

# Issues for the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee

March 2026

As we reach the end of the Sixth Senedd, there are a range of issues that we wish to draw to the attention of our successor committee in the Seventh Senedd.

In this report, we highlight a body of procedural work, and other matters, that our successor might wish to consider when developing its procedural work programme and proposals for the organisation of parliamentary business.



## 1. Procedural work

1. Throughout the Sixth Senedd we developed and delivered a procedural work programme alongside our other functions.
2. To ensure that the appropriate procedural framework was in place in preparation for the Seventh Senedd, in June 2025 we prioritised the procedural items to be delivered before the end of the Sixth Senedd and held additional meetings focused on our procedural function.
3. We published a report in July 2025 that explained our approach to prioritisation, and identified a range of procedural issues that could be more appropriately addressed by the Seventh Senedd.<sup>1</sup>
4. The report identified 10 items for the Seventh Senedd to consider:
  - Accountability of the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru
  - Codification of Welsh law
  - “Cognate” Bills
  - Consolidation Bills
  - Legislation (Procedure, Publication and Repeals) (Wales) Act 2025: Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee recommendations
  - The legislative consent process
  - Legislative diversity quotas for characteristics other than gender
  - Post-Brexit procedural reforms (relating to UK-wide common frameworks and the UK Internal Market Act 2020)
  - Senedd representation on interparliamentary bodies
  - Senedd role in Welsh Government public appointments.
5. Further details of these items can be found on pages 8 to 15 of our report *Sixth Senedd procedural work: priorities*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Senedd Cymru, Business Committee, *Sixth Senedd procedural work: Priorities*, July 2025

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

**Recommendation 1.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee considers the procedural items we have identified in our report, *Sixth Senedd procedural work: priorities*, when establishing its procedural work programme.

## Review of Public Bill and Member Bill processes

6. A central element of our procedural work was reviewing the Senedd's Public Bill and Member Bill processes.<sup>3</sup>

7. The three reports associated with this review highlight a number of issues for the Seventh Senedd to consider.<sup>4</sup>

**Recommendation 2.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee considers the issues identified in our reports relating to the review of Public Bill and Member Bill processes.

## The Family Friendly and Inclusive Parliament Review ("FFIPR")

8. The FFIPR reported on 3 March 2026.<sup>5</sup>

9. The report includes ten recommendations to the Business Committee, some of which share an interdependency with the actions of other bodies and persons.

10. We support the ambition of ensuring that the Senedd is a family-friendly and inclusive legislature. Responding to the recommendations made by the FFIPR will require significant work. Regrettably, there was insufficient time left in the Sixth Senedd to undertake the work required to meaningfully consider the recommendations and respond to them.

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<sup>3</sup> See the Senedd's webpage [Review of the Public Bill and Member Bill processes](#) for further information.

<sup>4</sup> Senedd Cymru, Business Committee, *Amending Standing Orders: Standing Order 26 Acts of the Senedd, and consequential changes to Standing Orders 26A Private Acts of the Senedd, 26B Hybrid Acts of the Senedd and 26C Consolidation Acts of the Senedd*, March 2026; Senedd Cymru, Business Committee, *Amending Standing Orders: Standing Order 26: Member Bills*, March 2026; and Senedd Cymru, Business Committee, *Review of the legislative scrutiny process: procedures for 'reconsideration' of Bills passed or rejected by a previous Senedd*, March 2026

<sup>5</sup> Senedd Cymru, *A Senedd for all: Report of the Family Friendly and Inclusive Parliament Review*, March 2026

**Recommendation 3.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee considers the Family Friendly and Inclusive Parliament Review report.

## The Chairs' Forum

11. The Chairs' Forum is essential to the effective operation of committees, and has been a valuable partner when considering matters that affect committees.

12. The Chairs' Forum wrote to us on 29 January 2026 and requested that consideration be given to whether the Chairs' Forum should be included in the Senedd's Standing Orders in future. We agreed that potential procedural consideration of this matter would be more suitably carried out by the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee.

13. On 25 March 2026, the Chairs' Forum published a report on the effectiveness of committees in the Sixth Senedd that will be of considerable assistance to the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee when developing proposals for the establishment of committees.<sup>6</sup>

**Recommendation 4.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd's Llywydd considers convening a Chairs' Forum and that sufficient time for it to meet is considered when developing the committee timetable.

**Recommendation 5.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee considers the status and operation of the Chairs' Forum as part of its procedural work programme.

## Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill

14. At the end of the Sixth Senedd, the Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill has passed all Senedd stages and has entered the four-week period.

15. If the Bill receives Royal Assent, then a considerable volume of procedural work will need to be actioned urgently in the Seventh Senedd to implement this legislation.

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<sup>6</sup> Senedd Cymru, Chairs' Forum, *Reviewing Committee Effectiveness in the Sixth Senedd*, March 2026

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16. For example, the Bill includes a requirement for the Senedd to amend Standing Orders to provide for the membership of the Standards of Conduct Committee to include one or more lay members. This change to Standing Orders is required by 7 November 2027.

17. Furthermore, one of the two triggers for how a Member of the Senedd becomes subject to a recall poll requires the Standards of Conduct Committee to develop recall guidance and such guidance must then be approved by the Senedd. There may also be an expectation that lay members are involved in the development of the recall guidance.

**Recommendation 6.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee considers the implications of the Senedd Cymru (Member Accountability and Elections) Bill for its procedural work programme, should the Bill be enacted.

## UK Finance (No.2) Bill

18. The Finance Committee, in a letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Welsh Language relating to the UK Finance (No.2) Bill (copied to the Business Committee) identified the possible need for procedural considerations arising from this legislation.<sup>7</sup>

**Recommendation 7.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee considers any procedural implications arising from this legislation, when developing its procedural work programme.

## The approach to procedural work in the Seventh Senedd

19. Under Standing Order 11.7, one of the Business Committee's functions is to make recommendations on the general practice and procedure of the Senedd in the conduct of its business, including any proposals for the re-making or revision of Standing Orders.

20. We note that the range and number of procedural matters outlined above that the next Business Committee will need to consider in the Seventh Senedd is already substantial, and our own experience indicates that this list will continue to grow as the next Senedd develops.

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<sup>7</sup> Letter from the Finance Committee to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Welsh Language, *Legislative Consent Memorandum: Finance (No. 2) Bill*, 23 January 2026

21. Whilst we do not offer a specific recommendation to our successor committee on how it should approach this work, we observe that setting aside specific time for considering its procedural functions has served us well in undertaking the work required of us in preparing for the transition to the Seventh Senedd. Alternatively, we consider that there may be some merit in the next Business Committee giving consideration when proposing a committee structure to establishing a procedures committee, or making procedures part of the remit of another committee, in order to assist it with the consideration of these matters.

## 2. Parliamentary business in the Seventh Senedd

### The Future Senedd Committee

22. The Future Senedd Committee ("the FSC"), published two reports:

- *Review of Standing Order Thresholds* (March 2025)<sup>8</sup>; and
- *Parliamentary Business in the Seventh Senedd* (May 2025).<sup>9</sup>

23. These reports made recommendations to us and the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee.

24. We have considered and sought to implement the recommendations made in the *Review of Standing Order Thresholds* report.<sup>10</sup> In our subsequent Standing Orders change report, *Amending Standing Orders: Political groups and groupings (Standing Orders 1.3 and 11.3)*, we recommended that the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee keeps arrangements for attendance at the Business Committee (as provided for by Standing Order 11.5(iii)) under review.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Senedd Cymru, Future Senedd Committee, *Review of Standing Order Thresholds*, March 2025

<sup>9</sup> Senedd Cymru, Future Senedd Committee, *Parliamentary Business in the Seventh Senedd*, May 2025

<sup>10</sup> See: Senedd Cymru, Business Committee, *Amending Standing Orders: Political groups and groupings (Standing Orders 1.3 and 11.3)*, February 2026; and Senedd Cymru, Business Committee, *Amending Standing Orders: Standing Order Thresholds*, February 2026.

<sup>11</sup> Senedd Cymru, Business Committee, *Amending Standing Orders: Political groups and groupings (Standing Orders 1.3 and 11.3)*, February 2026 pp.6-7

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25. In relation to the *Parliamentary Business in the Seventh Senedd* report (“the Parliamentary Business report”), we sought to implement recommendations 2 and 11, to amend Standing Orders to (in the words of the FSC) “[...] provide the Seventh Senedd with the flexibility to organise business in the way it determines to be best”.<sup>12</sup>

26. We have reflected upon the wider recommendations and conclusions of the FSC in the Parliamentary Business report, including the “further conclusions” provided on pages 19 and 20 of that report.<sup>13</sup>

**Recommendation 8.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd’s Business Committee considers the Future Senedd Committee’s report on *Parliamentary Business in the Seventh Senedd* when it comes to determining its proposals for the organisation of the Seventh Senedd’s parliamentary business.

## Our further considerations

27. It will be for the Seventh Senedd and its Business Committee to determine how the Seventh Senedd should organise its structures and timetable. To help inform these decisions, building on the work of the FSC, we agreed to offer a perspective from the Sixth Senedd.

28. We considered the options for the organisation of business presented by the FSC. In doing so, we drew similar conclusions. We are attracted to a multi-week approach to the timetabling of business. Our discussions with political groups led us to consider a three-week approach.

29. Our deliberations also led us to conclude that a modest amount of additional plenary time will be needed in the Seventh Senedd, compared to the status quo. This could be accommodated in a number of ways. We concluded that holding an additional plenary meeting on a Thursday morning (with a fixed finish time), once every three-weeks, is a workable option. Alternatives could be utilising a Monday afternoon for an additional plenary meeting, extending the duration of plenary meetings, or utilising a Thursday afternoon.

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<sup>12</sup> The quotation can be found at Senedd Cymru, Future Senedd Committee, *Parliamentary Business in the Seventh Senedd*, May 2025 pp.20-21. Our implementation of recommendations 2 and 11 is explained in Senedd Cymru, Business Committee, *Amending Standing Orders: Standing Orders 11.10 and 12.6(i)*, March 2026.

<sup>13</sup> Senedd Cymru, Future Senedd Committee, *Parliamentary Business in the Seventh Senedd*, May 2025 pp.19-20

30. In terms of the time dedicated solely for committee meetings, we agree with the FSC's recommended principle that "*[c]ommittees must be provided with sufficient time and have the flexibility to meet beyond the Senedd's Cardiff Bay estate.*"<sup>14</sup>

31. Another reflection we had was in relation to the time available to Members for their wider parliamentary roles. In the context of our preference for a three-week model, we considered including a reserve day on which business is not routinely scheduled (one day during the three-week cycle), to offer Members a degree of additional flexibility in managing their parliamentary and constituency responsibilities, alongside their personal familial and/or other duties. This day could also be utilised to schedule additional business as needed e.g. to meet a peak in workload or address time-critical matters such as legislation.

32. In summary, when it comes to a high-level timetable for the organisation of parliamentary business, we propose a three-week approach where:

- week 1 includes an additional plenary session on a Thursday morning, compared to the status quo;
- week 2 is the same as the status quo; and
- week 3 includes a reserve day i.e. a day on which plenary and committee meetings are not routinely scheduled, to offer a degree of flexibility.

33. An illustration of this timetable is provided on the next page.

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<sup>14</sup> Senedd Cymru, Future Senedd Committee, *Parliamentary Business in the Seventh Senedd*, May 2025 p.20

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
COMMITTEES	COMMITTEES	COMMITTEES	PLENARY	NO SENEDD BUSINESS	
	GROUPS		COMMITTEES		
	PLENARY		PLENARY		COMMITTEES
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
COMMITTEES	COMMITTEES	COMMITTEES	COMMITTEES	NO SENEDD BUSINESS	
	GROUPS				COMMITTEES
	PLENARY				PLENARY
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
COMMITTEES	COMMITTEES	COMMITTEES	RESERVE DAY	NO SENEDD BUSINESS	
	GROUPS				COMMITTEES
	PLENARY				PLENARY

Figure 1: An illustration of our proposed three-week timetable

34. Subject to more detailed decisions, this could allow for a more plenary-focused week, a more committee-focused week, and a week that includes additional flexibility for Members and the delivery of business.

35. Any decision to increase plenary time and non-business time will have a corresponding impact on the time available for committees to meet. It will reduce the flexibility currently afforded to many committees (through the current timetabling of a full-day to meet on Thursdays as part of their allocation).

**36.** The impact on committees will need to be carefully considered by the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee before timetable proposals are finalised, as reducing the time solely dedicated to committee meetings risks undermining the FSC's principle that "[c]ommittees must be provided with sufficient time and have the flexibility to meet beyond the Senedd's Cardiff Bay estate."<sup>15</sup>

**37.** We offer our view in the knowledge that decisions on the shape of business in the Seventh Senedd cannot be taken until the outcome of the election is known, and the numerous variables that affect what might be preferable begin to emerge.

**38.** Whatever approach the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee decides to propose, it will need to be robustly tested to ensure its implications are fully understood.

**Recommendation 9.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee considers a high-level three-week timetable (as described in paragraph 32 of this report and illustrated in Figure 1 on page 9).

**Recommendation 10.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee, prior to proposing a high-level timetable, assesses the full range of implications, including (but not limited to) the:

- capacity of Members;
- views of Members;
- effective delivery of all aspects of parliamentary business;
- extent to which proposals support conditions for enhanced scrutiny;
- equality impact of the timetable; and
- resource implications for the Senedd Commission.

**39.** Given the scale of change to the Senedd, it will be important to monitor and review the operation of the timetable and the overall organisation of parliamentary business.

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<sup>15</sup> Senedd Cymru, Future Senedd Committee, *Parliamentary Business in the Seventh Senedd*, May 2025 p.20

**Recommendation 11.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee establishes means of monitoring the effect of its decisions on the delivery of parliamentary business, and it considers setting review-points to ensure that adjustments to its approach can be made during the Seventh Senedd, if required.

**40.** In addition to considering the high-level organisation of business, we also considered some of the more granular aspects of plenary business.

**41.** Political groups were consulted on the following issues relating to the organisation of parliamentary business in the Seventh Senedd:

- i. The FSC's recommendations to remove or amend two Standing Orders that could be seen as constraining the options available to the Seventh Senedd when it comes to taking decisions (Standing Orders 11.10 and 12.6(i)).
- ii. Standing Order requirements in terms of oral questions in plenary, as they relate to the Welsh Ministers and the Counsel General (Standing Order 12.56 (ii)).
- iii. The number of oral questions selected for answer.
- iv. The format of oral questions and whether a second supplementary question could be permitted.
- v. Time allocations for contributions to different types of plenary business.

**42.** Following feedback from the political groups, we agreed to propose the amendment of the Standing Orders identified by the FSC (point (i) above).<sup>16</sup>

**43.** We did not agree to propose any other changes at this time.<sup>17</sup> These are matters the Seventh Senedd may wish to review, once the patterns and volumes of business in a larger Senedd are understood.

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<sup>16</sup> Senedd Cymru, Business Committee, *Amending Standing Orders: Standing Orders 11.10 and 12.6(i)*, March 2026

<sup>17</sup> See [the minutes from the Business Committee's meeting on 13 November 2025](#) for further details.

## Meeting format and virtual participation

44. The Sixth Senedd has seen a range of adjustments made to the format of Senedd plenary and committee meetings, following the emergency provisions that were introduced in the latter part of the Fifth Senedd to facilitate the continuation of business during the Covid-19 pandemic.

45. We conducted a review of those provisions and published a report in July 2022.<sup>18</sup> This recommended the incorporation of temporary provisions enabling Members to participate and vote remotely in plenary and committee proceedings into permanent Standing Orders. The required amendments to Standing Orders were agreed by the Senedd.<sup>19</sup>

46. The Llywydd subsequently consulted us on the development of formal *Guidance on virtual and hybrid proceedings*, issued under Standing Order 6.17.<sup>20</sup> This was first published in October 2022 and has been revised on a number of occasions subsequently.

47. In the final weeks of the Sixth Senedd we have given further detailed consideration to the procedures through which Members are able to participate and cast votes in plenary meetings. We consider that the Llywydd and the Business Committee in the Seventh Senedd will need to give early consideration to the optimal arrangements for supporting Members to participate in proceedings given the increase in the size of the Senedd's membership.

**Recommendation 12.** We recommend that the Seventh Senedd's Business Committee supports the Llywydd to consider how procedures to facilitate arrangements for remote participation and voting by Members should best be managed in the Seventh Senedd, and for these procedures to be reviewed at appropriate intervals. Such consideration should consider the different requirements associated with plenary and committee proceedings.

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<sup>18</sup> Senedd Cymru, Business Committee, *Amending Standing Orders: Standing Order 34 and remote participation in Senedd proceedings*, July 2022

<sup>19</sup> Item 5, *Plenary*, 13 July 2022

<sup>20</sup> Senedd Cymru, *Guidance on virtual and hybrid proceedings*

### 3. Conclusion

48. The Seventh Senedd offers an historic opportunity to demonstrate the benefits a larger Senedd can bring to the people of Wales.

49. Decisions on how parliamentary business is organised, and how the Senedd does its work, will be central to seizing that opportunity.

50. Through our work, we have sought to prepare the ground to allow the new Senedd to take decisions that enable it to take full advantage of its greater scrutiny capacity.

51. In this report we have sought to highlight the body of work that the Sixth Senedd has completed with a view to supporting the Seventh Senedd.

52. We wish our successor committee well with its work throughout the Seventh Senedd.