

National Assembly for Wales
Enterprise and Business Committee

Bulletin - Spring Term

January 2013



The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

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Enterprise and Business Committee

The Committee was established on 22 June 2011 with a remit to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising its expenditure, administration and policy, encompassing economic development; transport and infrastructure; employment; higher education and skills; and research and development, including technology and science.

Current Committee membership



Nick Ramsay (Chair)
Welsh Conservatives
Monmouth



Byron Davies
Welsh Conservatives
South Wales West



Keith Davies
Welsh Labour
Llanelli



Dafydd Elis-Thomas
Plaid Cymru
Dwyfor Meirionnydd



Julie James
Welsh Labour
Swansea West



Alun Ffred Jones
Plaid Cymru
Arfon



Eluned Parrott
Welsh Liberal Democrats
South Wales Central



David Rees
Welsh Labour
Aberavon



Ken Skates
Welsh Labour
Clwyd South



Joyce Watson
Welsh Labour
Mid and West Wales



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Welcome to our committee update

This update of the Committee's recent and future activities is aimed at widening engagement in the Committee's activities and helping you to provide information and expertise to officials and Members. It has been produced by the Clerking team which supports the Committee's work.

Contact details

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You can also e-mail the Committee Clerking Team using this link:
enterprise.committee@wales.gov.uk.

Website:

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=228>

Our fax number is: 029 2089 8021

Latest news

European matters

In September the Committee held update sessions with Ministers to follow up its three inquiries on EU procurement policy, Horizon 2020 and EU Structural Funds. The sessions coincided with a briefing from David Hughes, Head of the European Commission Office in Wales. In November the Committee visited Brussels to speak to key officials and politicians regarding these three areas and as part of stage 2 of its Horizon 2020 inquiry.

Scrutiny of Welsh Government draft budget proposals 2013-2014

The Committee began its scrutiny of the Welsh Government's draft budget proposals 2013-2014 in September with an engagement event in the Pierhead Building. The aim of the event was to canvass views from a variety of stakeholders ahead of Ministerial Scrutiny sessions with the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science, the Minister for Local Government and Communities and the Minister for Education and Skills.

The Committee wrote to each Minister with recommendations, to which the Welsh Government responded. A link to the letters is provided below:
<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=2225>

Inquiry into Apprenticeships in Wales

The Committee launched its report on 25 October at the Bridgend College Pencoed Campus. A link to the report is provided below:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-business-fourth-assembly-laid-docs.htm?act=dis&id=239872&ds=10/2012>

The Welsh Government is due to respond to the report by the middle of January and a Plenary debate will be held on 23 January. On the day of the report launch the Welsh Government announced that a further £5million would be committed for apprenticeships.

Inquiry into Integrated Public Transport in Wales

The Committee launched its inquiry into Integrated Public Transport in Wales in November with an engagement event at the National Waterfront Museum, Swansea. The aim of the event was to canvass views on integrated public transport from public transport users. The Committee also launched an online questionnaire to collect as many views as possible.

Following the event the Committee began its evidence sessions for the inquiry which will continue in the spring term.

As part of the inquiry, Members of the Committee have been compiling video diaries of journeys they make by public transport. The videos can be viewed using the link below:

<http://t.co/mYisQHi9>

Ministerial scrutiny sessions on Business Rates, City Regions and Enterprise Zones

On 29 November the Committee held scrutiny sessions with the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science and Professor Brian Morgan on Business Rates, and City Regions and Enterprise Zones. The Committee agreed that the Minister would provide an update on the businesses attracted into Enterprise Zones once the zones have been operational for 12 months.

Sub Committee on the Smoke-free Premises etc. (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012

Five Committee Members have formed a sub-committee that will join with a sub-committee of the Health and Social Care Committee to take evidence on the Smoke-free Premises etc. (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012. The regulations seek to create an exemption from the 2007 smoke-free regulations to allow performers to smoke for reasons of 'artistic integrity' when making a film or television programme, subject to certain conditions. The sub-committees will meet together on 22 and 29 January. Please contact the clerk for more information: lara.date@wales.gov.uk

Active Travel (Wales) Bill

In May 2012 the Welsh Government published a White Paper:

Consultation on Active Travel (Wales) Bill

The Committee held a technical briefing on the proposals with Welsh Government officials on 4 July and will scrutinise the Bill later this term.

Further and Higher Education (Wales) Bill white paper

On 3 October, the Committee received a factual briefing from Welsh Government officials on a White Paper about the Further and Higher Education (Wales) Bill. The paper sets out the Welsh Government's legislative proposals in relation to further education governance and higher education reform, and it is the latter that provided the focus for the session given that it comes with the committee's remit. The Bill is expected to be introduced by the Government later in the year.

UK Green Investment Bank Legislative Consent Motion

The Committee considered a legislative consent memorandum on 3 October about the UK Green Investment Bank. It is a public company established by the Secretary of State under the Companies Act 2006 to facilitate and develop investment in the green economy. The Committee reported on 26 October noting that businesses will be in a position to access funding to benefit appropriate green projects in Wales and stating that it had no objection to the Assembly giving the UK Parliament consent to legislate on this issue. The Assembly subsequently agreed the consent motion in plenary on 6 November 2012.

Committee activity for the spring term 2013:

Please note that information regarding dates and topics of inquiry is subject to change, depending on emerging priorities.

- Stage 2 of the Horizon 2020 inquiry will continue in the spring term, with a visit to Cardiff University in January and Ministerial scrutiny sessions in March.

- The Committee will continue its evidence sessions for the Integrated Public Transport inquiry. The sessions are due to finish in February and the report is expected to be published later in the spring.
- The Committee will hold an update session on EU Structural Funds 2014-2020 with the Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and European Programmes on 24 January.
- The Committee will hold a Ministerial scrutiny session with the First Minister on the Cardiff Airport Task Force on 30 January.
- On the 28 February the Committee will hold a one-off scrutiny session with the Deputy Minister to review qualifications for 14-19 year olds.

Forward look

The Committee's next substantial inquiry will be into encouraging entrepreneurship, to commence in the summer term.

How we plan inquiries

Ultimately all inquiries begin with the ideas, aspirations, expertise and knowledge of Assembly Members, who in turn are informed by their constituents and professional contacts. The Committee will also prioritise the scrutiny of legislation that comes under its remit.

Members and officials discuss the planning of inquiries every term so that the Committee has a rolling, flexible, programme of work.

Other ways inquiries may arise are:

- Frequently, the Committee will decide that it wishes to revisit certain inquiries, after a suitable time has elapsed, to determine whether the Welsh Government is implementing the Committee's recommendations. In these cases, it will carry out a relatively short follow-up inquiry.
- The Petitions Committee may propose that scrutiny committees undertake inquiries and/or investigate issues raised in petitions.

- Committees may undertake pre-legislative scrutiny inquiries to ensure that forthcoming legislation as drafted is robust and meets the needs of all stakeholders.
- Where UK legislation has significant implications for Wales, the Committee may undertake scrutiny of UK draft Bills or UK Bills.
- The Committee may decide that a particular issue requires a more informal and flexible approach than scrutinising evidence in formal hearings. It may therefore establish a task and finish group of, say, four members, to undertake work behind the scenes, as it were, and then report back to the full Committee.
- Sometimes stakeholders suggest to the Committee directly that it should be considering other issues.

And finally...

Feedback please!

We wish to receive **as much feedback as possible** regarding how useful this document is to you, whether its contents are relevant and appropriate, and whether you wish us to include anything that we have not covered this time around. Please e-mail: chloe.davies@wales.gov.uk with your feedback.

Also please feel free to forward this document or our contact details to anyone you think would wish to know about the work and operations of the Enterprise and Business Committee.