

Minutes – Business Committee

Meeting Venue:

Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 14 March 2023

Meeting time: 09.00 – 09.41

Private

Attendance

Category	Names
Committee Members:	Elin Jones MS, Llywydd (Chair) Lesley Griffiths MS Siân Gwenllian MS Darren Millar MS
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Yan Thomas (Deputy Clerk)
Others in attendance	Jane Dodds MS David Rees MS, Deputy Presiding Officer Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive and Clerk Siwan Davies, Director of Senedd Business Julian Luke, Head of Policy and Legislation Committee Service, Head of Policy and Legislation Committee Service Siân Wilkins, Head of Chamber and Committee Service Helen Carey, Welsh Government

1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

The Llywydd welcomed members to the meeting.



Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed for publication.

3 Organisation of Business

3.1 This week's business

Tuesday

The Trefnydd drew Business Managers' attention to the following changes:

- ~~The Packaging Waste (Data Collection and Reporting) (Wales) Regulations 2023 (15 mins) *Withdrawn*~~
- ~~LCM on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill (30 mins) *Postponed until 21 March*~~
- Voting Time will take place as the last item of business.
- Plenary is unlikely to run past 6.05pm.

The Llywydd reflected on the variable experience of the hybrid debates last week, noting the success of the Stage 3 debate on the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill but that several Members had expressed dissatisfaction with technical issues and interventions between the Siambr and Zoom participants during the debate on the Roads Review.

3.2 Three week timetable of Government Business

The Trefnydd drew Business Managers' attention to the following changes:

Tuesday 21 March 2023

- ~~Statement by the Minister for Health and Social Services: Update on the Six Goals for Urgent and Emergency Care Programme (30 mins) – *withdrawn*~~

- LCM on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill (30 mins)

Tuesday 28 March 2023

- The Alcoholic Beverages (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2023 (5 mins)
- ~~LCM on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (30 mins)~~ – *postponed until 2 May*
- LCM on the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill (15 mins)

3.3 Three week timetable of Senedd Business

The following changes were agreed to the Three Week Timetable of Senedd Business:

Wednesday 22 March 2023 –

- Short Debate: Rhys ab Owen (South Wales Central) (30 mins)

Wednesday 26 April 2023 –

- Statement by the Chair of the Standards of Conduct Committee: The Rules for the Operation of Cross-Party Groups (30 mins)
- Debate on the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee report – Scrutiny of the Welsh Government’s Accounts 2020–21 (60 mins)
- Time allocated to Plaid Cymru (60 mins)
- Short Debate: James Evans (Brecon and Radnorshire) (30 mins)

3.4 Member Debates: Selection of Motions for Debate

Business Committee considered the proposed motions for debate and agreed to schedule the following motion on 22 March:

Jack Sargeant

NNDM8219

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Believes that:

a) it is a national scandal that 600,000 people were forced onto prepayment meters in 2022 because they could not afford their energy bills;

b) energy regulator Ofgem has failed to protect vulnerable households by allowing energy suppliers to bypass proper checks;

c) those forced on to a prepay meter should be properly compensated by energy suppliers and switched back free of charge.

2. Notes that:

a) 3.2 million people were cut off from energy last year due to running out of credit on their prepay meter;

b) average household energy bills could rise even further, placing an additional burden on households already struggling due to the cost-of-living crisis.

3. Acknowledges the Welsh Government's 2021–22 in-home energy advice pilot, providing proactive advice and outreach support to people who are, or at risk of being, in fuel poverty.

4. Calls on the Welsh Government to roll out an in-home energy advice service across Wales to ensure all households can access the support and advice they need.

4 Legislation

4.1 Update on LCMs

Business Committee received an update on current LCMs and agreed to:

- refer the supplementary LCM (Memorandum No. 3) on the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill laid on 9 March for scrutiny, with a reporting deadline of 4 May 2023;
- refer the supplementary LCM (Memorandum No. 6) on the Social Housing Bill laid on 9 March for scrutiny, with a reporting deadline of 27 March 2023;

- refer the supplementary LCM (Memorandum No. 4) on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill for scrutiny, with a reporting deadline of 20 March 2023;and
- note the position on the Procurement Bill.

Business Committee noted correspondence from the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, which had been received and circulated following their meeting held on Monday 13 March. Business Committee noted that Committee's position that they would be unable to report on the supplementary LCM (Memorandum No. 4) on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill due to the very limited time available for this.

4.2 Paper to note – Correspondence from the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee to the Counsel General and Minister for Constitution regarding the Welsh Government's Legislative Consent Memoranda on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill

Business Committee noted the letter.

5 Committee Timetable

5.1 Correspondence from the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee regarding alternative committee meeting slots in May

Business Committee agreed to a request from the Committee to meet on Tuesday 2 May and Tuesday 9 May instead of in their regular slot due to the impact of bank holidays on 1 and 8 May.

6 Review of proxy voting

6.1 Possible areas for extension: matters for consideration

Business Committee returned to consider matters relating to possible areas of extension as part of its review of proxy voting.

Darren Millar stated the opposition of the Conservative Group to retaining or extending proxy voting provisions.

Business Committee agreed, on the basis of a majority view, to propose that proxy voting provisions be extended to include long-term illness or injury, caring responsibilities and bereavement. In all cases, entitlement to request a proxy vote would occur in circumstances where a Member would be absent from all Senedd proceedings.

For provisions relating to long-term illness or injury and caring responsibilities there would be a minimum duration of four weeks and a standard maximum duration of 6 months, with the ability for this to be extended at the Llywydd's discretion. The duration of a proxy vote following a bereavement will be agreed between the Member and the Llywydd.

Business Committee agreed that the current arrangements for publication of information around individual eligibility for a proxy vote should continue, with the broad category of proxy vote included when a report on the arrangement is laid by the Llywydd.

Jane Dodds raised how the proxy vote process works for Members who are not part of a party group. The Committee agreed to consider this further when considering draft updates to guidance.