

Welsh Parliament

**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport,
and International Relations Committee**

Sixth Senedd Legacy Report

March 2026



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and International Relations Committee**

Sixth Senedd Legacy Report

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About the Committee

The Committee was established on 23 June 2021. Its remit can be found at:
www.senedd.wales/SeneddCulture

Current Committee membership:



**Committee Chair:
Delyth Jewell MS**
Plaid Cymru



Mick Antoniw MS
Welsh Labour



Alun Davies MS
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Gareth Davies MS
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Contents

Chair’s foreword	5
Suggestions for scrutiny in the Seventh Senedd	7
1. Introduction.....	10
2. Culture.....	13
CELF: National Contemporary Art Gallery	14
Student finance for performing arts degrees	14
Suggested areas of scrutiny for the Seventh Senedd	15
3. Communications.....	16
Public service broadcasting and the Royal Charter review.....	16
Senedd involvement in the appointment of the Chair of S4C.....	17
Suggested areas of scrutiny for the Seventh Senedd	17
4. Sport.....	18
Preventative spending.....	18
Suggested areas of scrutiny for the Seventh Senedd	19
5. Cymraeg.....	20
Suggested areas of scrutiny for the Seventh Senedd	22
6. International relations.....	23
Welsh Government international relations.....	23
UK-EU relations	23
Wales-Ireland relations.....	24
The Senedd’s international relations.....	24
Suggested areas of scrutiny for the Seventh Senedd	25
7. Engagement.....	26
Engagement on the Culture Shock inquiry.....	26
Suggestions for the Seventh Senedd.....	27

8. Ways of working and remit..... 28

Cross-remit working..... 28

Joint working..... 28

Scrutiny arrangements for the First Minister..... 28

 Suggestions for the Seventh Senedd..... 29

Future Committee remit..... 29

 Suggestions for the Seventh Senedd..... 30

Annex 1 : Committee work 31

Inquiry work.....31

Legislation32

Non-inquiry work.....33

Annual scrutiny of arms-length bodies.....33

Pre-appointment hearings.....34

Citizen Engagement.....34

Chair's foreword

Wales is a nation shaped by its stories, its communities, and the enduring creativity of its people. This Committee has been privileged to hear from the people and organisations across Wales who give life to the culture, language and identity of our country. Their contributions, given generously, have illuminated both the extraordinary potential of our culture sector and the growing pressure it faces. I wish to express my deep thanks to all who have offered expertise, shared experiences, or helped bring the Committee's work to life.

Over the Sixth Senedd, we have seen profound and overlapping challenges reshape the cultural landscape of Wales. The long-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic exposed fragilities in the sectors that sustain our wellbeing. Austerity, shrinking budgets and rising costs have pushed organisations and communities to their limits. Brexit has further constrained cultural mobility and disrupted creative collaboration and longstanding partnerships across Europe. These forces have created a landscape in which cultural organisations, artists, and communities are expected to do more with less, even as their contribution becomes more vital to Wales's resilience and identity. It is against this backdrop that our call for sustained investment and preventative action must be understood.

Time and again, our work has highlighted a truth that should give us pause: Wales's cultural ecosystem is sustained less by the resources available to it, and more by the dedication and commitment of the people who work within it. Despite its immense social value, the sector remains brittle from a decade of underinvestment. It cannot continue to absorb additional pressures without risking further real and irreversible losses. Welsh culture cannot thrive on goodwill alone. If we want a vibrant, prosperous and healthy Wales where creativity truly flourishes, we must fund the foundations that make that possible.

This legacy report calls on the next Senedd to safeguard culture as an essential pillar of Wales's national infrastructure. The arts, heritage, sport and Cymraeg are not luxuries. They are central to our public life, integral to our wellbeing, to our national and global identity, and vital to the futures we imagine for our young people.

The work of our Committee has reinforced the conviction that preventative spend and investing early, whether in cultural participation, community sport, or creative education, builds resilience, strengthens communities and supports long-term

health and prosperity. Wales's commitment to becoming the first "Marmot nation" creates the right conditions to pivot towards prevention. But this shift will remain rhetorical unless government budgets, across all departments, begin to reflect the preventative power of culture and sport. We urge the next government to demonstrate this commitment not only in principle, but through resource allocation.

Our successor committee will inherit significant work: pressing the next government to increase investment in culture and sport until it is comparable with other European nations; scrutinising progress towards a million Welsh speakers by 2050; seeking to ensure that the renewal of the BBC Royal Charter delivers real improvements in media content for Wales, and holding the government to account on its ambitions for international relations. But above all, it will inherit the responsibility to protect and strengthen the cultural fabric of Wales.

The Seventh Senedd will face difficult decisions. But I hope it will hold fast to this guiding belief: that investing in culture, creativity, and community is not an optional extra, it is the surest path to a healthier, more hopeful Wales.



Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair

Suggestions for scrutiny in the Seventh Senedd

Conclusion 1. The successor committee may wish to continue to shine a spotlight on funding levels for culture and sport, and press the next government to increase investment in culture and sport until it is comparable with other European nations..... Page 15

Conclusion 2. The successor committee may wish to maintain scrutiny of the CELF project including its long-term funding arrangements..... Page 15

Conclusion 3. The successor committee may wish to take forward scrutiny of Welsh-domiciled students' access to Student Finance Wales support for specialist creative higher-education courses delivered outside Wales. Page 15

Conclusion 4. The successor committee may wish to press for improvements in the supply of media content for Wales and to make the BBC Royal Charter renewal a significant part of its work programme..... Page 17

Conclusion 5. The successor committee may wish to take forward arrangements (in discussion with the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee) to hold a pre-appointment hearing with the UK Government's nominee to be the next Chair of S4C in 2029..... Page 17

Conclusion 6. The successor committee may wish to continue to scrutinise Welsh Government spending decisions to monitor whether spending is being transferred towards prevention. Page 19

Conclusion 7. The successor committee may wish to consider further scrutiny work into brain injuries and sport..... Page 19

Conclusion 8. A successor committee may wish to monitor the implementation of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, and how it contributes to the aims in Cymraeg 2050 to ensure a million Welsh speakers by 2050..... Page 22

Conclusion 9. A successor committee may wish to scrutinise actions to progress the work and recommendations of the Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities on both phases of its work. This includes its recommendations for areas of higher density Welsh communities, and its work on medium and lower density areas. Page 22

Conclusion 10. A successor committee may wish to scrutinise government action to prioritise Cymraeg within Welsh Government economic strategies, and delivery

of economic interventions, such as ARFOR, that aim to sustain Welsh speaking communities. Page 22

Conclusion 11. A successor committee may wish to scrutinise the implementation of Welsh Language Standards for Registered Social Landlords. Page 22

Conclusion 12. The successor committee may wish to ensure that the Welsh Government adopts the Mission Cymru principles to guarantee that Wales delivers on its international relations ambitions and realises its potential. Page 25

Conclusion 13. To ensure that the Senedd is notified of key international relations milestones, the successor committee may wish to seek an agreement with the Welsh Government on what information will be provided. Our findings should be incorporated into any discussions between the Senedd and the Welsh Government on the Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement for the Seventh Senedd. Page 25

Conclusion 14. The successor committee may wish to prioritise scrutiny of UK-EU relations to consider key forthcoming issues, including new UK-EU commitments in devolved areas and improved arrangements for touring artists, as set out in the Committee's *Culture Shock* report. Page 25

Conclusion 15. The successor committee may wish to continue our work on Wales-Ireland relations to ensure that the relationship retains its special status. Page 25

Conclusion 16. A successor committee may wish to maintain and strengthen its involvement of citizens across Wales in its scrutiny to ensure that diverse voices are represented and that scrutiny processes remain informed, inclusive, and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people of Wales. Page 27

Conclusion 17. A successor committee may wish to seek further opportunities for joint working with other committees on cross cutting themes. Page 29

Conclusion 18. A successor committee may wish to consider holding formal committee meetings away from the Senedd to allow for greater participation from a wider range of stakeholders. Page 29

Conclusion 19. In the Seventh Senedd, the responsible minister (which may be the First Minister) should be subject to scrutiny for Wales's international relations in the same way as any other portfolio minister. Page 29

Conclusion 20. Future decisions on Senedd committee remits should ensure that communications forms part of the remit and title of the successor committee and should prioritise increased scrutiny capacity..... Page 30

Conclusion 21. Future decisions on Senedd committee remits should ensure that international relations remains a specified responsibility..... Page 30

1. Introduction

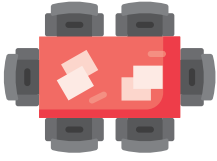
1. The purpose of this report is not to summarise the entirety of the work of the Committee in the Sixth Senedd. Instead, it highlights some inquiry outcomes, scrutiny and engagement that we have undertaken, and suggests areas our successor committee in the Seventh Senedd may wish to consider.

2. The Committee was established to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising its expenditure, administration and policy matters, encompassing (but not restricted to): the Welsh Language, culture; the arts; historic environment; communications, broadcasting; the media, sport, and international relations. A full list of the work of the Committee in the Sixth Senedd is set out in the Annex.

3. The areas of scrutiny under the Committee's remit corresponded to the following Welsh Government cabinet portfolios:

- **Culture, Communications and Sport**
 - Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership (current)
 - Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice
 - Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport
 - Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism
- **Welsh Language**
 - Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language (current)
 - Cabinet Secretary for Health, Social Care and Welsh Language
 - Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Welsh Language
 - Minister for Education and Welsh Language
- **International relations**
 - First Minister (current)
 - Minister for Economy
 - Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning

The Committee in the Sixth Senedd



HOW MANY FORMAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS WERE HELD?

108



HOW MANY WITNESSES GAVE EVIDENCE TO THE COMMITTEE?

330



HOW MANY STAKEHOLDER EVENTS/ VISITS WERE UNDERTAKEN?

13



HOW MANY BILLS WERE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE?

1



HOW MANY REPORTS WERE PRODUCED?

27



HOW MANY DEBATES WERE HELD?

14



HOW MANY INQUIRIES WERE UNDERTAKEN?

25



HOW MANY RESPONSES TO CONSULTATIONS WERE RECEIVED?

300

2. Culture

4. The Committee's culture remit encompasses the arts, museums and archives, heritage and the creative industries. Work in this area has included:

- annual scrutiny of public sponsored bodies and Welsh Government;
- reviewing the Welsh Government's cultural strategy;
- sector recovery from impact of the Covid-19 pandemic; and
- impact of cost of living increases.

5. The Committee held pre-appointment hearings with the Welsh Government's preferred candidates for the positions of Chair of Amgueddfa Cymru, Chair of the Arts Council of Wales, and President of the National Library of Wales. We also carried out annual scrutiny of these public bodies and of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

6. The Committee has expressed concern in successive reports about the health of the culture and sport sectors. In our 2025 report, *A decade of cuts*, we concluded that historic underfunding of these sectors by the Welsh Government, exacerbated by reductions in revenue funding in recent years, meant that the culture and sport sectors were "brittle and under-resourced."¹ Our work on the impact of funding cuts covered both culture and sport; more specific issues relating to sport are in section four of this report.

7. Analysis by Senedd Research showed that public funding of culture and sport in Wales is amongst the lowest in Europe.² We called on the Welsh Government to "increase funding for culture and sport until they are comparable (in terms of spending per head) with those of similar nations"³.

8. We also held a scrutiny session with the Future Generations Commissioner about his proposal for a Culture Bill. Some Members of the Committee expressed a degree of scepticism about the merits of legislating in this area. The

¹ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, [A decade of cuts: Impact of funding reductions for culture and sport](#), January 2025

² Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, [Scrutiny of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2026-27](#), December 2025

³ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, [A decade of cuts: Impact of funding reductions for culture and sport](#), January 2025, recommendation 1

Commissioner subsequently published a consultation paper about the proposal.⁴ This document sets out a clear assessment of the difficulties facing the culture sector, including long-term underinvestment and lack of strategic direction from the Welsh Government. What this document does not yet provide is a compelling argument for why legislation is the appropriate means of addressing these issues. As the consultation paper was published too late in the Senedd cycle for the Committee consider in detail, this is a matter that a future committee may wish to examine more fully.

CELF: National Contemporary Art Gallery

9. The Welsh Government has said that its aim of establishing a National Contemporary Art Gallery is complete. This is despite the project being a shadow of what was proposed in the initial feasibility study. Capital costs are “about a quarter” of the projected £35 million, reflecting what the Welsh Government calls a “lean operating model”⁵. The Welsh Government has not provided plans for future revenue funding of its project, with the Minister saying he hopes it will be “self-sustaining”⁶. This is despite the project’s key partners all saying that ongoing revenue funding is needed.⁷

Student finance for performing arts degrees

10. During the closing weeks of the Sixth Senedd, we received correspondence highlighting concerns regarding Welsh-domiciled students’ access to Student Finance Wales support for specialist creative higher-education courses delivered outside Wales. We wrote to the relevant ministers to express our concern.⁸ However, a lack of time meant we could not consider this matter fully. A successor committee may wish to take forward further scrutiny of this issue.

⁴ Future Generations Commissioner, [A Culture Act for Wales: Green Paper](#), February 2026

⁵ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, [The National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales, December 2023](#), page 15 and Welsh Government: [Update on the progress and any actions taken on the National Contemporary Art Gallery](#), 26 July 2024

⁶ [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 19 November 2025](#) paragraph 135

⁷ [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings – 2 October 2025](#) paragraph 308

⁸ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, [Letter to the Minister for Further and Higher Education and the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership](#), 10 March 2026

Suggested areas of scrutiny for the Seventh Senedd

Conclusion 1. The successor committee may wish to continue to shine a spotlight on funding levels for culture and sport, and press the next government to increase investment in culture and sport until it is comparable with other European nations.

Conclusion 2. The successor committee may wish to maintain scrutiny of the CELF project including its long-term funding arrangements.

Conclusion 3. The successor committee may wish to take forward scrutiny of Welsh-domiciled students' access to Student Finance Wales support for specialist creative higher-education courses delivered outside Wales.

3. Communications

11. The Committee continued the precedent set by our predecessor committee in the Fifth Senedd of carrying out in depth scrutiny of issues affecting journalism, local media and broadcasting. This has been an important and productive part of the Committee’s remit, reflected by the inclusion of “Communications” in the Committee’s title.

12. Committee work in this area has included:

- Public Service Broadcasting in Wales
- The UK Government’s Media Bill
- Six Nations rugby broadcasting rights

Public service broadcasting and the Royal Charter review

13. The Committee carried out an inquiry into the future of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB). It concluded that the supply of media content is inadequate, but that there was no clarity about where the necessary improvements would come from.⁹ Broadly speaking, Ofcom regulation is designed to maintain the status quo, publicly funded PSBs (BBC and S4C) are managing long-term cuts to their funding, and commercially funded PSBs (ITV) do not see increasing content for Wales as in their shareholders’ interests. A successor committee with responsibility for communications may wish to continue to press for improvements in the supply of media content for Wales.

14. The current BBC Royal Charter (“the Charter”) will expire on 31 December 2027. The UK Government is reviewing the Charter to decide on the terms for its renewal, and any changes needed to help the BBC to continue to serve the public. We responded to an initial UK Government consultation on the Charter renewal,¹⁰ but the bulk of this work will take place in the Seventh Senedd. Given the importance of the BBC and S4C¹¹ to Wales, contributing to the Charter renewal should be a significant piece of work for a successor committee.

⁹ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, [State of play: Public Service Broadcasting in Wales](#), March 2024

¹⁰ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, [Take 2: Public Service Broadcasting in Wales](#), March 2026, page 8

¹¹ S4C is also funded from the licence fee.

Senedd involvement in the appointment of the Chair of S4C

15. We have expressed our view to the UK Government that the Senedd should be involved in the appointment of the Chair of S4C, due to the particular relevance that S4C holds for the people of Wales.¹² In response, the responsible UK Minister told the Committee that he “would not object to the Senedd Committee inviting future proposed S4C Chair candidates for their own hearing prior to the candidate’s confirmation”¹³. This is an important step forward and a recognition of the anomaly that powers over the only public service broadcaster operating solely in the Welsh language do not reside in the nation where that language is primarily spoken.

Suggested areas of scrutiny for the Seventh Senedd

Conclusion 4. The successor committee may wish to press for improvements in the supply of media content for Wales and to make the BBC Royal Charter renewal a significant part of its work programme.

Conclusion 5. The successor committee may wish to take forward arrangements (in discussion with the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee) to hold a pre-appointment hearing with the UK Government’s nominee to be the next Chair of S4C in 2029.

¹² Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, [Letter to UK Government regarding the appointment of the Chair of S4C](#), 17 November 2025

¹³ UK Government, [Letter to the Committee regarding the appointment of the Chair of S4C](#), 23 January 2026

4. Sport

16. The Committee carried out a range of work in the area of sport. This included work in the following areas:

- participation in sport and physical activity in disadvantaged areas
- allegations surrounding the Welsh Rugby Union
- WRU proposals for the reorganisation of professional rugby in Wales

17. The Committee also held pre-appointment hearings with the Welsh Government's preferred candidate for the position of the Chair of Sport Wales and carried out annual scrutiny of Sport Wales.¹⁴

Preventative spending

18. A major theme this Senedd has been preventative spending. In our 2025 report, *A decade of cuts*, the Committee recommended:

“The Welsh Government should consider introducing, across all its departments, a ‘preventative’ category of spend in future budgets, moving towards a longer term budgeting view to help build and protect population health. This would help recognise and properly fund culture and sport for the value they have beyond their intrinsic worth.”¹⁵

19. In June 2025, Wales became the first “Marmot nation”, adopting Sir Michael Marmot’s eight principles, which aim to eliminate unfair and avoidable differences in health, and to strengthen “the role and impact of ill health prevention”¹⁶.

20. We have consistently asked the Welsh Government to explain how the aim of preventing spending in the future has influenced its spending decisions and have yet to receive a clear answer.

¹⁴ Transcripts of these sessions can be found on the [Committee's webpage](#).

¹⁵ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, [A decade of cuts: Impact of funding reductions for culture and sport](#), January 2025, recommendation 2

¹⁶ Welsh Government Press Release, [Wales to become world's first 'Marmot nation' to tackle health inequalities](#), June 2025

21. During the Sixth Senedd, the issue of brain injuries in sport was thrown into the spotlight as former players began legal action against rugby and football authorities, including the Welsh Rugby Union. The Committee had wished to look further into the issue of brain injuries and sport but decided not to do so whilst legal proceedings remained ongoing. It remains a crucial issue that warrants scrutiny.

Suggested areas of scrutiny for the Seventh Senedd

Conclusion 6. The successor committee may wish to continue to scrutinise Welsh Government spending decisions to monitor whether spending is being transferred towards prevention.

Conclusion 7. The successor committee may wish to consider further scrutiny work into brain injuries and sport.

5. Cymraeg

22. The Committee has carried out a number of inquiries and scrutiny on matters relating to the Welsh Language:

- The legislative framework that supports Welsh-medium education
- Development of post-16 Welsh language provision
- Cymraeg for all?
- HSBC UK Welsh Service Line

23. The Committee also held a pre-appointment hearing with the Welsh Government's preferred candidate for the position of Welsh Language Commissioner and undertook annual scrutiny of the Commissioner.¹⁷

24. The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 ("the Act") could be considered one of the biggest changes to Welsh language education policy since devolution.¹⁸ Two members of the Committee contributed, as rapporteurs, to scrutiny of the legislation, which was led by the Children, Young People and Education Committee.¹⁹ The Act seeks to contribute towards the goal of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, by aiming to ensure all pupils will be independent Welsh speakers by the time they leave statutory education.

25. The bulk of the work implementing the Act, including the associated subordinate legislation, will fall to the next Welsh Government. The new Athrofa (National Institute for Learning Welsh) will be responsible for supporting people (of all ages) to learn Welsh. This will include planning the development and training of the education workforce in order to improve Welsh language learning in schools. Continuous scrutiny of the implementation of the Act will be required.

26. During this Senedd, the Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities published three reports with recommendations for the Welsh Government. In its first report, it recommended that some communities in Wales should be designated "areas of higher density linguistic significance"²⁰. This

¹⁷ Transcripts of these sessions can be found on the [Committee's webpage](#).

¹⁸ Welsh Government, [Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Act 2025](#)

¹⁹ Senedd Wales, [Welsh Language and Education \(Wales\) Act 2025](#)

²⁰ Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities, [Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language](#), August 2024, page 25

recommendation was accepted in principle by the Welsh Government, which set out a “phased path to implementation”²¹. If this approach is maintained by the next Welsh Government, it will require continued scrutiny.

27. Providing high quality economic opportunities in Welsh-speaking communities is vital if we are to retain our young people and sustain the language. The ARFOR programme focused on economic development in communities within areas with a high density of Welsh speakers. The scheme, with its relatively modest budget and timeframe, was considered “largely successful” but some core weaknesses were highlighted in the evaluation.²² Our final scrutiny session did not provide the clarity needed about the lessons learnt from the programme, or how it could be incorporated into wider economic development programmes.²³

28. The Welsh Government introduced subordinate legislation in the final weeks of the Senedd term to incorporate Registered Social Landlords and Community Housing Cymru within the Welsh Language Standards regime.²⁴ Insufficient time meant the Committee was unable to scrutinise these regulations and a successor committee may wish to scrutinise their implementation.

29. In our final general scrutiny session with the Cabinet Secretary, we reflected on the position of Cymraeg at the end of this Senedd term. Throughout this term, the Senedd has maintained a valuable cross-party consensus in support of the broad aims of Cymraeg 2050. We lose this at our peril. The Welsh Language Commissioner has made it clear in her recent report that:

“The next Welsh Government will need to deliver bold and transformative interventions in support of the Welsh language if we are serious about doubling the daily use of Welsh and reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050.”²⁵

²¹ Welsh Government, [Response to Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities: Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language](#), May 2025, recommendation 2

²² Welsh Government, [Written statement: ARFOR Programme Update](#), 3 February 2026

²³ [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: Record of Proceedings - 4 March 2026](#), item 2

²⁴ Welsh Government, [The Welsh Language Standards \(No.10\) Regulations 2026](#), February 2026 and Senedd Wales, [The Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011 \(Amendment of Schedule 6\) Order 2026](#), February 2026

²⁵ Welsh Language Commissioner, [Our time to act: The position of the Welsh Language 2021-25: Welsh Language Commissioner’s 5-year report](#), March 2026, page 6

30. It will be incumbent on a future committee to hold the next government to account to deliver on this target.

Suggested areas of scrutiny for the Seventh Senedd

Conclusion 8. A successor committee may wish to monitor the implementation of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025, and how it contributes to the aims in Cymraeg 2050 to ensure a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Conclusion 9. A successor committee may wish to scrutinise actions to progress the work and recommendations of the Commission for Welsh Speaking Communities on both phases of its work. This includes its recommendations for areas of higher density Welsh communities, and its work on medium and lower density areas.

Conclusion 10. A successor committee may wish to scrutinise government action to prioritise Cymraeg within Welsh Government economic strategies, and delivery of economic interventions, such as ARFOR, that aim to sustain Welsh speaking communities.

Conclusion 11. A successor committee may wish to scrutinise the implementation of Welsh Language Standards for Registered Social Landlords.

6. International relations

31. The Committee has carried out a number of international relations inquiries including:

- The Welsh Government’s International Strategy
- Brexit and UK-EU relations
- Wales-Ireland relations

Welsh Government international relations

32. In January 2026, we launched a new set of principles for the future of Wales’s international relations in our *Mission Cymru* report, which we are calling on future governments to adopt.²⁶

33. The principles cover all aspects of international relations. In addition to a future international relations strategy, the principles set out minimum standards for ministerial responsibility, intergovernmental working, resourcing, and information that should be routinely provided to the Senedd. It will be for our successor committee to consider if Mission Cymru’s principles are met.

UK-EU relations

34. We have followed UK-EU relations closely since Brexit, examining new aspects of the relationship since 2021 in detail. The EU remains a priority for many organisations and individuals in Wales. We have called for the EU to be granted the status of a priority international relationship by the Welsh Government.

35. We participated in a cross-committee inquiry of four Senedd committees on the implementation review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. We led Senedd scrutiny of the UK-EU relationship “reset” and noted that significant developments are expected in the coming months.²⁷

²⁶ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: [Mission Cymru Principles for international relations](#), February 2026

²⁷ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee, Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee, and Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee: [UK-EU implementation review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), September 2025

36. Our 2024 *Culture Shock* report presented the first comprehensive body of evidence of the effects of Brexit on the culture sector in Wales, with a focus on challenges faced by touring artists and cross-border creative working.²⁸ We continued to raise the issues identified throughout the Senedd, mostly recently (in March 2026), calling on a future Welsh Government to prioritise and raise the profile of the new relationship with the EU as it relates to culture and creative work, including pressing the UK Government to reach joint solutions with the EU on touring artists and participation in relevant EU programmes.²⁹

Wales-Ireland relations

37. The Wales-Ireland relationship remains the Welsh Government's most developed strategic international relationship with another country. The Committee's 2023 inquiry examined this relationship in detail and the Welsh Government's approach as a basis for its other priority international relationships. We updated this work in our 2026 report, recommending that a future Welsh Government should continue to prioritise Wales-Ireland relations.³⁰

The Senedd's international relations

38. The Committee performed an important role in the Senedd's international relations through outward visits to Dublin and Brussels and by supporting inward visits of international delegations to the Senedd.

²⁸ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: [Culture shock: Culture and the new relationship with the European Union](#), November 2024

²⁹ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: [Wales-Ireland relations: A portrait of brilliant possibility, March 2026](#), recommendation 2

³⁰ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: [Wales-Ireland relations: A portrait of brilliant possibility, March 2026](#), recommendation 1



Committee visit to Dublin, 2023

39. The Chair led cross-committee international delegations and is the Senedd's representative on the UK-EU Parliamentary Partnership Assembly. Individual Committee members held relevant roles, including on the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Committee of the Regions-UK Contact Group, and the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly.

Suggested areas of scrutiny for the Seventh Senedd

Conclusion 12. The successor committee may wish to ensure that the Welsh Government adopts the Mission Cymru principles to guarantee that Wales delivers on its international relations ambitions and realises its potential.

Conclusion 13. To ensure that the Senedd is notified of key international relations milestones, the successor committee may wish to seek an agreement with the Welsh Government on what information will be provided. Our findings should be incorporated into any discussions between the Senedd and the Welsh Government on the Inter-Institutional Relations Agreement for the Seventh Senedd.

Conclusion 14. The successor committee may wish to prioritise scrutiny of UK-EU relations to consider key forthcoming issues, including new UK-EU commitments in devolved areas and improved arrangements for touring artists, as set out in the Committee's *Culture Shock* report.

Conclusion 15. The successor committee may wish to continue our work on Wales-Ireland relations to ensure that the relationship retains its special status.

7. Engagement

40. Over the course of the Sixth Senedd, we sought to ensure that our work programme was informed by meaningful engagement with the people of Wales. We engaged with people from across Wales to ensure that our work was informed by a broad spectrum of perspectives.

41. Across multiple significant inquiries, we used qualitative interviews, focus groups and surveys to ensure that peoples' lived experiences directly informed the scrutiny of the Committee, gathering both qualitative and quantitative insights.

42. The Committee engaged with 962 participants in all Senedd regions in Wales, demonstrating the scale and inclusivity of this approach.³¹



Members at an event on the video games industry, 2024

Engagement on the Culture Shock inquiry

43. During the Committee's *Culture Shock* inquiry, public engagement played a central role in shaping our understanding of how the UK-EU relationship is affecting Wales's cultural sector.³²

44. The Senedd's *Citizen Engagement Team* brought together the voices of 13 participants through ten interviews and a dedicated focus group, drawing in performing artists, managers, festival promoters, instrument makers, and cultural organisations from across Wales and those working regularly in European markets.³³

³¹ A list of all Citizen Engagement work carried out by the Committee is available in Annex A.

³² Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: [Culture and the new relationship with the EU](#).

³³ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: [Culture and the new relationship with the EU: Citizen engagement findings](#), March 2024

45. This direct testimony highlighted the practical realities faced by those touring and working cross-border, revealing reduced opportunities, financial pressures, administrative burdens, and weakened international networks.

46. This was supplemented by lived experiences gathered from structured interviews carried out by Members on the Committee's visit to the Wales-Ireland Other Voices festival in 2023.³⁴

47. These lived experiences ensured our recommendations were grounded in the authentic voices and needs of people working in Wales's creative industries, and demonstrated the clear impact that public engagement has had on informing the Committee's work.



Other Voices festival, 2023

Suggestions for the Seventh Senedd

Conclusion 16. A successor committee may wish to maintain and strengthen its involvement of citizens across Wales in its scrutiny to ensure that diverse voices are represented and that scrutiny processes remain informed, inclusive, and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people of Wales.

³⁴ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: [Stakeholder engagement note: Other Voices festival](#), October 2023

8. Ways of working and remit

Cross-remit working

48. The Committee recognises the important link between the areas of its remit. Our work benefited from incorporating as many parts of the remit as possible during inquiries and future committees may wish to consider our approach. For example, our work on Wales-Ireland relations was grounded in the international relations dynamics of culture, sport and language. Likewise, our inquiry work on Culture and the new relationship with the EU focused on UK-EU relations, culture and arrangements for cross-border creative workers.

Joint working

49. The Committee has taken the opportunity to encourage joint working with other committees where appropriate. Most notably, four Senedd committees worked together on the cross-committee inquiry into Wales's experience of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.³⁵ This was the first time that this had been done. Members from all four committees noted the positive experience and benefits of this cross-committee work.

50. The use of rapporteurs from other committees can be useful and should be encouraged. However, this was sometimes challenging due to committees meeting concurrently. The Seventh Senedd will have an opportunity to avoid this from the outset and to maximise opportunities for joint working which have brought dividends when successfully carried out.

Scrutiny arrangements for the First Minister

51. The Committee experienced issues with First Minister attendance for scrutiny and for Plenary debates on committee reports. We have regularly documented our strong criticism and serious concerns on this matter, most recently in our *Mission Cymru* report.³⁶

³⁵ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee, Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee, and Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, [UK-EU implementation review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), September 2025

³⁶ Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, [Mission Cymru Principles for international relations](#), February 2026, pages 14 – 15

Suggestions for the Seventh Senedd

Conclusion 17. A successor committee may wish to seek further opportunities for joint working with other committees on cross cutting themes.

Conclusion 18. A successor committee may wish to consider holding formal committee meetings away from the Senedd to allow for greater participation from a wider range of stakeholders.

Conclusion 19. In the Seventh Senedd, the responsible minister (which may be the First Minister) should be subject to scrutiny for Wales's international relations in the same way as any other portfolio minister.

Future Committee remit

52. The remit of the Committee has been broad, encompassing a wide range of subject areas. Inevitably, this has affected our ability to scrutinise the whole brief in as much a depth as we would have liked.

53. We have also sought to respond to issues as they arise and scrutinise areas of public policy and public bodies where events would indicate this is in the public interest. Such events and issues have arisen frequently. These include:

- Allegations surrounding the Welsh Rugby Union
- Future of St David's Hall
- Allegations concerning bullying at S4C

54. The expansion of the Senedd will afford an opportunity for the Senedd to revisit such matters. Whilst there will be many calls on the additional capacity, the creation of additional subject scrutiny capacity and more frequent committee meetings should be a high priority for the Seventh Senedd.

55. International relations has formed a fundamental part of the Committee's remit during the Sixth Senedd. Whilst international relations has primarily been the responsibility of the First Minister, the Welsh Government has had a dedicated minister. Future decisions on committee remits should take account of the potential for one of these two different models in the Seventh Senedd, and ensure that international relations remains a clear and specified responsibility.

56. For the last two Seneddau, the Culture Committee has had a specific remit to scrutinise communications and this has been included in the title of the

Committee. Whilst broadcasting is a matter reserved to Westminster, the importance of communications is such that the Committee feel strongly that this approach should be continued, not least because of the vital work in scrutinising the future of the BBC Royal Charter and the work of S4C.

Suggestions for the Seventh Senedd

Conclusion 20. Future decisions on Senedd committee remits should ensure that communications forms part of the remit and title of the successor committee and should prioritise increased scrutiny capacity.

Conclusion 21. Future decisions on Senedd committee remits should ensure that international relations remains a specified responsibility.

Annex 1: Committee work

Note – this list does not cover general ministerial scrutiny sessions or scrutiny of the Welsh Government draft budgets.

Inquiry work

Inquiry	Completion date
One day inquiry into Sport	October 2021
One day inquiry on Heritage, Museums and Archives	November 2021
One day inquiry on the Arts and Creative Industries	November 2021
One day inquiry on the Welsh Language	December 2021
One day inquiry into the future of public service media	December 2021
One day inquiry into International Relations	February 2022
Participation in sport and physical activity in disadvantaged areas	August 2022
Increasing costs: impact on culture and sport	November 2022
Inquiry into the legislative framework that supports Welsh-medium education	May 2023
Allegations surrounding the Welsh Rugby Union	June 2023
Wales-Ireland relations	October 2023
Challenges facing the creative industry workforce in Wales	October 2023
National Contemporary Art Gallery	December 2023
Public Service Broadcasting in Wales	March 2024
Six Nations rugby broadcasting rights	April 2024
Development of post-16 Welsh language provision	April 2024
Culture and the new relationship with the EU	November 2024
Impact of funding reductions for culture and sport	January 2025
The video games industry	March 2025
Charging for exhibitions	June 2025

Inquiry	Completion date
UK-EU implementation review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement	November 2025
Welsh Government's International Strategy	February 2026
Cymraeg for all?	February 2026
Wales-Ireland relations	March 2026
ARFOR	March 2026

Legislation

Bill / Legislative Consent Memoranda (LCMs) / Treaties	Date
Legislative Consent: The Cultural Objects (Protection from Seizure) Bill	March 2022
Legislative Consent: Online Safety Bill	June 2022
Draft Welsh Language Standards (No.8) Regulations 2022	June 2022
Legislative Consent: Northern Ireland Protocol Bill	October 2022
Treaty: Council of Europe Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach to Football Matches and Other Sporting Events	June 2023
Treaty: UK-Belgium Gainful Occupation of Certain Family Members of the Personnel of the Diplomatic Missions and Consular Posts	December 2023
Legislative Consent: Data Protection and Digital Information Bill	February 2024
Treaty: UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage	February 2024
Legislative Consent: Data (Use and Access) Bill	October 2024
Treaty: UK-Spain: Free Pursuit of Gainful Occupation by Dependants of Members of Diplomatic Missions and Consular Offices	March 2025
Treaty: UK-Ukraine One Hundred Year Partnership Agreement	April 2025
Treaty: UK-Germany Treaty on Friendship and Bilateral Cooperation	February 2026
Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill	March 2026

Non-inquiry work

Work undertaken	Completion date
Registering Welsh words as trademarks	September 2022
Closure of Corgi Cymru	January 2023
UK Government's Media Bill	January 2023
Support for Rubicon Dance	January 2023
Future of St David's Hall	January 2023
Promoting Welsh culture and the football World Cup	February 2023
International Relations Annual Report 2022-23	November 2023
Redundancies at Reach	February 2024
Safeguarding the national collections	June 2024
Allegations concerning bullying at S4C	September 2024
Financial position of Wales Rugby League	October 2024
Books Council of Wales magazine funding model	November 2024
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama Junior Department	January 2025
International Relations Annual Report 2024	March 2025
Cultural Strategy for Wales	May 2025
International relations monitoring	2024-2025

Annual scrutiny of arms-length bodies

- Welsh Language Commissioner
- Amgueddfa Cymru
- Arts Council of Wales
- National Library of Wales
- Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales
- Sport Wales

Pre-appointment hearings

Arms-length body	Date
Welsh Language Commissioner	October 2022
Amgueddfa Cymru	July 2023
Arts Council of Wales	March 2023
National Library of Wales	March 2022
Sport Wales	March 2022

Citizen Engagement

- Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill
- Cymraeg for all?
- Participation in sport and physical activity in disadvantaged areas
- Challenges facing the creative industry workforce
- National Contemporary Art Gallery
- Culture and the new relationship with the EU
- Impact of funding reductions for culture and sport