

Committee update

Autumn 2025 – Spring 2026

Welcome to our twelfth committee update

This is the twelfth bulletin for the Senedd's Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee. It provides an overview of the Committee's recent and planned activities to help you stay up to date and engage with the Committee's work.

This update has been produced by the Clerking team which supports the Committee. If you have any feedback, please let us know using the contact details below.

Contact details

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Current Work

Food Processing

The Committee concluded its evidence taking for its inquiry into [Food Processing](#), with a final oral evidence session having taken place on [24 September 2025](#).

The Committee agreed its final report on this inquiry towards the end of the Autumn term, which will be published early in the Spring term 2026.

The Future of Welsh Steel

The Committee continued its on-going work on this important issue, particularly with an eye on support for the people who were made redundant and the progress of the construction of Tata Steel's new Electric Arc Furnace (EAF), and associated assets, in Port Talbot, following the closure of the final blast furnace on the site.

The Committee held an evidence session on [9 October 2025](#) with Tata Steel UK, as well as representatives from national and local unions bodies, to hear an update on the current situation.

This work was followed up with a [series of correspondence](#) by the Committee seeking further information, and the Committee also plans to take evidence on the topic

during a Ministerial session in the Spring term 2026.

Local Growth Fund

The Committee undertook a short one-day inquiry on the [Local Growth Fund](#) on 18 December 2025. Oral evidence was taken across three panels, and the Committee plans to publish its output from this piece of work in the Spring term.

Inward Investment

The Committee launched a new inquiry into [Inward investment](#), and will begin taking evidence at its first meeting back after Christmas recess, on 14 January 2026.

Development of Tourism and Regulation of Visitor Accommodation (Wales) Bill

The Welsh Government introduced the [Development of Tourism and Regulation of Visitor Accommodation \(Wales\) Bill](#) on 3 November 2025, which the Business Committee remitted to the Committee for Stage 1 scrutiny of its general principles.

Working within the seven-week timetable allocated for scrutiny, the Committee ran a short [consultation](#) from 3 November 2025 to 17 November 2025, and undertook oral evidence sessions on [5 November](#), [13 November](#) and [20 November](#). Oral evidence taking opened and closed

with scrutiny sessions with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language (the Member in charge of the Bill), and the Committee heard from 16 stakeholders.

The Stage 1 report by the Committee was published on 19 December 2025. Stage 2 will begin in the Spring term, subject to the Senedd agreeing to the Bill's general principles.



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Recent Activities

Visit to the Global Centre for Rail Excellence

On 18 September 2025, the Committee visited the Global Centre for Rail Excellence (GCRE) in Onllwyn, Neath Port Talbot. They met with GCRE representatives to discuss

progress in developing the centre, and the potential economic impact the centre could have on the local area.

Members will continue to take an interest into the on-going development of the site.



City and Growth Deals

Following the short review of City and Growth Deals undertaken in the previous term, the Committee wrote to the Welsh Government and the UK Government's Wales Office on 17 September 2025, setting out their findings and seeking comment. The subsequent response from the Welsh Government was received on 23 October 2025 and from the UK Government on 27 October 2025.

UK-EU implementation review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement

The cross-Committee report on the UK-EU implementation review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement

was published shortly before the beginning of the Autumn term, on 10 September.

The Welsh Government responded to this report on 29 October 2025, after which a plenary debate was held on 5 November.



Plenary debates

Following their publication in the Summer term, the Committee also received responses from the Welsh Government and held Plenary debates on their reports into AI and the Welsh Economy, Apprenticeship Pathways and Hybu Cig Cymru.

The response to the AI and the Welsh Economy report was laid on 16 September 2025, with the plenary debate held on 24 September 2025.

The response to the Committee's report on Apprenticeship Pathways was laid on 19 November 2025, with the plenary debate held on 26 November 2025. A response to this report was also received from Medr on 7 October 2025.

The response to the Committee's report on Hybu Cig Cymru was laid on 26 November 2025, with the plenary debate held on 3 December 2025. A response to this report was also received from Hybu Cig Cymru on 22 October 2025.

Soil Health in Agriculture

The Committee published its report 'Digging the dirt: Improving Wales' soil health' on 18 November 2025, with a Plenary debate planned on this in the Spring term.



General Scrutiny

General Scrutiny sessions were held with the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs on 1 October 2025, and with the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning on 3 December 2025.

The Committee plans to follow this up with final General Scrutiny sessions with the Welsh Government covering all aspects of the Committee's remit in the Spring term 2026.

Budget Scrutiny

The Committee scrutinised the Welsh Government's Draft Budget for 2026-27 on 26 November 2025, hearing evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership, and the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs. The Committee published its report on the 15 December 2025 reporting deadline, with a debate on the Draft Budget held in Plenary the following day.

Forward Work Programme

The Committee has agreed its work programme for the remainder of the Sixth Senedd. The published work programme indicates the current intentions of the Committee at the time of publishing; however, it may change at any time to respond to external events.

The work is expected to include Stage 2 of the Development of Tourism and Regulation of Visitor Accommodation (Wales) Bill, as well as oral evidence taking in the Inward Investment inquiry, and a Ministerial session on the Future of Welsh Steel.

As noted, further general scrutiny with the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, and the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership is also expected.

The forward work programme of the Committee's Spring term will also include working on its final legacy report prior to the dissolution of this Senedd.

Remit

The Committee was established on 23 June 2021, with a remit encompassing (but not restricted to): economic development, regeneration, skills, trade, research, and development (including technology and science), and rural affairs.

Committee Members



Committee Chair:
Andrew RT Davies
MS

Welsh Conservatives



Jenny Rathbone MS

Welsh Labour



Luke Fletcher MS

Plaid Cymru



Samuel Kurtz MS

Welsh Conservatives



Hannah Blythyn MS

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