Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
CELG(4)–27–15 Papur 3 / Paper 3

7 October 2015

Dear Chair,

The Business Committee has decided to produce a legacy report and is gathering views on the work it has carried out over the past five years including the structures it has put in place, the procedural reforms it has introduced, and its ways of working. The final report will help inform the successor committee in making a number of key decisions at the start of the Fifth Assembly.

The Committee is consulting on the **questions set out in Annex A to this letter**. You will be aware that I have already established a Chairs Forum to consider many of these issues from a committee perspective, and to report to me by the end of the year. That Chairs Forum's report will feed into the Business Committee's own legacy report, but I wanted to give your committee the additional opportunity through this consultation of raising any specific issues related to your committee's work that you may want to bring to the Business Committee's attention.

The Committee is also consulting with external stakeholders, with a closing date for submissions of **13 November 2015**. We will be meeting in early December to consider the evidence gathered, and so ask that you make any submissions in time for them to be considered at that meeting.

If you wish to submit evidence, please send an electronic copy of your submission to SeneddBusiness@Assembly.Wales. Alternatively, you can write to: Committee Clerk, Business Committee, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay, CF99 1NA.

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1NA
SeneddSiambr@cynulliad.cymru
www.cynulliad.cymru/PwyllgorBusnes
0300 200 6565

National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1NA
SeneddChamber@assembly.wales
www.assembly.wales/BusinessCommittee
0300 200 6565

Disclosure of information

You can find further details about how we will use your information at www.assembly.wales/help/privacy/help-inquiry-privacy.htm. Please ensure that you have considered these details carefully before submitting information to the Committee. A hard copy of this policy can be requested by contacting the Clerk.

Rosemay Butler

Dame Rosemary Butler AM

Chair, Business Committee

Annex A

The terms of reference for the inquiry:

During the current Assembly, the Presiding Officer and Business Committee have introduced a number of procedural reforms, including changing the deadlines for tabling Oral Assembly Questions, introducing regular Individual Member Debates, and leaders' and spokespeople's questions.

- o What impact have these changes had in enabling Members to represent their constituents and hold the government to account?

For the first time, the committee structure of the Fourth Assembly, combined policy and legislative scrutiny within the same committees.

- o How effective has this approach been and how have committees achieved a balance between their policy, financial and legislative scrutiny?
- o What changes could be made to committee size and structure in future to make them more effective?

The Business Committee is responsible for setting the Assembly timetable, including scheduling committee meetings. Currently, Plenary meets on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, with committees meeting mostly on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, and Thursdays.

- o Does the current Assembly timetable, including the structure of the working week and committee/Plenary slots provide the

correct balance in terms of the use of the Assembly's time, allowing it to effectively perform its functions of making laws, representing the people of Wales, and holding the government to account?

The Business Committee is responsible for establishing timetables for committees to consider Bills, and LCMs, in line with Standing Orders.

- o Do the current processes for timetabling legislation – including Bills and LCMs – allow for proper scrutiny and engagement by Members and stakeholders? Could it be made more effective?

Unlike its equivalents in many other legislatures, the Assembly's Business Committee combines the role of scheduling Assembly business with that of a 'procedures committee' responsible for considering and proposing changes to the Assembly's Standing Orders and procedures.

- o What are the advantages and disadvantages of this dual role, and is there a case for reviewing it?