Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
Y Pwyllgor ar y Rheolau Sefydlog

The National Assembly for Wales
The Committee on Standing Orders

Dydd Llun, 3 Gorffennaf 2006
Monday, 3 July 2006

Cynnwys
Contents

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau Cynulliad yn bresennol: Jenny Randerson (Cadeirydd), Lorraine Barrett, Jocelyn Davies, Lisa Francis, Jane Hutt (Y Trefnydd), Ann Jones, Gwenda Thomas.

Swyddogion yn bresennol: Peter Jones, Cwnsler i Wasaneth Seneddol y Cynulliad; Paul Silk, Clerc y Cynulliad;

Gwasanaeth y Pwyllgor: Sian Wilkins, Clerc; Gareth Williams, Clerc; Sarah Beasley, Dirprwy Glerc.

Assembly Members in attendance: Jenny Randerson (Chair), Lorraine Barrett, Jocelyn Davies, Lisa Francis, Jane Hutt (the Business Minister), Ann Jones, Gwenda Thomas.

Officials in attendance: Peter Jones, Counsel to the Assembly Parliamentary Service; Paul Silk, Clerk to the Assembly;

Committee Service: Sian Wilkins, Clerk; Gareth Williams, Clerk; Sarah Beasley, Deputy Clerk.

Dechreuoedd y cyfarfod am 5.01 p.m.
The meeting began at 5.01 p.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Jenny Randerson:** Good afternoon, and welcome to the second formal meeting of the Committee on Standing Orders. I remind you that you may speak in either Welsh or English. We have no-one watching to whom I might say that headsets are available. Please make sure that you turn off your mobile phones or BlackBerrys so that they do not interfere with the translation or recording. In the event of an emergency, the ushers will direct everyone to the nearest safe exit. I welcome Lorraine Barrett, in particular; Val Lloyd has sent her apologies and Lorraine is her substitute on this occasion.

Rheolau Sefydlog ar gyfer y Cynulliad yn y Dyfodol
Standing Orders for the Future Assembly

[2] **Jenny Randerson:** We will start with Standing Order No. 1.

[3] **Jocelyn Davies:** Chair, before you move on to Standing Orders, there were one or two things that I did not agree with in the paper that we had summarising decisions. Do you want me to raise them now?

[4] **Jenny Randerson:** Was this the note of the informal meeting that we had?

[5] **Jocelyn Davies:** It is the paper that we were given today, summarising decisions.

[6] **Jenny Randerson:** Since it was an informal meeting, we will need to revisit that this afternoon. If you are concerned about it, when we get to that point we will revisit it. This is the opportunity to do that.

[7] **Ann Jones:** Sorry, Jenny, I have not seen this paper. It is only in the last half an hour that I have got into the building.

[8] **Jenny Randerson:** I have not seen it either, because it was not sent around until this

afternoon. I have been concerned about the delay in sending it around. The minutes have already been sent to you, so you will have seen it all. However, I was concerned that you should get the information again in plenty of time to look at it again and refresh your memories. These are minutes that have been sent to Members in the past. If you are unhappy about any decisions that were taken in the past, or the understanding of those decisions, those were informal discussions, and we have an opportunity this afternoon to deal with those issues.

[9] Let us look at Standing Order No. 1. Since there are so many issues and questions on this, I would prefer that we dealt with the major principles here, and the items of great significance. I will not ask the clerks to introduce this again, because I think that you are familiar with the issues. We will start with the annex to paper 1, which relates to the election of the Presiding Officer and the Deputy Presiding Officer. Where there are points of detail that talk about transferring issues from one lot of Standing Orders to another, we will take those as read, unless you want to disagree with that.

[10] Turning to page 1, I believe that that is unexceptional, is it not, in everyone's eyes? Page 2 mentions the question of who should preside over the first meeting of each Assembly. Do you wish to raise this issue, Jocelyn?

[11] **Jocelyn Davies:** I think that it should be the Clerk.

[12] **Jenny Randerson:** Are you all happy with that?

[13] **Jocelyn Davies:** I am happy with that.

[14] **Jenny Randerson:** I see that everyone is happy.

[15] Carrying on down that page, on 1.9, I believe that there is agreement that this would remain in its present form. I see that there is agreement on that. Moving on to page 3 of the annex, I believe that we would also agree, would we not, on Standing Order Nos. 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7? Standing Order No. 1.8 probably raises some significant issues that you may wish to discuss; it carries over to page 4, where there are two questions. Does anyone wish to discuss that issue of whether the Presiding Officer and the Deputy Presiding Officer should be from different political groups?

[16] **Jocelyn Davies:** There is an assumption, or a requirement, in fact, that they may not represent the same group—I suppose that we need to say 'group' rather than 'party'.

[17] **Jenny Randerson:** Therefore, if we use the wording in the Bill, that make us absolutely secure. Are Members content with that?

[18] **Jocelyn Davies:** Yes. It states at 1.8,

'a) the same political group, or

b) different political groups both of which are political groups with an executive role.'

[19] That is simple enough—I believe that most people could understand that; it is not written in a lawyerly way. There is a question then about what happens if they should end up in the same political group if things changed at any time—if there was a coalition, for example. The answer to the question is probably that we can either overrule Standing Orders, which is always possible, or we can have a fresh election. However, provision for the fresh election needs to be in there, even if, at that point, you have decided to overrule Standing Orders.

[20] **Jenny Randerson:** Are we all agreed that you would need to state that there should be a fresh election if there was a change in the governing parties or party? I see that we are.

[21] We will move on to Standing Order No. 1.9, and the issue of the extent of the definition of the functions of the Presiding Officer. What is your view on that?

[22] **Jocelyn Davies:** I think that 'functions' would do, because it sums everything up, does it not?

[23] **Lisa Francis:** We do not need to restate it.

[24] **Jenny Randerson:** Okay. Moving on to page 5, there is probably nothing controversial in 1.10—I believe that it is a matter of tidying that Standing Order up. On page 6, there is the issue of who might preside if the Presiding Officer and the Deputy Presiding Officer need a short break. My recollection is that we have an agreement that it should refer to a Member and that, if, in the future, it again became the trend to always choose a Chair, that would be within that definition.

5.10 p.m.

[25] **Jocelyn Davies:** I know that there was some talk of changing it to a committee Chair, but I can imagine that people who have chaired committees in the past would be perfectly appropriate and if, after 2007, we have fewer committees, there would be fewer people to select from. I think that the custom and practice, the convention, has been for it to be someone who chairs a committee and it has worked perfectly well, but we would not want to limit ourselves because we might find, in the future, that that could prove to be difficult.

[26] **Jenny Randerson:** On 1.12, also on page—. Sorry, Gwenda, you had a point?

[27] **Gwenda Thomas:** On 1.11, there is still the issue of a Member temporarily carrying out the functions for longer.

[28] **Jenny Randerson:** What is your view on that?

[29] **Gwenda Thomas:** I do not think that we have come to any agreement on this, but perhaps we need to come back to it and consider the issue. If someone did need to step in on a longer-term basis, then the issue of taking points of order and everything else will arise.

[30] **Jenny Randerson:** Does anyone have any positive suggestions to make on that, which we might consider over the next week or two?

[31] **Jocelyn Davies:** Would it not be possible for us to elect someone to step in? Could there not be an election for a temporary chair? I suppose that this would be the case if the Presiding Officer and the Deputy Presiding Officer were both ill and we knew that they were going to be ill for a week or so. I do not see why we could not just elect someone else to do it for a short period.

[32] **Jenny Randerson:** I think that Paul would like to add to the discussion.

[33] **Mr Silk:** Chair, I was just going to point out that this is covered by Standing Order No. 1.13 at present, which is further down your paper.

[34] **Jocelyn Davies:** Yes, but we were considering whether to keep it. It seems to be fine.

[35] **Jane Hutt:** That covers it, does it not?

[36] **Lorraine Barrett:** I am asking this as someone who has not sat here and gone through all of this. Is it covered in here whether the Deputy Presiding Officer, and not a Member, has to take the chair, if he is present and available, if the Presiding Officer cannot take it or needs a break?

[37] **Jenny Randerson:** I do not think that we have considered that point.

[38] **Lorraine Barrett:** I have not discussed this with anyone, but I do not think that it is right that a Member should take the chair while the Deputy Presiding Officer is in the Chamber.

[39] **Jenny Randerson:** It has never been used like that in the current situation, but it is something that might occur.

[40] **Lorraine Barrett:** It has happened.

[41] **Jenny Randerson:** It is difficult to write it in though, because there might be a time when the Deputy Presiding Officer might be regarded as having an interest in an issue, not in terms of a constituency interest, but a personal financial interest, which would mean that you would want to exclude him from taking the chair, perhaps.

[42] **Jocelyn Davies:** That is the point that I was going to make. If an amendment was tabled in the name of that individual, he or she would have an interest in that and you could not really expect, under those circumstances, for that person to chair.

[43] **Jenny Randerson:** It might be possible to draft a Standing Order that said that in the absence of the Presiding Officer, the Deputy Presiding Officer would normally take the chair. That would imply that there would have to be an exceptional situation for it to be otherwise. Would people be content with that? I see that you would.

[44] The other issue is that in the event of the absence of the Presiding Officer, we would elect a temporary Presiding Officer, but that would not clash with the situations in which the Clerk takes the chair. Would that be acceptable? Sorry, I do not mean a temporary Presiding Officer, but a temporary person to preside. Would that fulfil everyone's requirements? I see that it would.

[45] **Jocelyn Davies:** Currently under Standing Orders, it says something like, 'and shall perform other'—well, it would say 'the function', so they would not just be chairing Plenary meetings; they would be performing their functions, which I suppose would be needed.

[46] **Jenny Randerson:** Yes. We will get the clerks to draft something along those lines.

[47] Let us come to 1.12, which is an issue on which we do not have any agreement at this stage. Does anyone want to discuss this at this moment?

[48] **Jocelyn Davies:** I would be totally opposed to preventing somebody from voting when they were not in the chair. I do not think that many people would want to take the job if it prevented them from voting when they were not in the chair. I do not think that we should rob them of that.

[49] **Lisa Francis:** I would concur with that.

[50] **Ann Jones:** I think that the Presiding Officer has to act impartially at all times. I do

not know how you can act impartially if, when you are not in the chair, you vote along a political line. That puts the office of the Presiding Officer in some doubt and people could ask, 'Well how impartial is impartial, if that is how he or she is voting on that point?' I think that he or she should have the casting vote and that that should be it. I think that it has worked fairly well throughout the two previous sets of terms of office.

[51] **Jocelyn Davies:** That is my point: it has worked well and they are not prevented from voting. I do not think that any of us could point to a time when the Presiding Officer has used his vote on policy matters of the Assembly. There have been one or two occasions when he has used his vote, but it has not been on Government policy here; I think that there was one occasion when it was on the House of Lords and so on, when we were being consulted. You do not elect somebody to the position of Presiding Officer if you think that they are going to want to use their vote every week, but there could be very good reasons why they would want to and I do not think that we should rob them of it unnecessarily. That is more to do with the choice of the person. We could argue that perhaps other people have used their vote politically—well, that was a poor choice; it certainly was not ours, and you reap what you sow. However, I do not think that we should rob other people of the opportunity of occasionally voting when it is important. It is fundamental is it not? You are elected to represent people. I know that it mentions here what happens in the Scottish Parliament but perhaps you could tell us, Jenny, what is felt about that?

[52] **Jenny Randerson:** The personal feedback that I have had directly on this—it did not appear to be a major issue when we went to Scotland—from the previous Presiding Officer in Scotland was that it was a personal issue for him that was of great concern, because he felt that it disempowered him entirely as a representative of his constituency. It was not an issue in terms of the political range; it was local issues that he felt that he ought to have been able to vote on. However, it was not just the casting vote that concerned him; it was the very stringent regulations on the Presiding Officer in Scotland in general.

[53] **Jane Hutt:** I think that the question relates to both the Presiding Officer and the Deputy Presiding Officer and we probably need to separate them, because there may be agreement about the Deputy Presiding Officer's being entitled to vote in any situation and having the casting vote only if he or she is in the chair. I think that there is probably a difference of opinion regarding the Presiding Officer on this issue. Perhaps we need to return to this, Jenny. It is interesting. The current Presiding Officer in Scotland sees this as an appropriate Standing Order in terms of the Scottish situation—that is my understanding—but, as you said Jenny, you have heard otherwise from the previous Presiding Officer.

[54] **Lisa Francis:** I think that it could be very damaging for any constituency Member not to be allowed to vote on issues that concern his or her constituency, for example, and that might happen perhaps two or three times during one Assembly, but it is enough to damage the person who has taken on the role of Presiding Officer. I think that it would make people think twice about taking on that role, as Jocelyn said.

5.20 p.m.

[55] **Jenny Randerson:** Would there be a way of ensuring that the Presiding Officer could still have a right to vote by putting something elsewhere in the Standing Orders which was very firm about the need for impartiality and evenhandedness in the way in which the Assembly was run? That would make it very difficult for a presiding officer to kick over the traces and start voting all the time. It would also still enable him or her to have that exceptional vote which he or she may wish to take for local reasons, in the way in which our current Presiding Officer has done. He has never sought to vote on a regular basis, even though he can do so. We have a good strong tradition on that. Are you not happy with that, Ann?

[56] **Ann Jones:** I am happy for you to take it away and look at it, but, at the moment, the issue is about impartiality, and it has worked well because of the existing personnel at Presiding Officer level. However, we do not know who will be back in May 2007, so we do not know who the Presiding Officer will be. Who is to say that, if we allow him or her to vote, that we will not wrap ourselves in all kinds of constitutional challenges because someone is not seen to be impartial? I am happy to take your suggestion to look at it and bring it back, but we must safeguard the impartiality of that office as much as possible.

[57] **Jenny Randerson:** Let us see whether we can get Gareth and Siân to look at the Standing Orders to see if there is a way that a strong statement on impartiality can be put in, as a possible way forward. Failing that, we will have to hold further discussions about it. Are there any other issues under Standing Order No. 1 that you want to raise?

[58] **Lorraine Barrett:** I have a little point on 1.15. It is just the words ‘as soon as may be’. Should it be as ‘soon as possible’?

[59] **Jenny Randerson:** Yes; I think that there was a consensus that ‘as soon as possible’ would be a more sensible way of putting it.

[60] **Lorraine Barrett:** I quite like ‘as soon as may be’.

[61] **Jocelyn Davies:** I do not dislike it, but, if you say ‘as soon as possible’, does it mean that we could be called in the middle of recess if the Deputy Presiding Officer resigns and we need to elect another? ‘As soon as may be’ gives a little more flexibility, but, of course, there would be exceptional circumstances. I would not die in a ditch over it; I do not mind it.

[62] **Jenny Randerson:** Right. There does not seem to be a strong view either way on that. Perhaps the clerks could take some legal advice on it.

[63] **Jocelyn Davies:** I warn you that when I asked for the legal interpretation of the term ‘as soon as reasonably practicable’, it was four pages long.

[64] **Jenny Randerson:** We might not want four pages, but we might have an interpretation which says that ‘as soon as possible’ or ‘as soon as may be’ are fine, whichever is better.

[65] We will now look at Standing Order No. 2 on page 1. Under 2.2, would I be right in thinking that we agreed to retain the status quo, and that the Presiding Officer and the Deputy Presiding Officer should be excluded from voting, and that we will continue with a roll call? I see that we did. To go on to page 2, there are several things that are probably no longer necessary. Does anyone want to raise 2.4?

[66] **Jocelyn Davies:** I think that it should stay in.

[67] **Lisa Francis:** It is just a matter of keeping it tidy, and it is important that members of the public are able to see that this is procedure.

[68] **Jenny Randerson:** I think that it would be a pretty strange Government that did not bother to inform people who its Ministers were.

[69] **Ann Jones:** ‘I have chosen my Government, but I am not going to let you know.’ [*Laughter.*] I just think that it is unnecessary.

[70] **Jenny Randerson:** It is not a matter of principle, is it? It is just a case of informing.

[71] **Ann Jones:** I will not die in a ditch over it.

[72] **Jocelyn Davies:** One point is that the rest of the Assembly is supposed to scrutinise and have some accountability over the Cabinet, and if you have not been told who they are and what their responsibilities are—it is the first step, is it not, on accountability, to be told who the person is and what he or she is responsible for, so that you can scrutinise? I do not think it unnecessary; it is normal for it to be there, in terms of changes—it can change quite frequently at times—and accountability. It is important to know who exactly it is that you are scrutinising.

[73] **Jenny Randerson:** Okay. Let us move on to 2.7, and the issue of whether the Assembly has any involvement in contributing to the Ministerial Code. You will note that there is no mention of that in either Scotland or the House of Commons.

[74] **Jocelyn Davies:** I think that the First Minister should be obliged to publish it, but that the Assembly has no input in approving it.

[75] **Jenny Randerson:** Okay.

[76] **Jane Hutt:** I think that this is something, again, to which we may need to return, Jenny, for clarification. Jocelyn's suggestion is that it is not appropriate for the Assembly to contribute to the Ministerial Code. I have given assurances that, in fact, officials are preparing the Ministerial Code, projecting forward to May 2007, and any government will have to produce a Ministerial Code. I think that it is a matter of how one makes reference to it without there being an obligation under Standing Orders. Maybe that is something that we need to look at further, if that is all right, to see how it would be appropriate to make reference to it. It is not a matter for Standing Orders. That is absolutely clear; I am grateful that Jocelyn has said that it is not appropriate for the Assembly to contribute to the Ministerial Code. It is a matter of knowing that it is there, really. It is the reference that is important. Perhaps we can come back to that matter.

[77] **Jenny Randerson:** One way around this could be that there is reference to the Ministerial Code somewhere in the Standing Orders, in a way that makes it quite clear that there is such a code. However, personally, I think that there would be no problem with tacking it on to the end of the First Minister's list of Cabinet members and simply stating that he will also inform the Assembly of the existence of any Ministerial Code and its detail. That would be unexceptional, but we will come back to that, and see whether we can get some agreement as to how it can be referred to.

[78] **Lisa Francis:** I think that it is important, given that it is not just Assembly Members who read Standing Orders; members of the public do as well. For their guidance, it needs to be there.

5.30 p.m.

[79] **Jane Hutt:** May I just make a point, Jenny? I am sure that it is a good idea for us to look at this in the context of 2.4, but it is very important that the Ministerial Code is available to the public, quite apart from being able to find that through the Assembly. The important factor in terms of separation is that the Government, quite clearly, as you say, Lisa, has to be accountable and transparent. People need to know how to identify those responsibilities and the accountability that Ministers have. However, as a consequence of separation, it needs to be clearly the responsibility of the First Minister and the Government to ensure that people are aware of the Ministerial Code. I am sure that we can return to this, Jenny.

[80] **Jenny Randerson:** Yes. Does anyone want to raise anything on 2.8? I see that no-one does. Does anyone want to raise anything on 2.9?

[81] **Ann Jones:** Again, in terms of 2.8, I do not think that it is a matter for Standing Orders. If we are returning to the issue of the Ministerial Code and a way forward, perhaps we can also include this in our discussion. This is a consequence of separation.

[82] **Jenny Randerson:** Yes, it is.

[83] **Ann Jones:** If we are going to pull 2.7 back, we might as well also look at 2.8.

[84] **Jenny Randerson:** It should really be part of the code, should it not?

[85] **Jocelyn Davies:** It is also in the code for Assembly Members that you should not make any decision that benefits yourself.

[86] **Jenny Randerson:** Yes. It will have to specify that, will it not? Standing Orders will have to specify that in relation to ordinary Assembly Members.

[87] **Jane Hutt:** Yes; to us as Assembly Members.

[88] **Jenny Randerson:** Let us move on to the issue of the resignation of the First Minister. The Scottish Standing Orders state that the First Minister tenders his or her resignation to the Queen, and the Presiding Officer notifies Parliament. Are we content with that procedure here in the Assembly?

[89] **Jocelyn Davies:** I think that it would be very weird if the First Minister did not inform the Presiding Officer of his or her resignation. You offer your resignation to Her Majesty, but you would inform the Presiding Officer, because I believe that the Presiding Officer then has certain functions to carry out in relation to the resignation of the First Minister, including informing the Assembly. So, there must be a requirement in the Standing Order that the Assembly be informed, and I think that it should say that the First Minister should inform the Presiding Officer immediately and that the Assembly should be told.

[90] **Lisa Francis:** I agree.

[91] **Jane Hutt:** I thought that we had come to a view that the Scottish Standing Order was quite a useful model for us in terms of reporting back to the Assembly via the Presiding Officer. It would obviously be under Standing Orders that the Assembly should be notified. I thought that this was quite a useful compromise from the original positions that we were in when we discussed this last time.

[92] **Jenny Randerson:** Is this the issue in the minutes that you wanted to take up?

[93] **Jocelyn Davies:** No; I do not think so. My point is just that if the First Minister resigned, he or she should inform the Presiding Officer, who will then tell the Assembly. That is what I think that the Standing Order states, but not in those exact words. I do not know what our disagreement is.

[94] **Jenny Randerson:** If I understand you rightly, Jocelyn, you are saying that you think that Standing Orders should say that the First Minister should inform the Presiding Officer.

[95] **Jocelyn Davies:** Yes, but does the Presiding Officer not have to do something?

[96] **Jenny Randerson:** The Presiding Officer has to inform the Assembly.

[97] **Jocelyn Davies:** Yes.

[98] **Jenny Randerson:** I suppose that he might read it in the *Western Mail.* [*Laughter.*]

[99] **Jocelyn Davies:** These things will happen in extraordinary circumstances, and it seems quite normal to me that the Presiding Officer be informed and that he should then tell the Assembly. It is stated in the Scottish Standing Orders that

'the Presiding Officer shall, notify the Parliament',

[100] so, I do not know what the disagreement is.

[101] **Jane Hutt:** It is implicit in the Standing Order, is it not? He will not be reading it in the *Western Mail.*

[102] **Jocelyn Davies:** That is what I am saying. I do not think that there is any disagreement.

[103] **Jenny Randerson:** All right.

[104] **Jane Hutt:** I think that that is something on which we felt that the Scottish Standing Order would meet your concern, so perhaps we do need to return to this because we thought that we had made some progress on that.

[105] **Jenny Randerson:** I thought that we had an agreement, but let us go back to the default point that this is one of the details that could divide us. We do not have the time to spend hours and hours on it and, as you know, if we have not agreed on something specific, the clerks will produce a draft over the summer recess and it will then come back to us with a note saying that we still have to discuss this issue.

[106] **Jocelyn Davies:** I do not know what the disagreement is. The Presiding Officer will be told and he or she will notify the Assembly.

[107] **Ann Jones:** I think that it is the fact that when we discussed this before, there was reference to the First Minister tendering his or her resignation to Her Majesty—

[108] **Jocelyn Davies:** That is right.

[109] **Ann Jones:** And it will be done that way around, whereas if you read the Standing Order as it is at the moment it says that

'the First Minister may resign by giving notice in writing to the Presiding Officer.'

[110] **Jocelyn Davies:** That has gone now.

[111] **Jenny Randerson:** What you are saying is that it is implicit that the First Minister gives his or her resignation to Her Majesty, who will be in touch with the Presiding Officer, and, therefore, there is an obligation here in the—

[112] **Jocelyn Davies:** And she will notify the Assembly.

[113] **Jenny Randerson:** Yes.

[114] **Jocelyn Davies:** I do not think that there is a disagreement.

[115] **Lisa Francis:** I do not think that there is a problem with what is written in the Scottish Standing Order.

[116] **Jocelyn Davies:** But it must be in the Standing Orders.

[117] **Jenny Randerson:** That is fine.

[118] **Jocelyn Davies:** If you remember, when we first discussed the Bill, whether the First Minister resigned was nothing to do with the Assembly.

[119] **Jane Hutt:** We are happy with the Scottish Standing Order.

[120] **Jenny Randerson:** We are all content with the Scottish version.

[121] **Jocelyn Davies:** I do not think that we need to revisit this.

[122] **Jenny Randerson:** On 2.10, I do not think that we particularly want the provisions in the Bill restated at that level of detail.

[123] Let us move on to the appointment of the Counsel General. Are we setting out the procedure for agreement of the First Minister's nomination for the Counsel General? I see that you agree with that. Then there is the issue of the participation in proceedings of the Counsel General, if that person is not an Assembly Member. Are you happy with the phraseology in the last question? I see that you are.

[124] Let us move on to Standing Order Nos. 5, 6 and 13 on the control of business. I think that we have agreement that we should stick with our current timetable of a three-week forward look. Are we happy with that? I see that we are.

[125] The other points relating to Standing Order No. 5 in the annex are suggested routes to us for retaining various bits. Are you content with the suggestions in the paper? The significant point about Standing Order No. 5 is the issue of the length of time for which we will have a timetable. I think that we agree that the three-week timetable suits us very well.

5.40 p.m.

[126] On Standing Order No. 6, which needs a pretty hefty overhaul, the suggestion is that it might be split up into smaller Standing Orders. Our experience in Scotland was helpful with regard to the issue of the timing of the questions to the First Minister. We were not at all impressed; it is a pity that Val is not here, because I think that she agreed with us that we did not like the detail of the way in which it was run. However, in some ways, Scotland has a useful and rigorous approach to it. Should we go for a maximum period of time or a minimum period of time for questions to the First Minister?

[127] **Jocelyn Davies:** I think that it should be a maximum period. There is more certainty, because, sometimes, questions to the First Minister will go on for 55 minutes. It says that they should be for at least 15 minutes, but that does not give you any idea of how long they will last. When we have ministerial questions on a Wednesday, that can throw the whole afternoon.

[128] **Jenny Randerson:** So, we will specify a maximum time.

[129] **Jocelyn Davies:** The question is, what should that maximum be?

[130] **Jenny Randerson:** Half an hour?

[131] **Lorraine Barrett:** It is roughly 45 minutes, though it is sometimes a little more.

[132] **Jenny Randerson:** Forty minutes?

[133] **Lorraine Barrett:** Perhaps it should be 45 minutes, because, in 30 minutes, you may only get to question six or seven.

[134] **Jenny Randerson:** I am anxious that we keep enough time. One of the things that did not impress us in Scotland was that they only got to question six, and, other than from party leaders, there were no supplementary questions, or perhaps only one very short one. So, ordinary backbenchers did not get a look-in at all.

[135] **Lisa Francis:** That session only lasted for around 21 minutes.

[136] **Jenny Randerson:** So, shall we say that there should be no more than 45 minutes for the First Minister, and no more than 30 minutes for ordinary Ministers.

[137] **Lisa Francis:** Yes.

[138] **Jocelyn Davies:** We could see how that goes. It would be possible for the next Assembly to change that if you found that it was just being dominated by two or three individuals, which can be a problem.

[139] **Jenny Randerson:** Are you happy to keep the questions to the Finance Minister? I see that you are. Are you also happy to keep the questions to the Business Minister on her responsibilities other than for business? I see that you are. The issue of Deputy Ministers is tied up with the issue of how clearly defined the role of Deputy Ministers has been.

[140] **Lisa Francis:** There is a sense that, at the moment, Deputy Ministers are not heading up the department and, as such, they do not take questions, and nor should they. Will this role change in future Assemblies?

[141] **Jane Hutt:** Yes; they will be in statute, which has not previously been the case. We started along the course after the Senior Salaries Review Body's discussions about what the role of the Deputy Minister could be in relation to remuneration, because they are not paid anything at all. As is the case in Scotland, some of those Deputy Ministers have defined roles within an overall portfolio. They will have functions, so they have to be held accountable to the Assembly, but maybe it should be the overall lead Minister with overall responsibility who should decide when the Deputy Minister should be asked to answer questions. However, we have to recognise that they will have a status, a role, remuneration, and accountability.

[142] **Jocelyn Davies:** If you have functions to exercise and you are paid extra money for that, then I think that it is only right that you should answer questions on it. Currently, Deputy Ministers can table questions, which seems a bit ridiculous. If they were taken out of the equation, at least that would give the rest of us who are tabling questions a better chance to get our questions in. We must find a way for them to answer questions. I am not quite sure how we would do it, but it must be done.

[143] **Jenny Randerson:** Shall we leave this to the clerks, for them to give some thought as to how one would cast a Standing Order giving an opportunity to Deputy Ministers to answer questions in certain circumstances?

[144] **Lisa Francis:** I think that, in certain circumstances, it needs to be factored in. Our

being given adequate notice of Deputy Ministers filling that role is also important.

[145] **Jenny Randerson:** Now, if a Minister is unable to attend, we have had situations where another Minister has answered on their behalf. We have also had to change the day for questions—I remember that happening when the education Minister was unable to be in Plenary. My understanding is that we will be in a situation where a Deputy Minister could answer questions on behalf of a Minister, if the Minister was absent through illness or something. It is going to take a bit of tricky consideration. I hate to say the word 'Scotland' again, but I wonder whether we might get some inspiration from the Scottish situation. It may not come from how the Scottish Parliament currently manages questions, but from its original Standing Orders, because they have changed them over the years.

[146] **Jane Hutt:** Perhaps that is something that our officials could feed in, with the Assembly Parliamentary Service officials, to look at a possible way forward.

[147] **Jenny Randerson:** Yes, I think that that would be helpful.

[148] We have agreed the frequency. What about the motion of censure on page 3, Standing Order No. 6.5? Are you happy with that? I see that you are. On those categories of business, rather than adding a shopping list at this stage, it would be helpful if Members could e-mail the Clerks with any other categories that occur to them should be added to that list. We could then have that drawn to our attention. Otherwise, we could all sit here adding things and it is already a fairly formidable list. Are you all happy with the frequency of the four minority party debates?

[149] **Jocelyn Davies:** We would like more of them, I suspect, would we not, Lisa?

[150] **Lisa Francis:** Yes, in the interests of fairness. [*Laughter.*] I think that what we have works all right.

[151] **Jenny Randerson:** What about the committee reports? Do we want all committee reports to continue to be debated by Plenary?

[152] **Jane Hutt:** I think that they are valued.

[153] **Jocelyn Davies:** The committee slots may be needed to apply for Assembly measures, so we do need them although they may be used for other things.

[154] **Jenny Randerson:** On Standing Order No. 6.7, where we are talking about the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and so on, I think that it needs to refer to annual reports, because those organisations produce a lot of other reports that are currently considered by the Committee on Equality of Opportunity. We cannot debate every report from those organisations.

[155] **Gwenda Thomas:** This will be overtaken by the setting up of the new commission for equality and human rights, and so I would think that we will have to consider the issue in due course in any case.

[156] **Lorraine Barrett:** Yes, that will be the single equality body.

[157] **Jenny Randerson:** Going over to page 5, I do not think that there is anything controversial there, or on page 6 or page 7—possibly Standing Order No. 6.13A.

5.50 p.m.

[158] **Lisa Francis:** On whether the Presiding Officer should have to consult the Business Committee, I think that he should.

[159] **Lorraine Barrett:** Sorry, Chair, I think that you have different page numbers to me. So, could you say 'No. 6.9 or 6.13'?

[160] **Jenny Randerson:** All right, we will go back to Standing Order No. 6.9.

[161] **Lorraine Barrett:** Oh no, it is okay, but that was where I lost you.

[162] **Jenny Randerson:** Sorry. We are on No. 6.13A, which is on my page 7.

[163] **Lorraine Barrett:** Right. It is on my page 9.

[164] **Jenny Randerson:** Sorry, Lisa, you were saying?

[165] **Lisa Francis:** Yes, on page 7, the last question is:

'Should the Presiding Officer have to consult the Business Committee or successor body?'.

[166] I believe that he should.

[167] **Jenny Randerson:** So, you are happy with the idea that this has generally worked well and that we should retain it, with appropriate amendments, are you?

[168] **Lisa Francis:** Yes.

[169] **Jocelyn Davies:** We need to delete, 'on motions and on amendments', and so on, because it could be on broader things, so we should not specify what the guidance should be about. I am not sure how the Presiding Officer would consult Assembly Members if he did not do it through—

[170] **Jenny Randerson:** The Business Committee.

[171] **Jocelyn Davies:** Or whatever body takes its place.

[172] **Jenny Randerson:** On Standing Order No. 6.15, currently, motions on subject committee reports are not amendable; they are always to-note motions. I feel strongly that that is appropriate. Is everyone happy with that? I see that you are. Should that include the Audit Committee and the Committee on Standards of Conduct? I would imagine that the answer to that is 'yes'. Are we happy with that? I see that we are.

[173] My page 9 refers to Standing Order Nos. 6.17, 6.18 and 6.19. I cannot see anything controversial there. The same goes for Nos. 6.20 and 6.21.

[174] **Ann Jones:** I am very keen that Standing Order No. 6.17 should reflect that a majority vote in favour be required to extend business. I am keen to see that retained somewhere. We would have to look at that if we are looking at others, when we come on to discuss them, but I am keen to see that a majority vote is required to extend business.

[175] **Jenny Randerson:** Are there any comments on that? I think that we are looking at a more carefully and firmly defined timetable in general and there is a possible clash with your view, Ann. If we move to such a timetable, then, if the Government wants to put in additional items, there would be a need to extend that timetable and, if the Government were to give you adequate notice—several days ahead, shall we say—that, next Wednesday, business will

continue beyond 5.30 p.m., would it then be fair on the Government to hold a procedural vote, which could crash its business?

[176] **Ann Jones:** But we have not really gone into how we are going to control business. We have had informal discussions about that, but all that I am saying is that, if we are formally doing this, I would like to protect it at this point. It may be that it becomes superseded by further discussions that we have, but, at the moment, I am just keen that if this is the Standing Order, now is the opportunity to say this. I just want it on record that if this is the one that we are going to have to go to, I would want to see a majority vote in favour requirement in there. Perhaps we could note that and then if there is talk on the control of business later on and it all gets rolled into one, I will be happy to withdraw it.

[177] **Jenny Randerson:** We will note that now then. Okay, let us move on to the Standing Orders relating to procedural motions, namely Nos. 6.19, 6.20, 6.21, 6.22, 6.23, 6.24 and 6.25, which have never caused us any trouble. Standing Order Nos. 6.26 and 6.27 are on personal statements. We will move on to the Standing Orders relating to oral questions. We have answered the first question relating to the Business Minister. On the question under No. 6.30 of whether five days is the most appropriate time period, that has also worked well, has it not, Minister? We have also managed to get perfectly topical questions by casting them pretty widely. Does everyone agree with me on that?

[178] **Jane Hutt:** Does this cover the urgent questions issue, or is that elsewhere?

[179] **Jenny Randerson:** No, urgent questions come somewhere else, do they not?

[180] **Jane Hutt:** Obviously, we need that provision.

[181] **Jenny Randerson:** We would still have provision for urgent questions.

[182] **Jane Hutt:** And the management of them, time-wise.

[183] **Jenny Randerson:** On Nos. 6.32, 6.33 or 6.34, the only real question there, on that 4 p.m. deadline, relates to a detailed internal staff issue; that deadline has always worked very well for us. On Nos. 6.35 to 6.40, there is nothing that we can answer at this stage. There may be one or two things that need to be tidied up later on.

[184] **Jocelyn Davies:** On the topic for the short debate, it says any Member ‘other than a Minister’. I assume that Deputy Ministers would also be included in that. The short debate is for backbenchers, is it not?

[185] **Jenny Randerson:** I know that there was some discussion on whether we might reduce the five working days to three for the notification of questions. I think that you were going to look at the practicality of this, Jane.

[186] **Jane Hutt:** Yes, but I have not received feedback at this stage. I will bring it back you next week.

[187] **Jenny Randerson:** We will stick to five days, and then, when we sift through things at the final stage in the autumn, we can pick up that issue and perhaps reduce the number of days.

[188] **Ann Jones:** On the short debate, could we have some discussion about the time required to give notification of the title of that short debate?

[189] **Jenny Randerson:** Sorry, that was what I was referring to.

[190] **Ann Jones:** Oh, sorry. I thought that we had already looked at questions. It is about topics, but it is also about having the right amount of time for the relevant Minister to prepare.

[191] **Jenny Randerson:** We decided that the consent of the Presiding Officer was no longer needed. We all understood the difference between speaking and allowing interventions, so that was not a problem.

[192] **Lorraine Barrett:** I should have gone to fetch my earpiece from the Chamber, because I am having difficulty in hearing; I do not find these headsets comfortable. On Standing Order No. 6.36, it should read the Assembly Commission and not the House Committee. In fact, wherever it says 'House Committee', should it not say 'Assembly Commission'?

[193] **Jenny Randerson:** Yes, thank you. There are many drafting issues, which we really rely on the clerks to pick up. Let us move on to Standing Order No. 13. We have an issue with this in terms of the Business Committee. We have not firmly agreed whether there will be Business Committee or something like the Scottish Parliamentary Bureau, or whether there will be a separate procedures committee. Is the way ahead simply to consider this when we look at all the committees, because we have so many that we would ideally like to set up, but we really would need a couple of hundred Assembly Members instead of 60, and this is an issue that really needs to be viewed in the round. However, we have had some valuable experience from Scotland as to how the bureau works and how its Procedures Committee works. We will, undoubtedly, feed that into our discussions. Does everyone agree that we delay a decision on the Business Committee? I see that you do.

6.00 p.m.

[194] Then there is the issue that, if you have a substitute, the same provision should relate to all committees, should it not? We do not want one rule for a business committee or bureau and another for other committees.

[195] What about the suggested wording for Standing Order No. 13.4? One assumes that whatever one has, whether it is a bureau or a business committee, it will need to meet every week. Are Members happy with that? I see that you are.

[196] Turning to Standing Order No. 7, then—we still have a long way to go—on 'Order in Plenary Meetings', there are suggestions here in the paper, and we are asked whether we agree with them. Let us go through page 1, down to Standing Order No. 7.4. Is everyone happy with that? I see that you are. On Standing Nos. 7.5 to 7.8, which are on my page 2, some amendments are suggested there. Is everyone happy with those? Some of them are pure drafting amendments. I see that you are happy with those.

[197] On page 3, we have Standing Orders No. 7.9 and 7.10.

[198] **Jocelyn Davies:** May I just make a point on 7.9? I did not realise that if you are ordered out of the Chamber by the Presiding Officer and you refuse to go, there would then be a vote on whether you should go. Is there a need for that? Should not the Presiding Officer's telling you to go mean that you just go? I know that this has never been used, but I just wondered why a vote is needed if the Presiding Officer has told you to go. I just cannot see why it is here.

[199] **Jenny Randerson:** It is interesting—I was not aware of it, either. I wonder whether—

[200] **Gwenda Thomas:** There is a precedent in the House of Commons, is there not?

[201] **Jenny Randerson:** Paul, your advice would be valuable.

[202] **Mr Silk:** It reflects the position in the House of Commons, and the theology behind it is that, if the Presiding Officer is defied by a Member, who refuses to leave the Chamber, then the Presiding Officer needs the authority of Plenary to back him or her up. That is the theology behind it.

[203] **Mr Jones:** The consequences of being excluded are quite serious, and include loss of salary and so on. You need quite an authority behind it to deal with such serious penalties.

[204] **Gwenda Thomas:** I think that we should retain the vote.

[205] **Jenny Randerson:** From my recollection of our Scottish visit, I do not know whether the Scottish Parliament has a vote in Plenary there, but it definitely has a committee that sits to consider the issue and votes, and it has used that power to deprive someone of his salary for a time. That happened a year or so ago.

[206] **Lorraine Barrett:** Would that be after the event?

[207] **Jenny Randerson:** The MSP concerned was excluded. He failed to go, as I recall, which might be a problem and might explain why we need this provision. The proceedings were, as I recall, possibly adjourned, but the committee met and decided that he would be excluded for a time and deprived of his salary. The committee met that day to make that decision. So, it might be a different procedure but it does involve more than the Presiding Officer making a judgment on his or her own.

[208] Since we have had this arrangement, it has not been needed, but since it is based on the House of Commons procedure and so on, are we content to leave it at that? Jocelyn is still slightly worried.

[209] **Jocelyn Davies:** It states that:

‘a motion to exclude the Member from proceedings of the Assembly shall be proposed by a Member and shall be voted on immediately.’

[210] Would this happen straight away? If I was in the Chamber, would I know whether to propose a motion? When would this vote take place? Would it take place immediately? The Presiding Officer would say ‘Out’ and the person would say, ‘No, I am not going’, and a Member, we do not know who, would get up to propose a motion. Would you know what to do, Jenny?

[211] **Jenny Randerson:** No.

[212] **Lisa Francis:** I think that Jocelyn has raised an interesting point. I understand that the incident in Scotland happened on the last day of term, did it not? So, an urgent meeting was held to decide what should occur. I think that the feeling of the clerk to the committee was that this decision had been made in rather a hurry, and the situation developed further when the MSPs came back in the autumn, because there were pickets and so on taking place outside the Scottish Parliament by the party concerned. The MSP was still excluded and, in the end, I think that it was resolved that perhaps he should not have been excluded; I am not sure.

[213] **Jenny Randerson:** I wonder whether we might return to this specific issue, because I think that Jocelyn has raised an interesting point. I do not think that it is something that will

divide us; I just think that it is something where we could have some more comparison between what happens in Westminster and whether it has disadvantages, what happens in Scotland, and whether there any disadvantages to that, and maybe what happens in other parliaments, so that we get a picture of what works in other parliaments. Gwenda, did you have a comment?

[214] **Gwenda Thomas:** I just wondered whether we should consider what would happen if the situation arose in committee rather than in Plenary.

[215] **Jenny Randerson:** That is a very useful point. I think that we should get some work done on this.

[216] **Jane Hutt:** Just to follow on the point that in Scotland, the bureau or whichever committee meets to then endorse or recommend a ruling, I think that we also need to look at that under the Scottish Parliament Standing Orders. It is not left on the floor of the house, as it were, as Jocelyn has just mentioned; it goes to a business committee, bureau, or whatever for it to make the recommendation.

[217] **Jenny Randerson:** I think that it is the Standards and Public Appointments Committee that deals with it in Scotland.

[218] **Jane Hutt:** We need to look at that.

[219] **Jenny Randerson:** Let us look at alternative ways of dealing with it. It is an interesting issue that we might discuss.

[220] So, that was Standing Order No. 7.9. Do we agree with the suggestions for Standing Order No. 7.10 to 7.15? I see that we do. We will therefore move on to Standing Order No. 12, on the Audit Committee. I think that we generally believe that a membership of seven to 11 Members is fair enough at this stage, because we do not know, with regard to d'Hondt, what kind of problems it will cause us in terms of committee size. I do not think that we would want to change the way in which the impartiality of the Audit Committee is established.

[221] I think that this paper goes through issues on which there is very likely to be great consensus among us. There are many suggestions here on amendments in relation to the legislation.

6.10 p.m.

[222] Before we move on, I just need to announce that the fire alarm may go off, but we do not need to evacuate. There are workmen on the roof, or something.

[223] I think that we are very happy with the suggestions on the Audit Committee, are we not? I see that we are. So, we will just leave that to mature.

[224] On Standing Order No. 20, on the reports of proceedings, once again, this is a very short paper—there are only two pages—and the key issue is the bilingual version. Is the committee happy with the current situation and that the principles of bilingualism to which we adhere at the moment are what we would aspire to?

[225] **Jocelyn Davies:** Do we know when the House Committee's review is to be completed?

[226] **Jenny Randerson:** I do not know; can anyone help? Lorraine is on the House

Committee.

[227] **Lorraine Barrett:** I am not sure when it is to be completed, but there is a strong feeling that spoken Welsh should be translated into English, but not vice versa. I am not sure when that review will be completed.

[228] **Jenny Randerson:** Are you saying that the House Committee is looking at these reports only being translated one way?

[229] **Lorraine Barrett:** There is a verbatim report in English, and when someone speaks in Welsh, that should be translated into English, but it would not be fully translated into Welsh—not all of the English spoken would be translated into Welsh.

[230] **Jenny Randerson:** As is currently the case.

[231] **Lorraine Barrett:** Yes.

[232] **Jocelyn Davies:** That is the proposition, is it? Wow.

[233] **Jenny Randerson:** That will be fairly significant, I think, and could lead to major issues.

[234] **Lisa Francis:** Is that due to costs?

[235] **Lorraine Barrett:** It is one of the considerations. It was put in terms of whether it is necessary to spend all that money translating both ways, when the money could perhaps be spent in other ways to promote the language, shall we say.

[236] **Jocelyn Davies:** It is not for us to carry out the review, but my view would be that it is fine as it is. I am surprised that people have not called for simultaneous translation from English into Welsh.

[237] **Jenny Randerson:** I am, too, having visited other bilingual parliaments, where they do not think that we do things sufficiently bilingually at the moment.

[238] **Lisa Francis:** I am surprised that this is being considered when it is one of the main—

[239] **Lorraine Barrett:** I have attended bilingual parliaments and, personally, I think that the translation was a total waste of time and money, with no-one listening to it. I know that someone could do so, technically, but I would oppose translation both ways, anyway.

[240] **Jenny Randerson:** I am not suggesting that we do that for one minute; I am just saying that we are going half way at the moment.

[241] **Lisa Francis:** Is not bilingualism one of the principles on which this Assembly was established? Am I wrong? I find it extraordinary that this is even being considered by the House Committee, but there we are.

[242] **Jenny Randerson:** I think that Jocelyn used a useful phrase in an earlier discussion, which is that people should be able to work through the medium of Welsh. That involves the translation. As currently drafted here, and as our Standing Orders are currently drafted, the record is translated from English into Welsh and Welsh into English. It is suggested in the paper that we reaffirm that. Are you happy to do that? Then, of course, if the House Committee comes up with this suggestion in the end, it will be something that we will have to

take into account when we get to the final point in the Standing Orders. Lorraine has told us something that a few of us had heard rumours about, but were not aware of in any formal way; there has been no formal consultation to my knowledge.

[243] **Lorraine Barrett:** I am not sure of the status of the review.

[244] **Ann Jones:** On that point, Jenny, I am conscious that we have verbatim reports of committees, but that Standing Orders have not been amended to reflect that. Should we ensure that we keep that valuable tool in there?

[245] **Jenny Randerson:** Thank you, Ann; that is an extremely important point.

[246] **Ann Jones:** We would not want to see that go.

[247] **Jenny Randerson:** We will move on to Standing Order No. 23, which relates to complaints procedures. Once again, we have a series of questions suggesting answers. They are all issues of detail rather than principle. Are you happy with that? Would anyone like to raise anything under Standing Order No. 23? If not, we will accept the suggestions given to us.

[248] We will move on to Standing Order Nos. 35 and 36, which relate to the laying of documents, and notification and tabling procedures. A little redrafting is required on Standing Order No. 35. Is everyone happy with that? I see that you are. Standing Order No. 36 will have to be linked in with decision-making relating to subordinate legislation. We cannot really make all of our decisions here. I think that we are looking at the same approach. Are you happy with that? I see that you are.

[249] We cannot really make decisions on Standing Order No. 37, which relates to the revision and suspension of Standing Orders, at the moment, because we have not decided whether there will be a business committee or a procedures committee. It would not be a bureau, because a bureau would not suspend Standing Orders. We have a series of questions on the first page, on which the clerks could do some drafting to put in business committee/procedures committee, and make the decision. Are we happy for any Member to submit a proposal for amendments to Standing Orders, as a free and open organisation?

[250] **Lisa Francis:** I am happy for any Member to do so, but I think that it should be put to the Business Committee or its successor body, whatever it is.

[251] **Jenny Randerson:** I think that it currently requires the support of six Members, does it not?

[252] **Jocelyn Davies:** I think that you should be able to demonstrate a certain level of support, because you cannot change the Standing Orders unless you are supported by two-thirds of the Assembly. So, if you do not have five friends to start you off, I do not think that you would stand much chance of success.

[253] **Jenny Randerson:** So, we will keep to the requirement for six that we currently have. Are you happy for motions to be tabled only by the relevant bureau or business committee or whatever we call it?

[254] **Jocelyn Davies:** I would like to make a point on that. I do not think that most of us realised that if six of us got together we could make a proposal to change Standing Orders, but it is possible that, in the future, Members may take that route. The paper notes that:

‘The Business Committee considers the proposed revisions and submits a report to the

Assembly with its recommendations'.

[255] Do you think that this should be a time-limited process? Otherwise, nothing might happen.

[256] **Lisa Francis:** Do you mean something like a Standing Order No. 31 type of thing?

6.20 p.m.

[257] **Jocelyn Davies:** Yes, that there would be a time limit, within which you would have your answer. Obviously, normally, it is the Business Minister, so everybody is kept in the loop, but if six people did get together, should there not be a time limit as to when that had to be—

[258] **Jenny Randerson:** How about three months?

[259] **Lisa Francis:** That would make sense.

[260] **Jenny Randerson:** 'Three months' is not something that you would put in the Standing Orders; it would have to be so many working days.

[261] **Jocelyn Davies:** There should definitely be a report at some point that was not too far into the future. Sometimes we consider things and then we decide not to bother with it; we leave it or we decide not to change it. If six people did get together, they ought to have—

[262] **Lisa Francis:** It means that an answer is forthcoming.

[263] **Jocelyn Davies:** In a foreseeable time.

[264] **Jenny Randerson:** Perhaps we could ask Siân and Gareth to discuss with Assembly Parliamentary Service officials what would be a workman-like, but not rushed timescale that would give satisfaction. I think that what Jocelyn said is perfectly reasonable, otherwise you could park it for two years or something.

[265] **Jocelyn Davies:** If it was a very good idea—

[266] **Gwenda Thomas:** Should that issue not be dealt with by whoever put forward the proposal to revise the Standing Order? It should not be different if AMs did it or the First Minister or a Minister. I think that the procedure should be constant, clear and not subject to change, whoever put forward the proposal.

[267] **Jenny Randerson:** That is a very fair point. Thank you.

[268] We have now completed the business for this meeting. Thank you.

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 6.22 p.m.
The meeting ended at 6.22 p.m.