:** The question is that amendment 33 be agreed. Does any Member object? [*Objection.*] I will therefore take a vote by show of hands. The question is that amendment 33 be agreed. Those in favour please raise your hands. Those against please raise your hands. There are no abstentions. In relation to amendment 33, there voted four in favour and four against. As there is a tied vote, I use my casting vote in the negative, that is, against the amendment, in accordance with Standing Order 6.20(ii). Therefore, the amendment is not agreed.

Gwelliant 33: O blaid 4, Yn erbyn 4, Ymatal 0.

Amendment 33: For 4, Against 4, Abstain 0.

O blaid:

For:

Bennett, Gareth

Gwenllian, Sian

Jenkins, Bethan

Melding, David

Yn erbyn:

Against:

Griffiths, John

Passmore, Rhianon

Rathbone, Jenny

Watson, Joyce

Ymatal:

Abstain:

Gan fod nifer y pleidleisiau yn gyfartal, defnyddiodd y Cadeirydd ei bleidlais fwrw yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 6.20(ii).

As there was an equality of votes, the Chair used his casting vote in accordance with Standing Order 6.20(ii).

*Gwrthodwyd gwelliant 33.
Amendment 33 not agreed.*

**Grŵp 6: Gwybodaeth i Denantiaid a Darpar Denantiaid: Gofynion ar
Landlordiaid (Gwelliannau 6, 7, 8, 34)
Group 6: Information for Tenants and Prospective Tenants: Requirements on
Landlords (Amendments 6, 7, 8, 34)**

[131] **John Griffiths:** Group 6 relates to information provision and requirements on landlords. The lead amendment in the group is amendment 6 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary.

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 6 (Carl Sargeant).
Amendment 6 (Carl Sargeant) moved.*

[132] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 6 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary and call on the Cabinet Secretary to speak to his amendment and the other amendments in this group.

[133] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you, Cadeirydd. We share the committee's wish to ensure that clear and appropriate information about abolition is given to tenants, as I said earlier. The Government's amendments revise the Bill following our acceptance of recommendation 3 by this committee in the scrutiny report. The amendments concern section 8 of the Bill on the provision of information for tenants and prospective tenants—amendments 6, 7 and 8—and describe key information for qualified landlords.

[134] Can I also speak to amendment 34 by Bethan Jenkins? I support the principle of this amendment but there is, we believe, a technical drafting issue in the way that it's been brought forward. I'd be happy to work with Bethan Jenkins and my team in order for that to be redrafted and to be brought back at Stage 3, subject to the Member wishing to accept that offer.

[135] **John Griffiths:** Okay, are there other Members who wish to speak? Bethan.

[136] **Bethan Jenkins:** Yes. Thank you for that. Before I respond directly to that, I just wanted to say the reason for putting amendment 34 in is because

it reflects recommendation 4 of the committee report that we put forward about ensuring that information is communicated in the most appropriate way to different groups of people. You'll see that we've listed that tenants would benefit from receiving information in another language other than Welsh or English, by means of audio recording, British Sign Language, in Braille, or any other format. We believe this should be on the face of the Bill as the legal advice we've received is that some qualifying landlords may not be bound by the Equality Act 2010 or the Human Rights Act 2010 and therefore not bound by the public sector equality duty—that's the advice I've had.

[137] Obviously, having listened to the Minister and understanding that he accepts that in principle and would like to look at a different drafting, I'm happy to withdraw the amendment on the understanding that we'll work together on an acceptable drafting, but I think the principle is sound.

[138] **John Griffiths:** Jenny Rathbone.

[139] **Jenny Rathbone:** We spent quite a lot of time discussing the importance of this issue in committee, and it's good to see the amendments brought forward by the Minister. I have to say, it reminds us all that we did have very good evidence from housing associations on the skill with which they have communicated other changes affecting tenants, namely changes in welfare benefits. So, I'm obviously happy to discuss further with Bethan Jenkins her reservations, but I think, in general terms, I am content that, with these amendments, housing landlords will work in all manner of ways, not just written information but door knocking, where required, to ensure that everybody is aware of their rights.

[140] **John Griffiths:** David Melding.

[141] **David Melding:** I still remain slightly confused about how amendments 7 and 8 work; they seem a bit circular to me. The Cabinet Secretary referred to our recommendation 3 in our report. If he could give me a bit more clarity there, I'd be happy then to reflect on that, or if I've any concerns I'll take them up at Stage 3. So, I'll remain quiet for now on that. I do think that Bethan Jenkins's amendment is worthy of support, so we will be supporting that, if it's moved.

[142] **John Griffiths:** Okay. If no other Members wish to speak, I call on the Cabinet Secretary to reply to the debate.

10:15

[143] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you, Cadeirydd. Again, I'm grateful for the support of Members for the amendments when we move to a vote on this. For clarity for David, on amendments 7 and 8, based on the evidence that you provided us with, we've worked out a principle of how this would work in operation in legislation. Amendment 7: the effect of this amendment is to provide that a qualifying landlord must only publish the information it considers to be relevant to its tenants and prospective tenants.

[144] Amendment 8, so it's in the boundaries of—. The effect of this amendment is to ensure that qualifying landlords publish the minimum information requirements, so it's the information contained within those boundaries. That information will be based upon the conversations from the previous amendments that we wish to talk about around the financial inclusion et cetera, so what would be the content of that. And also, the issue that Jenny and Bethan raised around amendment 34 is an important one, making sure—. I do recognise that RSLs and local authorities are very nimble in the way that they are able to engage with their tenants, they know them very well. However, I'm very happy to look at the detail of what the minimum standards of that should be and that's where I'd like to do some work with you in terms of the drafting of amendment 34 when we bring that back at Stage 3.

[145] **John Griffiths:** Okay. Cabinet Secretary, do you wish to proceed to a vote on amendment 6?

[146] **Carl Sargeant:** Yes, please.

[147] **John Griffiths:** The question is that amendment 6 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 6 is agreed.

*Derbyniwyd gwelliant 6 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.
Amendment 6 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.*

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 7 (Carl Sargeant).
Amendment 7 (Carl Sargeant) moved.*

[148] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 7 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 7 be agreed. Does any Member

object? Amendment 7 is agreed.

Derbyniwyd gwelliant 7 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.

Amendment 7 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.

Cynigiwyd gwelliant 8 (Carl Sargeant).

Amendment 8 (Carl Sargeant) moved.

[149] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 8 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 8 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 8 is agreed.

Derbyniwyd gwelliant 8 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.

Amendment 8 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.

[150] **John Griffiths:** Bethan, I believe you have indicated that you do not wish to move amendment 34. Is that correct?

[151] **Bethan Jenkins:** Correct.

[152] **John Griffiths:** It is. Does any Member wish to move amendment 34 in accordance with Standing Order 26.65? The amendment is not moved.

Ni chynigiwyd gwelliant 34 (Bethan Jenkins).

Amendment 34 (Bethan Jenkins) not moved.

Cynigiwyd gwelliant 9 (Carl Sargeant).

Amendment 9 (Carl Sargeant) moved.

[153] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 9 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 9 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 9 is agreed.

Derbyniwyd gwelliant 9 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.

Amendment 9 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.

Grŵp 7: Pwerau Gwneud Rheoliadau (Gwelliannau 27, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

Group 7: Regulation Making Powers (Amendments 27, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

[154] **John Griffiths:** Group 7 relates to regulation-making powers. The lead amendment in the group is amendment 27 in the name of David Melding. I

call on David Melding to move amendment 27 and speak to his amendment and other amendments in this group.

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 27 (David Melding).
Amendment 27 (David Melding) moved.*

[155] **David Melding:** Amendment 27, which I move, is my only amendment. The Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee noted their concern that section 9 as drafted gave very wide powers to make consequential amendments. This amendment narrows that power by deleting the words ‘or expedient’. This is a long-running concern for the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee and one I fully share. I will, however, support the Cabinet Secretary’s amendments 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

[156] As I said earlier, I am a member of the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee, and I do share their concerns about the broad nature of the regulation-making powers that are prescribed in section 9 of the Bill. It was an agreed and consistent view that the Welsh Ministers should adopt a more targeted approach rather than taking the widest possible approach available to them. Despite this commitment, the actual actions of Cabinet Secretaries don’t seem to have changed very much, and so for this purpose, I’m hoping to nudge them to best practice and eliminate ‘or expedient’. I move the amendment.

[157] **John Griffiths:** Are there other Members who wish to speak? No. I call on the Cabinet Secretary to speak.

[158] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you, Chair. Again, thank you for David Melding’s amendment, which seeks to leave out the words ‘or expedient’. We had correspondence with the CLAC committee on 12 September setting out in further detail the reason why we use the words ‘or expedient’ and I recognise that the CLAC have long-standing issues with the way that this is interpreted. My legal advice is sound and we will wish to ensure that ‘or expedient’ remains within the Bill in order to give us that flexibility as needed.

[159] The Government amendments 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 relate to section 10 of the Bill and seek to clarify that section 10 of the Bill applies only to the regulation-making powers in section 9. These amendments were the recommendation of the CLAC committee in recommendation 5 of their report, and I’m happy to bring those forward. I urge Members to reject amendment 27 and support amendments 10 to 14.

[160] **John Griffiths:** I call on David Melding to reply to the debate.

[161] **David Melding:** I think we've aired our differences. I'm unconvinced.

[162] **John Griffiths:** David, I believe you've indicated that you wish to proceed to a vote on amendment 27.

[163] **David Melding:** I do.

[164] **John Griffiths:** The question is that amendment 27 be agreed. Does any Member object? [*Objection.*] I will therefore take a vote by show of hands. The question is that amendment 27 be agreed. Those in favour, please raise your hands. And those against. There are no abstentions. In relation to amendment 27, there voted two in favour and six against. The amendment is therefore not agreed.

*Gwelliant 27: O blaid 2, Yn erbyn 6, Ymatal 0.
Amendment 27: For 2, Against 6, Abstain 0.*

O blaid:
For:

Yn erbyn:
Against:

Ymatal:
Abstain:

Bennett, Gareth
Melding, David

Griffiths, John
Gwenllian, Sian
Jenkins, Bethan
Passmore, Rhianon
Rathbone, Jenny
Watson, Joyce

*Gwrthodwyd gwelliant 27
Amendment 27 not agreed.*

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 10 (Carl Sargeant).
Amendment 10 (Carl Sargeant) moved.*

[165] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 10 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 10 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 10 is agreed.

*Derbyniwyd gwelliant 10 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.
Amendment 10 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.*

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 11 (Carl Sargeant).
Amendment 11 (Carl Sargeant) moved.*

[166] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 11 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 11 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 11 is agreed.

*Derbyniwyd gwelliant 11 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.
Amendment 11 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.*

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 12 (Carl Sargeant).
Amendment 12 (Carl Sargeant) moved.*

[167] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 12 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 12 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 12 is agreed.

*Derbyniwyd gwelliant 12 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.
Amendment 12 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.*

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 13 (Carl Sargeant).
Amendment 13 (Carl Sargeant) moved.*

[168] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 13 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 13 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 13 is agreed.

*Derbyniwyd gwelliant 13 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.
Amendment 13 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.*

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 14 (Carl Sargeant).
Amendment 14 (Carl Sargeant) moved.*

[169] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 14 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 14 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 14 is agreed.

*Derbyniwyd gwelliant 14 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.
Amendment 14 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.*

Grŵp 8: Y Darpariaethau Diddymu yn Dod i Rym (Gwelliannau 30, 20)
Group 8: Coming into Force of the Abolition Provisions (Amendments 30, 20)

[170] **John Griffiths:** The eighth and final group of amendments relates to the coming into force of the abolition provisions. The lead amendment in the group is amendment 30 in the name of David Melding. I call on David Melding to move amendment 30 and speak to his amendment and other amendments in this group.

Cynigiwyd gwelliant 30 (David Melding).

Amendment 30 (David Melding) moved.

[171] **David Melding:** Thank you, Chair. As you say, this is the final group, and the lead amendment is amendment 30, which I move, and I think it's a very significant one. I look forward to the discussion we will have. This amendment will ensure that the abolition of the right to buy and associated rights may not come into effect until at least two years after the Bill receives Royal Assent. As currently drafted, abolition would come into effect after one year. Additionally, amendment 20 is a consequential amendment of amendment 30.

[172] I believe that there is considerable scope for the right-to-buy grace period to be extended to two years, and would have many advantages. During our Stage 1 committee proceedings, it was pointed out that the 2011 Measure provided that, where the right to buy was suspended for the maximum duration of 10 years, local authorities were required to wait two years before submitting a further application. According to the Welsh Government's guidance for local authorities on applications to suspend the right to buy and related rights, this was to allow, and I quote, 'a reasonable amount of time' for tenants to consider whether to exercise the right to buy before the authority could apply for another suspension—a very clear precedent for what I'm proposing.

[173] Given this, it does seem to me that your shorter period of 12 months provided for in this Bill ahead of abolition is problematic and not a full recognition of the rights of tenants. An extended grace period would give tenants more time to consider their options. A few respondents in Stage 1 warned of the risk that tenants may be targeted by unscrupulous mortgage brokers or lenders or property speculators during the 12-month notice period, and emphasised the need to safeguard against this. At least two years gives full time for consideration, and moving ahead after diligent

assessment of the costs and benefits. Additionally, concerns were raised by some about potential spikes in sales ahead of abolition, with some respondents linking this to the 12-month period.

As I've said earlier, this is a very significant change in the law and the rights that tenants currently have, and, again, I think that urges us to extend the period of grace. I do note that in Scotland there was a two-year grace period. That seemed to have operated very effectively and, certainly, they didn't have a surge in social housing purchases. In fact, their pattern of sale remained stable. So, I do think, in practical terms, extending the period to two years, given the precedent that I referred to in the Measure, given what happened in Scotland, practically, is an appropriate way of proceeding. It would also, I think, strengthen the Welsh Government's argument that they're attempting, at least, to recognise the change in existing rights that tenants have in the areas where it's not been suspended, and are moving a bit, anyway, in that direction. I so move.

[174] **John Griffiths:** Okay. Are there other Members who wish to speak? Joyce Watson.

[175] **Joyce Watson:** Again, David, as always, makes his case very eloquently and thought out, but I'm afraid I don't agree with it. We keep coming back to this being a fundamental right that is being removed and that has existed for 30 years, but 30 years ago there was a fundamental right that was removed, and that was the right of those who had money to buy their homes, against those who didn't have the money not to buy their homes. So, I just take us right back to that and all that ensued 30 years ago, and I did mention, very early on in what I said, that there are currently, co-existing in the same street, different amounts of rent being collected from those who did exercise the right to buy, and then rent back to the poorer tenants. And, really, that's what we're trying to do here. We're trying to secure the rights of tenants to know that their landlord will be the social housing or the local authority, and that they will have all the rights and that they are protected under that scheme.

[176] I don't accept any argument whatsoever that we need to extend the period to two years, and I—. Whilst David has done some research in Scotland and says that there wasn't a spike, it doesn't necessarily transfer automatically to Wales, and that concerns me, quite frankly, because I firmly believe that social housing, in whatever form and whoever owns it, should stay within that sector, and therefore I'm afraid that I cannot support

extending the period from 12 months to two years. David also talked about unscrupulous moneylenders or other operatives coming in offering people mortgages and forcing them and bouncing them into a position—. As far as I can see—and that might be the case, that some people will experience that—extending it by a mere year won't prevent that, and I think we come back full square here to Bethan's point that she made earlier that people are fully informed about managing their money. I look forward to further discussing that with Bethan. These two things, in my opinion, don't belong here in the same place.

[177] **John Griffiths:** Jenny Rathbone.

10:30

[178] **Jenny Rathbone:** Buying a house is a stressful business, but it should be a much simpler process where there are no third-party chains involved. Given that there are only 300 to 400 sales in any given year, I think 12 months should be a perfectly adequate time for the 22 local authorities to process such claims, were they to exist. Even if the numbers were to double, I think it's perfectly possible, and I don't follow the argument that extending it to two months would make it easier to—

[179] **John Griffiths:** Two years.

[180] **Jenny Rathbone:** I beg your pardon—to two years would make it easier to exclude mortgage speculators from the process. I think there are some quite substantive issues around protecting the rights of the tenants against the possible desires of the children of tenants, and we have to make sure that the tenants themselves have their rights protected in any right-to-buy process, but I think 12 months is an adequate amount of time, particularly given that it's already in the public domain that this law is due to come into effect. Therefore, those who think they may wish to purchase their property are already in a position to go and look for ways of funding that purchase.

[181] **John Griffiths:** Rhianon Passmore.

[182] **Rhianon Passmore:** Thank you. I think some sound counterarguments have been made, both by Joyce Watson and Jenny Rathbone, in regard to extending to the two-year period. I would also like to state that there is evidence, with payment protection insurance and the other issues that are currently in the public domain, that the longer you have a period of

exploration for speculators out there, the more that we will be putting people in a position, potentially, of having loan sharks or unscrupulous mortgage dealers working with them. I think the wider point for me is that there seems to be a lack of recognition in terms of the principles of the Bill in terms of some of the amendments that have been placed. I would also like to say that the rights of tenants—David Melding as a champion of tenants, I'm very happy to see. Obviously, in terms of the bedroom tax, there are many issues there, and it's nice to see David Melding championing the rights of tenants.

[183] **John Griffiths:** Okay, we must be very careful not to digress from what is before us. Sian Gwenllian.

[184] **Sian Gwenllian:** Rydw i yn erbyn unrhyw oedi efo gweithredu'r Ddeddf, unwaith y daw hi i rym. Mae angen symud yn syth. Mae'r gwaith achos rydw i'n delio â fo bob wythnos yn dangos yn glir i mi fod gennym ni argyfwng ym maes tai cyhoeddus yng Nghymru. Mae'n rhaid cadw'r stoc bresennol ac atal colli hyd yn oed mwy, ac mi fyddai unrhyw oedi yn golygu ein bod ni'n colli mwy o stoc dai allan o'r stoc bresennol, law yn llaw, wedyn, efo cyfres o weithredoedd eraill i gynyddu'n sylweddol y stoc o dai cyhoeddus o bob math sydd ei hangen yn y wlad.

Sian Gwenllian: I oppose any delay in relation to implementing this Act once it comes into force. There is a need to act immediately. This is something I have to deal with every week in my casework, and I can see clearly that we have a crisis here in the public housing sector in Wales. We have to keep the current stock and avoid losing even more, and any delay would mean that we'd lose more stock from the current stock, alongside, then, a series of other implementations to substantially increase the public housing stock of all kinds we need in the country.

[185] **John Griffiths:** Okay. If there are no other Members wishing to speak, I call on the Cabinet Secretary to speak.

[186] **Carl Sargeant:** Thank you, Chair. I think it would be fair to say this is David Melding's last noble attempt to be as disruptive as possible to this Bill, and constructive as he may see it, perhaps I don't share his views. In terms of the understanding of the Bill and the process of the Bill, there was a White Paper, there were the elections, there were the manifestos of Plaid Cymru and the Labour Party, and there is the legislative process. There is a 12-month period on introduction where people still have the ability to apply for this process. It's not about completion within the 12-month period. An

application to the final day of the 12-month period is considered to be fine within the regulations. I believe that is a reasonable amount of time. Indeed, this committee, bar one person, thought it was also a reasonable amount of time, and that's why we continue to pursue this.

[187] David Melding made reference to the Scottish Parliament. He was selective in that process. He is right to say that the Scottish Parliament agreed to a two-year period. However, the broader picture around this was the committee that scrutinised this Bill recommended a 12-month period. They also, in the Scottish legislation, did not contain details, as we have, and provision to ensure that correct information is provided to tenants in a relevant way.

[188] Can I also say I fail to see the argument as well about extending it to a two-year period—how that would protect tenants from loan sharks or other unscrupulous lenders? I think the discussion we had earlier around financial inclusion and support for tenants is an important one, and that's why we introduced amendments, and Bethan Jenkins's amendment 34 was introduced. We will pursue that in terms of making sure that we give the right support for tenants who, potentially, could become at risk within that 12-month period. But extending it by a further 12 months I think actually doubles the risk for those tenants. We will not be seeking to support that amendment.

[189] **John Griffiths:** I call on David Melding to reply to the debate.

[190] **David Melding:** Can I thank Members for their contributions to the discussion? Could I start with Jenny, then? I think it was you who introduced this concern about people making ill-judged decisions under some duress to move to a decision quickly, and I think a two-year period—if that's a risk—will allow for a calmer approach, and people certainly should be encouraged to consider the full consequences of buying your own property, because the capital requirements of upkeep and maintenance are considerable. I do not think a guillotine after a year is conducive to that longer term approach. Obviously, we all agree that financial regulation should be tight enough to punish those who engage in practices of offering inappropriate loans or making people choose financial products that are not in their interest.

[191] So, I'm responding to a concern that was raised by others. I think it is appropriate to do that, and I do think the questions were also put to you in the evidence that we took, Minister, by some of your colleagues. I also think

a two-year period allows the Government to manage this process of change, and obviously this is predicated throughout, really, by my attitude that this is a fundamental change in tenants' rights. Therefore, doing it in the full light of day without any additional unnecessary speed is appropriate, especially now, given that there is not going to be a 10-year review, and no other checks in terms of turning on those rights for those who are in suspended areas at the moment. So, I do think it is appropriate to extend the period. Sorry, I think Joyce made some of those remarks initially, not Jenny.

[192] Jenny raised the issue of the right to buy being a less arduous form of home purchase. Well, I think home purchase is a serious business and people should enter it in that spirit of due diligence. So, I'm not quite sure if we should distinguish between right-to-buy purchases and purchases that people make on the private market. I just disagree with Rhianon that you get more speculation, not less. I think it would be a more controlled process, more timely and, therefore, we would manage change much more effectively. Sian wants to move to abolition without any further delay, and obviously we disagree on that but I respect the ideological position or, sorry, the position you take out of your principle of feeling that abolition is now required in your interpretation of the public interest. So, we're obviously not going to agree and I'd set that to one side.

[193] The Cabinet Secretary has been courteous mostly, I have to say, apart from the occasional jibe that I'm being disruptive. Well, this is a legislative process. You're supposed to come under the maximum scrutiny at this time. You're not supposed to just throw a manifesto commitment onto the table as if it's some trump card that I can't then respond to. If your manifesto commitments are sound then it doesn't matter how much scrutiny you go under. You'll survive and flourish, indeed, if your arguments are strong enough. I'm not saying it's passed that test for me. It has failed, but I do think it is important and I'm not being disruptive. This was done in Scotland, and I note what you say, that there was divided opinion there, but the Government took a very different view to the Welsh Government, and I think that needs to be explored—why you are taking such a different approach to the only other jurisdiction that has moved to abolition. I hope you take the opportunity in Stage 3, at least, to do that. The point the Minister made that this is not about completion, but it's about application, is a fair point—I accept that. So, in effect, the period of grace is more than 12 months because you only have to make an application. But then, you know, that would apply to the two-year period as well. But, you know, in what you said there I think that's fair that that's put into the public debate and people

consider that. But, anyway, I do move that we do have a two-year period of grace.

[194] **John Griffiths:** Okay, David, you've indicated that you do wish to proceed to a vote on amendment 30. If amendment 30 is not agreed, amendment 20 falls. The question is that amendment 30 be agreed. Does any Member object? [*Objection.*] I will therefore take a vote by show of hands. The question is that amendment 30 be agreed. Those in favour please raise your hands. Those against please raise your hands. And there are no abstentions. In relation to amendment 30, there voted two in favour and six against. The amendment is therefore not agreed.

*Gwelliant 30: O blaid 2, Yn erbyn 6, Ymatal 0.
Amendment 30: For 2, Against 6, Abstain 0.*

O blaid:
For:

Yn erbyn:
Against:

Ymatal:
Abstain:

Bennett, Gareth
Melding, David

Griffiths, John
Gwenllian, Sian
Jenkins, Bethan
Passmore, Rhianon
Rathbone, Jenny
Watson, Joyce

*Gwrthodwyd gwelliant 30.
Amendment 30 not agreed.*

*Methodd gwelliant 20.
Amendment 20 fell.*

*Cynigiwyd gwelliant 15 (Carl Sargeant).
Amendment 15 (Carl Sargeant) moved.*

[195] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 15 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 15 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 15 is agreed.

*Derbyniwyd gwelliant 15 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.
Amendment 15 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.*

Cynigiwyd gwelliant 1 (Carl Sargeant).

Amendment 1 (Carl Sargeant) moved.

[196] **John Griffiths:** I move amendment 1 in the name of the Cabinet Secretary. The question is that amendment 1 be agreed. Does any Member object? Amendment 1 is agreed.

Derbyniwyd gwelliant 1 yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.34.

Amendment 1 agreed in accordance with Standing Order 17.34.

[197] **John Griffiths:** Okay, well, that completes our consideration of the amendments and Stage 2 proceedings. I very much wish to thank the Cabinet Secretary and his officials for their attendance. You will be sent a transcript of the meeting to check for factual accuracy. Stage 3 begins tomorrow. The relevant date for Stage 3 proceedings will be published in due course. Standing Orders make provision for the Cabinet Secretary to prepare a revised explanatory memorandum taking account of the amendments agreed today. The revised memorandum will be laid at least five working days before Stage 3 proceedings. Thank you all very much, Cabinet Secretary, officials and committee members. We will now break for 10 minutes before proceeding with the rest of today's business.

Barnwyd y cytunwyd ar bob adran o'r Bil.

All sections of the Bill deemed agreed.

Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10:42 a 10:53.

The meeting adjourned between 10:42 and 10:53.

Papurau i'w Nodi

Papers to Note

[198] **John Griffiths:** Okay, committee is back in public session, and item 3 is papers to note. Paper 1 is additional information from the Wales Construction Federation Alliance in relation to making the economy work for people on low incomes. Paper 2 is a letter from me in relation to fire safety in high-rise blocks in Wales, and paper 3 is a letter from the Llywydd in relation to Senedd@delyn. Is committee content to note those papers? Okay, thanks for that.

[199] **Rhianon Passmore:** Chair, can I just ask a question in regard to the report on the survey of payment practices and prequalification? Have we reached that?

[200] **John Griffiths:** Do you mean the Wales Construction Federation Alliance, Rhianon?

[201] **Rhianon Passmore:** Just basically in terms of where the recommendations have now gone from that. Is there an update?

[202] **John Griffiths:** This is a contribution to our ongoing inquiry.

[203] **Rhianon Passmore:** This is part of that.

[204] **John Griffiths:** Yes.

[205] **Rhianon Passmore:** Yes, okay.

[206] **John Griffiths:** So, it will be considered as part of that ongoing work.

[207] **Rhianon Passmore:** So, what I'm asking is: have the recommendations of this paper here—agenda item 3.1—been finalised in terms of this submission, not our submission?

[208] **John Griffiths:** No, this is something that we'll consider in due course as part of the inquiry, and any points you wanted to make on that we could address at that stage.

[209] **Rhianon Passmore:** Okay, fine.

[210] **John Griffiths:** Okay. So, is committee content to note the papers?

10:55

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd
Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public**

Cynnig:

bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog 17.42(vi).

Motion:

that the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 17.42(vi).

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[211] **John Griffiths:** We move on to item 4, which is a motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting. Are there any objections? No. We will move into private session.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10:55.

The public part of the meeting ended at 10:55.