

Minutes – Business Committee

Meeting Venue:

Meeting Room 4B, Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 20 May 2025

Meeting time: 09.00 – 09.56

Private, Hybrid

Attendance

Category	Names
Committee Members:	Elin Jones MS, Llywydd (Chair) Paul Davies MS Heledd Fychan MS Jane Hutt MS
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Yan Thomas (Deputy Clerk)
Others in attendance	David Rees MS, Deputy Presiding Officer Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive and Clerk Matthew Richards, Interim Director of Senedd Business Bethan Davies, Head of Chamber and Committee Service Julian Luke, Head of Policy and Legislation Committee Service Helen Carey, Welsh Government



1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

The Deputy Presiding Officer welcomed Members to the Committee and chaired items 3.1–3.3. The Llywydd chaired the remainder of the meeting. Apologies were received from Jane Dodds.

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 informed Business Managers of the following change:

- ~~Legislative Consent Motion: The Product Regulation and Metrology Bill (15 mins)~~ *Postponed until 3 June*
- Voting Time will take place before as the last item of business.
- Plenary is unlikely to run past 6.45pm.

Wednesday

- Voting Time will take place before the Short Debate.
- Plenary is unlikely to run past 7.10pm.

Heledd Fychan requested that the Government make oral statements on the following matters:

- delays to repairs to the Menai Bridge;
- fines imposed on Dŵr Cymru for failing to properly monitor water quality; and
- the implications of UK–EU trade deal for Wales.

In response, the Trefnydd stated the Government is considering correspondence from Rhun ap Iorwerth MS regarding the situation with the Menai Bridge and will give it further consideration. She noted that a written statement on the UK–EU trade deal had been issued and that she would consider the requests made.

3.2 Three week timetable of Government Business

The Trefnydd informed Business Managers of the following changes to the Three Week Timetable of Government Business:

Tuesday 3 June 2025 –

- Legislative Consent Motion: The Product Regulation and Metrology Bill (15 mins)

Tuesday 10 June 2025 –

- The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 (Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2025 (15 mins)

3.3 Three week timetable of Senedd Business

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

Wednesday 4 June 2025 –

- ~~Debate on the Equality and Social Justice Committee report: Anything's Achievable with the Right Support: Tackling the Disability Employment Gap (60 mins)~~ *Postponed until 11 June*
- Short Debate: Llyr Gruffydd MS (North Wales) (30 mins) *Brought forward from 11 June*

Wednesday 11 June 2025 –

- Debate on the Equality and Social Justice Committee report: Anything's Achievable with the Right Support: Tackling the Disability Employment Gap (60 mins) *Moved from 4 June*
- ~~Short Debate: Llyr Gruffydd MS (North Wales) (30 mins)~~ *Moved to 4 June*

The following items were also agreed to be scheduled on the Three Week Timetable of Senedd Business:

Wednesday 18 June 2025 -

- Debate on petition: P-06-1365 Re-open railway lines to connect the north and south of Wales (30 mins)
- Motion to suspend Standing Orders (5 mins)
- Open debate (120 mins)
- Time allocated to the Welsh Conservatives (60 mins)

4 Committees

4.1 Letter from the Chair of the Petitions Committee requesting a debate

Business Committee agreed a request from the Petitions Committee to schedule a Plenary debate on petition *P-06-1525 Preserve the unique character of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal for the future generations of Wales* prior to the summer recess.

4.2 Wales COVID-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee: Charing Arrangements

The Business Committee discussed a number of options in relation to the Wales COVID-19 Inquiry Special Purpose Committee. Paul Davies confirmed that the Welsh Conservative group would engage with scrutiny carried out by other subject committees. The Trefnydd indicated that the Labour group would be content for the Committee to continue its work if a new co-chair could be nominated. Heledd Fychan reiterated the Plaid Cymru group's position, which is to identify a way in which the Committee and scrutiny of the UK Covid Inquiry can continue in the Senedd but that

co-chairing arrangements had not worked and that the group would not be content to nominate a co-chair on that basis.

The Llywydd proposed that the Business Committee consider inviting relevant committees to examine the reports published by the UK Covid Inquiry at the end of its consideration of each module and to scrutinise the matters pertinent to Wales. Business Committee agreed to consider a proposal relating to this at a subsequent meeting.

5 Legislation

5.1 Update on LCMs

Business Committee considered an update from the Trefnydd and agreed to:

- refer the SLCM (No.2) on the Planning and Infrastructure Bill to the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee and the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee for scrutiny, with a reporting deadline of 27 June 2025.
- note the position in relation to SLCM (No.5) on the Data (Use and Access) Bill in relation to the late stage of the timetable for the Bill at the UK Parliament but agreed to refer it for consideration by the relevant committees, should they wish to do so. The Government was asked to provide further information about the likely timetable for this Bill.
- extend the reporting deadline on the Product Regulation and Metrology Bill to 2 June 2025 and note that the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee may need to report on the morning of 3 June due to their meeting on 2 June.

5.2 Paper on matters to consider in light of the Welsh government's proposals for the consolidation of planning law

The Business Committee considered a paper on the implications for the Senedd of the Welsh Government's proposals for Bills to consolidate planning law. The Counsel General and Minister for Delivery attended to contribute to a discussion around the Government's proposed timetables for scrutiny of the Bills.

Senedd Commission officials outlined the potential implications which could arise from the limited time that will be available for scrutiny of the Bills by committees and the Senedd in Plenary. In particular, it was noted that the overall timetable would be unable to provide sufficient time for both the Initial Consideration Stage and allow the possibility of a Detailed Senedd Consideration Stage (should that be recommended to the Senedd by the responsible committee).

The Counsel General and Minister for Delivery recognised the concerns that had been raised about the size of the Bills and the time remaining for scrutiny and their passage through the Senedd. She reiterated that it is the Government's intention to provide draft Bills to the responsible committee at the point at which they are sent to the Llywydd for Determination and that she will make herself and her officials available to the committee as required throughout the Initial Consideration Stage.

The Counsel General indicated that the Government held a different position on the timetabling of the Detailed Senedd Stage, and set out the Government's thinking on the way in which the amending stage(s) for two linked but separate Consolidation Bills might be handled.

Business Committee agreed to note advice on the procedure for the scrutiny of Consolidation Bills and that Welsh Government and Senedd Commission officials would meet to further discuss proposals for the timetables for the two Consolidation Bills. In particular, officials were asked to consider questions around how the amending stage(s) should be handled in relation to the two linked but separate Bills.

5.3 Year Five of the Legislative Programme

The Counsel General and Minister for Delivery outlined Welsh Government proposals for timetables for the Bills in Year Five of the Legislative Programme, and indicated again that the Government intended to make draft versions of the Bills available to committees when they are provided to the Llywydd for the Determination period.

Business Committee noted the Government's current proposals and that the Government has committed to provide further detail on each prior to the summer recess to aid the lead committees to plan their scrutiny work.

The Business Committee also noted several issues in relation to committees having an interest in Bills with overlapping timetables and agreed that Senedd Commission officials will produce advice on the potential allocation of Bills to existing or additional committees prior to it being asked to agree to proposed timetables.

6 Any other business

Russell George committee place

Paul Davies indicated that the Conservative Group would be content to offer one of their places on a committee to Russell George MS and that he would liaise with the secretariat for the purpose of arranging this.

Dissolution of the Reform Bill Committee and the Future Senedd Committee

The Business Committee noted that the work of both the Reform Bill Committee and the Future Senedd Committee had now concluded. Business Managers thanked the Deputy Presiding Officer for his chairing of both committees and agreed to put motions to the Senedd after half-term to propose the dissolution of the committees.