



Enterprise and Learning Committee **Economy; Enterprise; Transport; Lifelong Learning**

Welcome to our Committee Update

The Enterprise and Learning Committee is one of the Scrutiny Committees of the **National Assembly for Wales**. Its main function is to hold the **Welsh Assembly Government** to account by examining the expenditure, administration and policy of the government and associated public bodies in the following areas:

- **Economic Development**
- **Transport**
- **Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills**

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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Website: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-third1/bus-committees-third-els-home.htm>

Latest news

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Agenda

The Committee took evidence from key stakeholders throughout the autumn term and scrutinised the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning; and the Deputy Minister for Science, Innovation and Skills at its meeting on 8 December. The Committee will publish its report early in the spring term.

Economic Renewal Programme

The Committee conducted an inquiry into the Implementation of the Welsh Government's Economic Renewal Programme. The Committee has written to the Minister for Economy and Transport outlining key issues and recommendations to the Welsh Government. This letter was published on 24 November 2010 and can be accessed on the following link;

http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-els-home/bus-committees-third-els-inquiry/el3_inq_erp/business-inq-erp-evidence.htm

We expect the Minister's response to the letter in the spring term. The Committee intends to scrutinise the Minister on his response at a meeting in the spring term.

Role of social enterprises in the Welsh economy

The Committee took evidence from key stakeholders within the social enterprise sector in Wales and scrutinised the Minister for Economy and Transport. The report was published on 18 November 2010 at a networking event at Pack-IT's new premises in Cardiff and can be accessed on the following link;

http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-els-home/bus-committees-third-els-inquiry/el3_inq_soc_ent/el_inq_soc_ent_evidence.htm

The report and the Minister's response will be debated in Plenary on 9 February 2010.

Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training

The Committee took evidence from key stakeholders and scrutinised the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning. The report was published on 15 October 2010 and can be accessed on the following link;

http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-els-home/bus-committees-third-els-report/el_3_-10-r09.htm

The report and the Minister's response will be debated in Plenary on 12 January 2010.

Rapporteur Group on Bilingualism

The Committee published its report on the first stage of the inquiry 'The teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a second language' on 30 September 2010. The report and Minister's response were debated in Plenary on 1 December.

The report, Minister's response and Plenary transcript can be accessed on the following link;

http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-els-home/bus-committees-third-els-report/el_3_-10-r08.htm

The rapporteur group has also taken evidence on the second stage of the inquiry on Bilingual training and skills in the workplace; and business interface with the public.

The group took evidence from the Welsh Language Board and Consumer Focus Wales on 29 September 2010 and visited Natwest and CADCentre UK in Cardiff on 1 December 2010. The rapporteur group will publish its second report in the spring term.

Committee activity for the spring term 2011:

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

Given that the Assembly will be dissolved on 31 March the Committee has agreed to hold one-off scrutiny sessions in the spring term to

monitor the Welsh Government's progress in implementing recommendations from previous inquiries.

Review of the roads programme in Wales - There will be two sessions in January which will include evidence from stakeholders including the Traffic Commissioner for the Welsh area and the West Midlands area and scrutiny of the Minister for Economy and Transport.

Review of the rail programme in Wales - There will be two sessions in January which will include evidence from key stakeholders and scrutiny of the Minister for Economy and Transport.

Review of the handling of the Committee's Proposed (Highways and Transport) Legislative Competence Order - The Committee's Proposed Order 2010 is being progressed. The Deputy First Minister agreed to support the Proposed Order and to facilitate its passage through Whitehall. Negotiations between relevant Welsh Assembly Government officials and Whitehall officials are taking place and the LCO is expected to reach the Welsh Affairs Committee after Christmas.

The Committee has invited the Secretary of State for Wales and the Minister for Economy and Transport to be scrutinised on the process of the LCO at a meeting in February.

Structural Funds - Implementation of the 2007-2013 programmes - There will be two sessions in February to re-visit this inquiry. The Committee will take evidence from key stakeholders and scrutinise the Minister for Economy and Transport.

Economic Renewal Programme - As previously highlighted, there will be one session in February to re-visit this inquiry. The Committee will scrutinise the Minister for Economy and Transport.

The Economic contribution of higher education in Wales - There will be one session in March to re-visit this inquiry which will include evidence from key stakeholders. The Committee will follow up on the Government progress in implementing the recommendations in the Committee's report by taking evidence and scrutinising the Minister for Economy and Transport.

Transformation agenda for post-16 education - The Committee will scrutinise the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning on his response to the Committee's letter which was published in summer 2010.

Skills in Wales - The Committee will take evidence from key stakeholders and scrutinise the Deputy Minister for Science, Innovation and Skills at a meeting in March.

The impact of the UK Government's Quango policy on Wales –
There will be one session in March.

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.

Usually Members and officials discuss the planning of inquiries every term so that the Committee has a rolling, flexible, programme of work.

Inquiries can arise in a number of ways:

- 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. The Enterprise and Learning Committee has reported on a number of petitions – for example, Carno railway station; fuel and road haulage; additional learning needs and the 'Pride in Barry' petition.
- 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 that one or two issues arose that it would wish to scrutinise in further detail. For example, the Committee reported in February 2009 on the Teacher Workload Agreement and as a result, Members undertook a further inquiry on the role of school governors.
- 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 rapporteur group of, say, four members, to undertake work behind the scenes, as it were, and then report back to the full Committee. This is what happened in the case of the Committee's report on dyslexia. The Committee currently has a rapporteur group considering aspects of bilingualism.

- 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:

daniel.collier@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 Learning Committee.

The next update

We will produce a final update on the Committee's work by the end of March 2011.