

PBMB02 Local Government and Housing Committee

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: Y Pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol a Thai | Evidence from: Local Government and Housing Committee

Elin Jones MS
Y Llywydd
Chair, Business Committee

18 March 2025

Annwyl Lywydd,

Business Committee review of the Public Bill and Member Bill processes

Thank you for your letter of 21 January seeking the Committee's views on the Public Bill and Member Bill processes, which we considered at our meeting on 6 March.

The Committee has considered two Bills during this Senedd term and we are expecting a further two to be referred to us this year. Our comments are based on our experiences and that of individual Members who have been involved in the Member Bill process.

Our main comments relate to the timetabling of Senedd scrutiny of Public Bills, in particular the time allocated to committees to undertake their Stage 1 scrutiny. While we recognise there will be occasions when it will be appropriate for expediated timetables to be applied, we believe that as a principle, committees should be allocated a minimum of twelve sitting weeks to undertake their scrutiny. Committee scrutiny is a crucial aspect of developing legislation, which must include sufficient time for stakeholder engagement and thorough consideration of the evidence presented to form recommendations. We believe that twelve sitting weeks is a reasonable period to be allocated for Stage 1 scrutiny as it enables committees to undertake this important element of Bill development without impacting the wider timescale. We believe that in managing its legislative programme, the Welsh Government should routinely schedule twelve sitting weeks for Stage 1 scrutiny. It is also important that the Business Committee continues to consult committees on Bill timetables to ensure these can be considered in the context of their wider work programmes.

Our other comments relate to legislating in a hybrid context. We noted that both of the Stage 2 proceedings we have undertaken were held fully in person in order to avoid any technical difficulties preventing Members from participating. While we support the principle of Members attending Stage

2 proceedings in person, we recognise that as hybrid working has become the norm, consideration should be given to whether Members in the Seventh Senedd could vote using the voting app used in Plenary, rather than by show of hands or roll call.

Members also reflected on individuals' experiences of the Member Bill process. Members praised the support provided by Senedd Commission staff but noted that the resources available are limited compared to those in place to support the development of Welsh Government legislation. Members commented that the process is lengthy from ballot to introduction and concern was raised over the potential of fewer opportunities to introduce legislation during a shorter Senedd term, coupled with greater competition from Members following the next Senedd election. The Senedd Commission may wish to consider whether ballots should be conducted more regularly and whether the resources available to support the Member Bill process is sufficient in a larger Senedd.

I hope our reflections are useful to the Business Committee in undertaking your review.

Yours sincerely



John Griffiths MS

Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.