

Minutes – Business Committee

Meeting Venue:

Video Conference via Zoom

Meeting date: 3 April 2020

Meeting time: 13.30 – 14.30

Private

Attendance

Category	Names
Committee Members:	Elin Jones AM, Llywydd (Chair) Rebecca Evans AM Darren Millar AM Siân Gwenllian Caroline Jones AM
Committee Staff:	Aled Elwyn Jones (Clerk)
Others in attendance	Ann Jones AM, Deputy Presiding Officer Manon Antoniazzi, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly Siân Wilkins, Head of Chamber and Committee Service Siwan Davies, Director of Assembly Business Gwion Evans, Head of the Llywydd's Private Office Helen Carey, Welsh Government Elin Roberts, Policy Adviser to the Llywydd Bethan Garwood, Deputy Clerk



1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

3 Organisation of Business

3.1 This Week's Business

The Trefnydd informed Business Managers that the government had grouped the general principles and the financial resolution for the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill together for debate.

Business Committee agreed that Plenary should be held on Wednesday next week, and that it should start at 1.30pm.

Business Managers also agreed that the next Plenary meeting should be broadcast live and there should be a short break (approx. 15 mins) scheduled before the Stage 1 debate to allow for a comfort break, and for changing Members if needed. The Llywydd asked that Business Managers go back to their groups to discuss the number of their Members that would swap during these breaks, advising that it should be no more than half, and if possible much less.

The Llywydd also asked Business Managers to feed back to their groups that second speakers on items should adapt their questions to avoid asking questions that have already been asked, so that virtual meetings can make more efficient use of time.

Business Committee agreed to continue with the practice of there not being any questions on the BSA.

Number of Members attending:

Business Managers agreed that more Members could attend plenary, given that: social distancing is no longer an issue; the IT system had been shown to work successfully last week; and, voting will be weighted. They agreed to double the allocation for each group: 12 Labour and government, 6 Conservatives, 4 Plaid Cymru and 2 Brexit, giving a maximum of 28 attendees should all independent Members attend.

Stage 1 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill

Darren Millar and Caroline Jones did not think the debate was appropriate in the current circumstances. Sian Gwenllian was happy for the debate to take place though she did have sympathy with the views expressed. Business Managers noted that as this

is government business, the scheduling is a matter for the government alone and the Trefnydd emphasised the time critical nature of the Bill.

In order to allow for all three committee chairs to be called in the Stage 1 debate, the Trefnydd agreed to the request from Business Managers for it to be extended to the usual length of 60 minutes.

The Llywydd informed Business Managers that voting would be by weighted voting and by roll call, and party groups will need to indicate in advance which of the Members attending will be voting on behalf of their group.

Feedback from the virtual plenary meeting

Business Managers felt that the virtual plenary meeting went very well, and agreed to send a formal thank you letter to all commission staff involved.

3.2 Three Week Timetable of Government Business

Business Managers agreed that Plenary should be on Wednesdays in the future.

Business Managers agreed to formally designate a recess from 9 April to 21 April. This would allow for the clock to be paused on any statutory instruments, and recall provisions could be used if there was urgent business in the meantime.

4 Legislation

4.1 Handling of Statutory Instruments

Business Managers discussed the paper and the letter from the Chair of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee. They agreed the process proposed in the paper for the consideration and reporting on SIs.

They also agreed to write to the LJC to say that the Business Committee will be considering the work of committees more broadly at their next meeting, and would review the role of the LJC Committee at that point.

4.2 Legislative Consent Memorandum: Trade Bill

Business Managers agreed to ask officials to start looking at the LCM, and to return to the matter in two weeks' time to decide whether to formally refer it to a committee for scrutiny.

4.3 Paper to note – Legislation in light of COVID-19

Business Managers noted the paper.

5 Any Other Business

As both the Business Committee and Plenary are successfully meeting virtually, Business Managers asked officials to provide a paper to outline the essential business that is likely to come to committees. This will allow the Business Committee to consider whether committees could meet, and in what form, after recess.