

Julie James MS
Counsel General and Minister for Delivery

23 January 2025

Dear Julie

Consolidation of planning law

At our meeting on 20 January 2025, we considered, in detail, the Welsh Government's 'The future of Welsh law: A programme for 2021 to 2026 Annual Report for 2023-24.

Specifically as regards the proposed consolidation of planning law, the Committee would welcome further information and clarity as regards a number of matters as set out in the questions below.

In the Annual Report, you state that progress has continued on consolidating the main Acts that provide the legislative framework for the planning system in Wales, as well as certain provisions closely linked to planning currently found in other Acts. You go on to state that the consolidation "is expected to result in a very large Bill (around 450 pages in each language)". However, you then go on to state that work is also underway to prepare a second "consequential provisions" Bill, which will make a series of consequential amendments and repeals to other enactments as well as providing for transitional and savings provisions.

The possibility of a consolidation exercise involving two or more 'cognate' bills was raised by the Welsh Government in the Fifth Senedd during the development of the new Standing Orders to enable the laying and scrutiny of Consolidation Bills. The Committee's predecessor submitted views to the Business Committee on the draft Standing Order. In response, the Business Committee said:

"We would anticipate discussions between government and Senedd officials in the lead-up to the introduction of any Consolidation Bill(s) to consider the desirability and practicability of using 'cognate' bills in each case, and ultimately the decision would rest with Business Committee as to whether it agrees to more than one Bill being subject to the same timetable."

We understand that it is your intention to introduce both Bills into the Senedd at the same time. During the general scrutiny session the Committee held with yourself and the Deputy First Minister on 9 December 2024, you said you believed that the current intention is for the Bills to be introduced in September 2025.

Question 1: Have you discussed with the Business Committee (or have Welsh Government officials discussed with Senedd Commission officials) your proposal that the consolidation of planning law should be dealt with over two Bills – a ‘main’ Bill and a second ‘consequential provisions’ Bill? If so, what were the outcome of those discussions?

Question 2: Please would you confirm the current thinking as regards the timing of when both Bills will be laid before the Senedd for initial consideration.

Question 3: Please would you confirm the approximate length (in pages and/or provision numbers) of the ‘main’ Bill and the ‘consequential provisions’ Bill.

We would welcome a response by 6 February 2025.

I am copying this letter to the Rt Hon Elin Jones MS, the Llywydd and Chair of the Business Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Hedges". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Mike Hedges
Chair