

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Enterprise and Business Committee

Bulletin - Spring / Summer Term

May 2012



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 individuals and organisations who may wish to learn about the work of the Committee. It is hoped that it will promote access and widen engagement in the Committee's activities by 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.comm@wales.gov.uk](mailto:Enterprise.comm@wales.gov.uk).

Our fax number is: 02920 898021

Website:

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

## **Latest news**

### **Inquiry into Ports and Airports**

The Committee took evidence from key stakeholders throughout the spring term and scrutinised the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science and the Minister for Local Government and Communities at its meeting on 22 March. The joint meeting with the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee attracted strong media interest and helped to highlight some of the important themes of the inquiry. The Committee will publish its report in the summer term.

### **Inquiry into Apprenticeships in Wales**

The Committee issued a consultation at the start of Easter and will start taking evidence for this inquiry during the summer term.

The Committee's terms of reference for the inquiry are:

- is the current apprenticeship system providing effective support to the Welsh economy?
- is the current apprenticeship system meeting the current and future skills needs of employers in Wales? If not, what needs to be improved?
- with increased priority on apprenticeships for 16-24 year olds, are apprenticeships an attractive option for young people?
- do the systems for establishing Apprenticeship Standards and Frameworks and recruiting apprentices work effectively?

Further information about the inquiry can be found at the link below:

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=3281>

### **Horizon 2020**

The Committee will be starting its inquiry into Horizon 2020 (The European Commission's proposals for developing research and innovation) in June.

The committee's terms of reference for the inquiry are to:

- assess the potential impact of the European Commission's draft legislative proposals for the future Horizon 2020 on Wales, both positively and negatively;
- make recommendations to Welsh Ministers on what the Welsh Government should prioritise in seeking to shape the UK Government's

position in the Council of Ministers, and feed these views into the negotiations taking place in Brussels (including the European Parliament);

- assess the opportunity for synergies between Horizon 2020 and future EU Structural Funds in Wales aimed at improving future Welsh participation in Horizon 2020;
- consider how the science strategy for Wales and other relevant Welsh Government policies are aimed at maximising the opportunities to organisations in Wales from participation in future EU research and innovation funding.

A link to the inquiry page, with the European Commission proposals, can be found here:

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=3383>

### **Procurement Task and Finish Group**

The group, made up of five Members of the Enterprise and Business Committee, held five private informal meetings from January to March. It took evidence from a wide range of procurement specialists from within the UK and Welsh Government, public bodies and the business sector. The notes from these meetings and the consultation responses are available on the website -

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=16722>.

The group's report will be published during May and is likely to be debated in plenary before the end of the summer term.

### **Structural Funds**

The Committee published its report on the Draft Legislative Proposals for EU Structural Funds 2014-2020 in February 2012 to which the Welsh Government has responded.

<http://wefo.wales.gov.uk/programmes/post2013/news/120328draftlegislativeproposals/?lang=en>

The report has received positive coverage within the European community and has helped to highlight some important issues with regards to Structural Funds.

## **Town Centre Regeneration**

The Committee launched its report in January with a visit to Caerphilly town centre. The visit gave the Committee an opportunity to talk to local businesses and explain the key recommendations from the report. The event was put together by working closely with colleagues from the Federation of Small Businesses and received positive publicity from the local press.

The Welsh Government has responded to the report and it was debated in plenary on the 28 March.

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-business-fourth-assembly-laid-docs.htm?act=dis&id=231903&ds=3/2012>

## **Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science Scrutiny Session**

The Committee called in the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science on the 14 March for an update on the developments in the Government's Business and Enterprise portfolio.

## **National Transport Plan**

The committee held a scrutiny session with the Minister for Local Government and Communities on the National Transport Plan.

After the session, the committee wrote to the Minister requesting additional information. The letter to the Minister and his subsequent response can be viewed on our website:

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=2225>

## **Committee activity for the summer term 2012:**

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

- The Committee will hold two sessions to follow up work on Social Enterprises by the Enterprise and Learning Committee from the previous Assembly.
- A one day session on Enterprise Zones is expected to be held in the summer term.
- The Committee plans to receive an oral briefing from Welsh Government officials on the expected Highways and Transport White Paper.
- The Committee plans to carry out a one-day session on Bus Travel.

## **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. In addition to this, and new for the Fourth Assembly, the Committee will be responsible for scrutinising any Assembly legislation that comes under its remit.

Usually Members and officials discuss the planning of inquiries every term so that the Committee has a rolling, flexible, programme of work. The networking event held in November 2011 proved a useful source of ideas for issues facing the sectors at the moment, and will influence the future work programme. A similar event is planned for the autumn of 2012.

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 in other ways issues raised in petitions.

- Since Committees can propose legislation, they may undertake pre-legislative scrutiny inquiries to ensure that the 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.
- Following an inquiry in a particular area, the Committee may consider issues that arise that it would wish to scrutinise in further detail.
- 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 whether this document is useful 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: [kayleigh.driscoll@wales.gov.uk](mailto:kayleigh.driscoll@wales.gov.uk)

**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.**