



Enterprise and Business Committee

The Enterprise and Business 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.

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.

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Our fax number is: 02920 898021

Website:

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

Latest news

Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration

The Committee took evidence from key stakeholders throughout the autumn term and scrutinised the Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage at its meeting on 24 November. The Committee wanted to gather views from small businesses first-hand and therefore on 10 November, visited Narberth town centre. The visit was hosted by the Narberth Chamber of Trade and gave Members the opportunity to listen to the views and concerns of local businesses. The Committee will publish its report early in the New Year.

Inquiry into the Draft Legislative Proposals for EU Structural Funds 2014-2020

The Committee's objectives are to:

- assess the potential impact of the European Commission's draft legislative proposals for the future EU Structural Funds (2014-2020) on Wales and to identify any particular positive and negative aspects of these proposals to Wales;
- make recommendations to the Welsh Government on what it should prioritise in seeking to shape the UK Government position in the Council of Ministers;
- influence the negotiations in Brussels on the draft legislative proposals for the future EU Structural Funds, in particular through the European Parliament (potentially through proposing amendments to the draft legislative proposals).

The Committee held three sessions in the autumn term, gathering evidence from key stakeholders within the EU and two MEPs – Derek Vaughan and Jill Evans. The Committee will continue taking evidence in the New Year and will report by the end of January 2012.

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

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=1862>

Procurement task and finish group

The Enterprise and Business Committee has established a task and finish group of five Assembly Members to investigate and seek to influence the reform of European Union (EU) public procurement policy.

The task and finish group will meet informally, starting in the New Year. A link to the Procurement inquiry page is below:

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=1672>

Welsh Government draft budget proposals for 2012-13 and Ministerial Scrutiny Sessions

During the autumn term the Committee scrutinised the following Ministers on their draft budget proposals:

- Leighton Andrews, Minister for Education and Skills and Jeff Cuthbert, Deputy Minister for Skills
- Edwina Hart, Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science
- Carl Sargeant, Minister for Local Government and Communities

The Committee also held general scrutiny sessions with Huw Lewis, Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage and Alun Davies, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and European Programmes.

After the sessions, the Committee wrote to each Minister separately outlining recommendations and concerns based on the proposed draft budgets.

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

Networking Event

The Enterprise and Business Committee held a networking event on 24 November in the Pierhead building in Cardiff Bay. The event was attended by key stakeholders from across the Committee's portfolio and was an opportunity for them to inform members of any concerns and issues they would like the Committee to consider in its future work programme.

If you would be interested in attending an event like this in the future, could you please let one of the team know, using the contact details above.

Photos:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalassemblyforwales/sets/72157628143583635/>

Committee activity for the spring 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 further sessions on the EU Structural Funds inquiry in the early New Year.
- The Procurement task and finish group will meet informally throughout next term, gathering information for its report to the European Commission.
- Terms of reference for a new inquiry are to be agreed early in the New Year. This is likely to be an inquiry into Ports and Airports.
- The Committee will be holding a follow-up scrutiny session on Social Enterprises, taking evidence from Lis Burnett – expert adviser to the Enterprise and Learning Committee in the last Assembly.
- The Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science will be attending in the Spring term for a further Ministerial Scrutiny session.
- The Minister for Local Government and Communities will be attending on 29 February for a scrutiny session on the National Transport Plan.

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.

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: ryan.bishop@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.