

PBMB13 Plaid Cymru Senedd Group

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Busnes | Business Committee

Adolygiad o'r broses ar gyfer Biliau Cyhoeddus a Biliau Aelod | Review of the Public Bill and Member Bill processes

Ymateb gan: Grŵp Senedd Plaid Cymru | Evidence from: Plaid Cymru Senedd Group

Heledd Fychan

Aelod o'r Senedd dros
Ganol De Cymru

—
Member of the Senedd for
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Dyddiad | Date: 15 April 2024

Llywydd
Business Committee
(on e-mail)

Annwyl Llywydd,

Response to the Business Committee's Review of the Public Bill and Member Bill Process

I am writing on behalf of the Plaid Cymru Senedd Group in response to the review of the public bill and member bill process. We appreciate the opportunity to provide our input on this important matter.

Public Bills

We believe that greater accountability is needed from the Welsh Government to ensure that their legislative programme is carried out in a timely manner. We should seek to avoid situations such as the last 18 months of the 6th Senedd, where a number of bills have been introduced in quick succession, placing a considerable workload on several committees and on individual Members, including during the scrutiny of the final budget.

The Business Committee should work with the Future Senedd Committee to consider any evidence gathered during their review of dual function policy and legislation committees and ad hoc bill committees, as well as any wider work being undertaken by the Future Senedd Committee on public bills.

Some Members would be interested in exploring the possibility of establishing dedicated bill committees, similar to the House of Commons bill process. This could allow opposition groups to ensure that their relevant spokesperson or Member of interest on the specific bill's purpose can scrutinise legislation brought forward by the Welsh Government without interfering with the general scrutiny work of other committees they may be sitting on. Those who are supportive do not see it as an issue of capacity, but of practicality and to ensure greater scrutiny.

Looking ahead to the 7th Senedd also provides an opportunity to review our general practices relating to legislation. We would welcome any work to explore processes in other comparable legislatures in terms of timetabling, length of the process, agreeing financial consequences of bills and amendments to ensure that the Senedd is applying best practices.

We consider that all stages of the legislative process should be attended in person if submitting amendments, and have favoured ensuring that all Group Members are present in person for stage 3 proceedings. Where a committee of the whole Senedd is required, voting should only be allowed in person.

We would like to put on record our thanks to the committee clerks and the legal and research service teams for their role in assisting Members on drafting amendments and during scrutiny. Given the often complex nature of submitting technical amendments, we would welcome any further steps to provide training to staff members, technical briefings, and continued close contact to ensure that thorough, robust scrutiny is provided during the bill process, and that all technical information is shared in an accessible format and language.

Member Bills

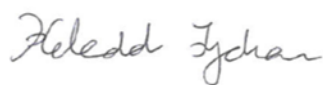
The Plaid Cymru Senedd Group believes that greater emphasis should be given to Member bills and any other opportunity for backbench Members to bring forward legislation and proposals as part of timetabling considerations for the 7th Senedd.

More emphasis should be given on assisting Members to bring forward Member bills that are focused and narrower in scope, given that backbench Members do not have the same access to legal advice and expertise to bring forward substantial, technical bills.

We would again like to see work being carried out to review procedures in other legislatures so that we can form a more informed view to feed into this review process.

We look forward to working with you and the Business Committee to refine and improve the legislative process in the Senedd.

Yn gywir,



Heledd Fychan AS/MS

Llefarydd Plaid Cymru ar Gyllid a'r Gymraeg

