

REPORT OF THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE
PROPOSAL TO CHANGE STANDING ORDERS

Introduction

1. The Business Committee has considered and approved the following proposed revisions to Standing Orders 8 & 9.

Standing Order 8.8

2. The proposed revision (*Annex 1*) addresses an anomaly in Standing Order 8.8, which provides:

“If a Member fails to attend four consecutive meetings of a committee of which he or she is a member, and cannot show good cause to the satisfaction of the Presiding Officer, he or she shall cease to be a member of that committee”.

3. Constituency Members are not elected to Regional Committees and are therefore not bound by Standing Order 8.8, while it does apply to regional list Members, because they are elected by the Assembly to Regional Committee(s). This is of particular concern to those regional list Members who are entitled to be elected onto two Regional Committees, due to the different boundaries of the electoral region and the Regional Committees.

4. The proposed revision amends the final sentence of Standing Order 8.8 so that it does not apply to Regional Committees.

Standing Orders 9.7, 9.8 and 9.13

5. There is a mismatch between the portfolios of Ministers and Subject Committees, with no formal provision for Committees to scrutinise or consider cross-cutting matters.

6. The proposed revisions (*Annex 2*) address the asymmetry between Subject Committee and Ministerial remits. The proposal was considered and approved by the Panel of Chairs at its meeting on 11 November.

New Standing Order 9.15

7. On 11th May the House of Commons Procedure Committee published a Report on Joint Working with the Assembly. The following is an extract from the report -

“We wish to give further consideration to the general desirability of formal joint meetings, but believe that the expected arrival of a draft bill applying to Wales indicates a suitable limited experiment.”

8. The Business Committee and Panel of Chairs have welcomed the Report and the proposal for joint pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Transport (Wales) Bill by the Welsh Affairs Committee and the Economic Development and Transport Committee.

9. On 7th June, the House of Commons approved a motion to revise its Standing Orders to allow members of Assembly subject committees to be invited to attend and participate in meetings of the Welsh Affairs Committee.

10. The proposed revisions (*Annex 3*) will allow members of the Welsh Affairs Committee to be invited to participate in meetings of our subject committees.

Proposal

11. The proposed revisions have been agreed by Business Committee. The Assembly is invited to approve them.

Clerk to the Business Committee
June 2004

Annex 1

8.8 ...If a Member fails to attend four consecutive meetings of a committee of which he or she is a member, and cannot show good cause to the satisfaction of the Presiding Officer, he or she shall cease to be a member of that committee. This provision does not apply to members of Regional Committees.

9.7 Each Subject Committee shall

- (i) contribute to the development of the Assembly's policies within the fields for which the relevant Minister is accountable to the Assembly and in the areas for which that Minister has been allocated other responsibilities (with the exception of the management of the Assembly's business and its finances and matters within the terms of reference of the Committees on Equality of Opportunity and on European and External Affairs);
- (ii) keep under review the expenditure and administration connected with their implementation; and
- (iii) keep under review the discharge of public functions in those fields and areas of responsibility by public, voluntary and private bodies.

9.8 Each Subject Committee shall also, within the relevant fields and areas of responsibility,

- (i) advise on proposed primary, secondary and European legislation affecting Wales, including performing its functions under Standing Order 24;
- (ii) provide advice to the Assembly Cabinet on matters relating to the allocation of the Assembly's budget in accordance with Standing Order 21;
- (iii) perform its functions under Standing Order 23 (complaints);
- (iv) perform any functions assigned to it under the Code of Practice on Public Appointments Procedure made by the Assembly under Standing Order 22; and
- (v) consider matters referred to it by the Assembly within its fields and areas of responsibility.

9.13 A Minister who is not a member of a particular Subject Committee may attend a meeting of that Committee where the matter under consideration is closely related to his or her responsibilities or accountabilities, and may participate in the meeting with the consent of the chair.

Annex 3

9.15 A Subject Committee may invite members of the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee to attend and participate in its proceedings (but not to vote).