

Committee update

Summer 2025 – Autumn 2025

Welcome to our Eleventh committee update

This is the Eleventh 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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Tribute to Hefin David MS

Hefin David MS sadly passed away on 12 August 2025. The team who support the Committee were saddened by this news and will miss him. Hefin had been a key member of the Economy Committee in its different guises since he was first elected. We would like to share this tribute to Hefin offered by the Chair on behalf of the Committee:

“Hefin was passionate about trying to improve the lot of the people of Wales. Using his considerable intellect and enthusiasm he made an important contribution to the Committee’s work and Wales’ public discourse more widely. Hefin’s dedication was never clearer than when he was working on Apprenticeship policy, striving to improve the system and with it help people across Wales access training so they could improve their lives.

He will be deeply missed by all the Members of the Committee.”

Current Work

Soil Health in Agriculture

The Committee undertook an inquiry into [Soil Health in Agriculture](#) during the Summer term, taking oral evidence from 9 stakeholders, followed by a final session with the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs on [15 May 2025](#).

City and Growth Deals

During the Summer term, the Committee held a short review of [City and Growth Deals](#). The Committee heard oral evidence from each of the four Growth deals in Wales across two sessions. As part of this inquiry, the Committee also ran a

[consultation](#) between 12 May 2025 and 23 June 2025, which received 10 responses.

The Future of Welsh Steel

The Committee continues to keep a watching brief on this important issue, following the closure of the final blast furnace at Port Talbot’s Tata steelworks.

On 19 June 2025, Committee Members visited the Community Union Support Centre in Aberafan Shopping Centre, Port Talbot as part of this ongoing inquiry. During the visit, Members met with senior representatives from Community Union and their partner organisations, including Business Wales and Neath Port Talbot

Employability, to hear more about the support available for those affected by the blast furnace closure.

Looking to the Autumn term, the Committee plans to hold oral evidence sessions with key stakeholders in the Port Talbot Steel industry, to discuss recent events and milestones since its last evidence session in November 2024.



UK-EU implementation review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement

Joint-Committee work has continued on the UK-EU implementation review of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement over the Summer term, with Hannah Blythyn MS representing the Committee on a Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee led visit to Brussels between 24 and 26 June as part of the inquiry.

Food Processing

The Committee also launched its new inquiry into Food Processing during the summer term, taking evidence from a range of stakeholders over 4 panels so far. A consultation was also run alongside this, receiving 13 responses between 13 May 2025 and 24 June 2025. Oral evidence sessions for this inquiry will continue in to the Autumn term, including a final session with the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs.

The Committee also held a round-table event with 22 stakeholders at this year's Royal Welsh Show, on 22 July 2025. This was an opportunity to discuss the inquiry's key issues in an informal setting, and provided very interesting discussion to assist Members in forming recommendations for Welsh Government to improve the Welsh food sector.



Recent Activities

AI and the Welsh Economy

The Committee published its report AI and the Welsh Economy: Can Welsh androids dream of electric sheep? on 20 May 2025, with a Plenary debate planned for in the Autumn Term.



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Plenary debates

Following their publication in the Spring term, the Committee received responses from the Welsh Government and held Plenary debates on their reports into the Green Economy, Holyhead Port Storm Damage and Closure, and the Foundational Economy.

The response to the Green Economy report was laid on 4 June 2025, with the plenary debate held on 11 June 2025.

The response to the report 'Holyhead Port Storm Damage and Closure; Initial Findings' was laid on 25 June 2025, with the plenary debate held on 2 July 2025.

The response to the Foundational Economy report was laid on 2 July 2025, with the plenary debate held on 9 July 2025.

Apprenticeship Pathways

The Committee published its report on its Apprenticeship Pathways inquiry on 31 July 2025, following the evidence sessions during the Spring term.



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Hybu Cig Cymru

Following the conclusion of oral evidence sessions for this [inquiry](#) early in the Summer term, the Committee also [published its report](#) on Hybu Cig Cymru on 3 September 2025.



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General Scrutiny

The Committee held a General Scrutiny session [on 17 July 2025](#) with Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs; Rebecca Evans MS, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning;

and Jack Sargeant MS, Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership.

The Committee will look to continue its general scrutiny work in to the Autumn term.

Forward Work Programme

The Committee has agreed its [work programme](#) into Autumn 2025. 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 further general scrutiny with the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, and the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, as well as completing oral evidence taking in the Food Processing inquiry. The Committee also plans to focus several panels on the Future of Welsh Steel.

The forward work programme of the Committee's Autumn term is expected to be heavily led by the imminent anticipated introduction of legislation by the Welsh Government, which will fall into the Committee's remit. Further details of the Committee's planned meetings for the term will therefore be made available when this is confirmed.

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
Welsh Labour