

Comisiwn y Senedd

—
Welsh Parliament
Senedd Commission

David Rees MS
Chair of the Reform Bill Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

26 January 2024

Dear David Rees MS,

Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill: Response to recommendations made by Reform Bill Committee

Thank you for your letter dated 19 January 2024, enclosing a copy of your Stage 1 report on the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill, and inviting the Senedd Commission to respond to recommendations made to it by Friday 26 January 2024.

Please find enclosed with this letter a response from the Senedd Commission.

Kind regards,



The Rt. Hon. Elin Jones MS
Llywydd and Chair of the Senedd Commission

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English



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Response from the Senedd Commission to recommendations made by the Reform Bill Committee

This paper provides responses to recommendations made by the Reform Bill Committee, in its *Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill Stage 1 Report*, to the Senedd Commission.

Recommendations to the Senedd Commission

Recommendation 2: If the Bill passes Stage 1, the Senedd Commission should write to us in advance of Stage 2 proceedings to outline what the differences in the financial estimates would be if the estimates had been based on the 2023–24 Determination rather than the 2022–23 Determination. The Member in charge should then incorporate these estimates into the revised Explanatory Memorandum and Regulatory Impact Assessment to be laid after Stage 2.

Senedd Commission response: Accept

1. The information requested will be provided in advance of Stage 2 proceedings.
2. Whether or not it is included in a revised Explanatory Memorandum and Regulatory Impact Assessment is a matter for the Member in charge.

Recommendation 3: In its response to our report, the Senedd Commission should provide information about any interaction between the proposals in the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill (if passed) and the Cardiff Bay 2032 accommodation project. This should include information about how any increase in the number of Members would affect the potential costs of the 2032 project. If it is not possible to provide cost estimates at this stage, the Senedd Commission should provide an indication in its response of when the information may be available. The Senedd



Commission should also commit to keeping the Senedd, and the public, updated on these matters.

Senedd Commission response: Accept

3. The Cardiff Bay 2032 Project aims to secure a high-quality space befitting of a national parliament that meets the long-term needs of the Senedd and its Members, the Senedd Commission and the people of Wales.
4. The project is still in its very early stages, with the Commission having approved the Strategic Outline Case in December 2023 – the first of the three business cases required by the guidance set out in the Welsh Government / HM Treasury Green Book.
5. This project is driven solely by the ending of the current Ty Hywel lease in 2032; the progress of the Senedd Reform Bill's through the Senedd is not a material factor impacting on this work at this stage.
6. The number of Members of the Senedd, and their preferred ways of working, will of course influence consideration of space needs, along with a wide range of other key factors and variables, over the 50+ years of the planning horizon for the project, but only once the work reaches the detailed design stage.
7. Therefore, it is not yet possible to provide the Committee with meaningful estimates of costs and how they might change as a result of differing space and usage requirements. This information can only be produced following detailed design work based on the consideration of what may be a range of potentially viable options for accommodation needs. This activity requires the commencement of a complex public procurement exercise and is expected to take between 24 and 36 months.
8. The Commission is committed to keeping the Senedd and the public updated on the progress of the Bay 2032 project (noting that there are and will be commercial sensitivities from time to time) and will be developing a comprehensive engagement plan as one of the project's key deliverables. In the interim, the Senior Responsible Owner and Project Sponsor will be providing the Senedd's Finance Committee with a technical briefing in March to ensure the Senedd remains informed whilst managing commercial sensitivities that could impact value for money.
9. The Committee may also wish to note that the project will be conducted and options evaluated in a manner that considers and compares their "whole-life" costs to ensure the best value for public money is demonstrably attained.



Recommendation 12: The Senedd Commission should, as part of its Senedd Reform Programme, consider whether any changes are required to the processes for undertaking Senedd-led (or Senedd Commission-led) public appointments to account for more frequent electoral cycles.

Senedd Commission response: Accept

10. The Senedd Commission's Senedd Reform Programme will address this recommendation, in consultation with relevant Senedd committees and the appointed offices that are potentially affected by more frequent electoral cycles.

