

17 April 2018

Dear John,

PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (WALES) BILL

I am pleased that the Assembly agreed to the general principles of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill on 21 March 2018 and I am grateful for your Committee's work on scrutinising the Bill.

Timetable

In September 2017, the Business Committee considered the timetable for the Bill and agreed a provisional deadline of 18 May 2018 for Stage 2 proceedings. However, as Stage 2 proceedings rely on the Government bringing forward a financial resolution before your Committee can consider amendments, I have written to the Business Committee requesting an extension to the Stage 2 deadline. I have attached a copy of my letter for your information and I will keep you updated on this issue.

Inclusion of the Wales Audit Office in Schedule 3

You may recall the Auditor General for Wales (AGW) raised the issue of removing the Wales Audit Office (WAO) from Schedule 3 of the Bill. I replied to the AGW (and copied the letter to you) saying that, as the Bill had been introduced, it was a matter for your Committee to consider as part of Stage 1 scrutiny but, should evidence support the removal of the WAO, I would consider bringing forward an amendment. However, the Stage 1 report was silent on this issue.



As way of background, the WAO is not currently included in the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005. Following consultation on the draft Bill by the Finance Committee of the Fourth Assembly, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (in a joint submission) suggested the WAO's inclusion, and it was subsequently added to the Bill that was introduced.

Before deciding whether to bring forward an amendment on this issue, I would be keen to hear whether your Committee considered this matter as part of your Stage 1 deliberations.

Yours sincerely



Simon Thomas AM

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



17 April 2018

Dear Elin,

TIMETABLE FOR PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN (WALES) BILL

In September 2017, the Business Committee considered the timetable for the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill and agreed a provisional deadline of 18 May 2018 for Stage 2 proceedings.

The Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee's ability to undertake Stage 2 proceedings relies on the Government bringing forward a financial resolution prior to Stage 2 proceedings. Standing Order 26.74(i) requires a financial resolution to be tabled within six months of the completion of Stage 1. As the Assembly agreed the general principles of the Bill on 21 March 2018, the deadline for tabling the financial resolution is 21 September 2018.

On this basis, the provisional deadline for Stage 2 proceedings previously agreed by the Business Committee may need to be extended. I will need to have further discussions with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance in order to establish the amount of additional work which needs to be undertaken in order to satisfy the Government and in order for them to bring forward the financial resolution.

Therefore, I will write to the Business Committee with a new proposed timetable following the outcome of those discussions. I am copying this letter to John Griffiths, Chair of the ELCG Committee, due to the implications this timetable change has on the work of that Committee.

Yours sincerely



Simon Thomas AM

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Annex

Draft timetable – PSOW Bill

MILESTONE	DATE
1. Bill introduced	Monday 2 October 2017
2. Deadline for Stage 1 Committee consideration ¹	Friday 9 March 2018
3. Stage 1 ends – Plenary debate on general principles and motion on financial resolution (if necessary)	Wednesday 21 March 2018
4. Stage 2 Begins ²	Thursday 22 March 2018
5. Earliest possible date for consideration by Committee ³	Monday 16 April 2018
6. Stage 2 Ends – Deadline for stage 2 Committee ⁴	Friday 11 May 2018
7. Stage 3 Begins ⁵	Monday 14 May 2018
8. Earliest possible date for detailed consideration by Assembly ⁶	Tuesday 5 June 2018

¹ Allows 18 sitting weeks for Stage 1 Committee consideration, and takes account of: half term Autumn recess (30 October 2017 – 5 November 2017); Christmas recess (18 December 2017 – 7 January 2018); and half term Spring recess (*provisional: 19 February – 25 February 2018*).

² Stage 2 begins on the first working day after Stage 1 is completed.

³ At least 15 working days must elapse between the start of Stage 2 and the first Committee meeting and takes account of Good Friday on 30 March 2018 and Easter Monday on 2 April 2018.

⁴ Four possible Committee meetings have been allowed for Stage 2 proceedings.

⁵ Stage 3 begins on the first working day after Stage 2 is completed.

⁶ At least 15 working days must elapse between the start of Stage 3 and the date of the first meeting of the Assembly that considers Stage 3 proceedings. Takes account of Whitsun bank holiday on 28 May 2018.



9. Stage 3 in Plenary	Wednesday 13 June 2018
10. Stage 4 in Plenary	TBA
11. Royal Assent	TBA

