

Elin Jones AM

Y Llywydd and Chair of the Business Committee

20 December 2019

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill

Dear Elin

Thank you for your letter providing further information in relation to the Business Committee's decision regarding the deadline for reporting on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill. The Committee noted your paper at our meeting on 11 December, and Members agreed that it would be useful if I replied to outline our current position.

We accept the reporting deadline and have begun taking oral evidence from stakeholders. We had hoped to use our meeting on 5 December, however this was not possible due to witnesses' availability at short notice. Whilst we were able to secure witnesses for our meeting on 11 December, this was somewhat problematic. Having initially intended to hear from local government representatives at the earliest opportunity, it was necessary for us to revise our schedule as those witnesses would not have been able to provide evidence on such a broad Bill within that timescale. Their difficulties were compounded by the UK General Election.

The UK General Election has also impacted upon our ability to engage with electoral stakeholders at an early stage in the process, as this has been a particularly busy time for them.



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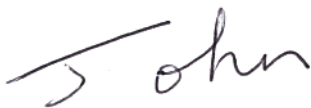
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Those witnesses whom we have been able to secure have commented on the very limited timescale for providing written evidence and appearing before us, and we are grateful to them for being available at short notice and, when necessary, re-arranging their schedules to accommodate this. The amount of time we have been able to allocate for the public consultation has also been limited, with several stakeholders commenting on the difficulties posed by the constrained timescale. This is very frustrating both for us and stakeholders as we want to hear as many views as possible on such an extensive and important piece of legislation.

We welcome the Business Committee's intention to look at the timetabling of scrutiny of legislation in preparation for the Sixth Assembly. As a Committee who has scrutinised numerous Bills during this Assembly term and expect several more, we believe that 12 weeks should be the minimum amount of time allocated for Stage 1 consideration, with an expectation that additional time available for particularly large or controversial Bills. It is also important to take account of other factors outside of the Committee's control, such as recesses, other legislative commitment and as in this particular case, the UK General Election.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

John Griffiths AM

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

