



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 and Regeneration**
- **Social Enterprise**
- **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.

Contact details

Siân Phipps	Clerk	02920 898582	sian.phipps@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Dan Collier	Deputy Clerk	02920 898020	daniel.collier@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Mike Lewis	Committee Support	02920 898018	michael.lewis@wales.gsi.gov.uk

You can also e-mail the Committee Clerking Team using this link: Enterprise.learning.comm@Wales.gsi.gov.uk. Our fax number is: 02920 898021

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

Latest news

The Economic Contribution of Higher Education in Wales

The Committee's report on the Economic Contribution of Higher Education in Wales was launched on 7 October in the University of Wales, Newport, Caerleon Campus. The report was debated in Plenary on 2 December 2009. The transcript of that debate can be accessed on the following link;

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-chamber/bus-chamber-third-assembly-rop.htm?act=dis&id=155634&ds=12/2009>

In the joint response from the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills and the Minister for Economy and Transport, reference is made to the new strategy '21st Century Higher Education Plan', which sets out the Welsh Government's vision for the future of higher education in Wales. The strategy includes: offering flexible, accessible and learner-centred provision; contribution to the renewal of the Welsh economy; working with business inside and outside Wales; and contributing to the reviving and sustaining of communities. The Committee will ensure that Ministers deliver on these priorities and will monitor their progress.

The Committee Proposed Legislative Competence Order on Highways and Transport

The Committee laid its proposed (Legislative Competence) (Highways and Transport) Order 2009 and its Explanatory Memorandum in June 2009. The proposed Order would lead to duties being placed on local authorities to create and maintain a network of safe routes primarily for pedestrians and cyclists. In November 2009, the Deputy First Minister agreed to support the Proposed Order and to facilitate its passage through Whitehall on condition the Committee lay the draft LCO in March 2010. The Committee has agreed to this approach as long as powers can be drawn down within the life of this Assembly. Further details 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/bus-committees-third-els-inquiry-lco.htm>

Other reports

The Committee published the following reports during the autumn term;

- [Casualty Reduction and Trunk Road Management](#) – 23 September 2009

- [Final report on the Economic Contribution of Higher Education in Wales](#) – 7 October 2009
- [Arrangements for School Funding – Follow-up report](#) – 8 October 2009
- [Follow-up report on Support for People with Dyslexia in Wales](#) – 28 October 2009

All Enterprise and Learning Committee reports, Government responses and Plenary debates can be accessed via the following link;

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

The Committee will publish reports on ‘The Future Railway Infrastructure in Wales’ and ‘The Manufacturing Strategy’ in early spring. Following their publication, these reports will be available on the Committee’s report page.

If you require hard copies of Committee reports, please e-mail daniel.collier@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Committee activity for the spring term 2010:

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

Generating Jobs in the Green Economy – This inquiry will continue into the spring term. The Committee has taken evidence from Dr Calvin Jones from Cardiff Business School; representatives from Energy Saving Trust; Constructions Skills; the Institution of Civil Engineers and scrutinised the Minister for Economy and Transport and the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing.

Specialist provision for young people with autism in further education – Two meetings in February. Possible scrutiny of the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills and evidence from key stakeholders.

Structural Funds: implementation of the 2007-2013 programmes - Possibly four meetings after half term. Scrutiny of the Minister for Economy and Transport, Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills and relevant representatives of the private and voluntary sectors.

Manufacturing Strategy – Possibly one further meeting in March. Scrutiny of the Minister for Economy and Transport.

Transformation agenda for post-16 education – Possibly one further session in March. Evidence from key stakeholders.

Terms of Reference for the new inquiries will be published in due course, together with an invitation for interested parties to submit written evidence.

Rapporteur Group on Bilingualism – will work informally and undertake visits, meeting with individuals and organisations, which can help the group with its remit:

- The teaching and acquisition of Welsh as a Second Language in Secondary Schools and how Welsh is then transferred into social and adult life
- Bilingual training and skills in the workplace
- Business interface with the public

The Rapporteur Group took video evidence from teachers, pupils and their parents on the teaching of Welsh as a second language at the Urdd Eisteddfod in May 2009. The video evidence and on-line questionnaires can be found on the following link;

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

Looking further ahead

We already know some of the issues the Committee wishes to scrutinise in summer 2010, though as always, priorities may change:

- Community Learning;
- Transport Planning and Future Funding (including Community Transport);
- The role of cooperatives and social enterprises.

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 they 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 witnesses 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.gsi.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 aim to produce an update at least once a term, and to e-mail you more frequently, should the Committee decide to undertake some urgent scrutiny or change its published priorities.