

National Assembly for Wales
Committee for Scrutiny of the First Minister
Legacy Paper
March 2011

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Committee for Scrutiny of the First Minister

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Information on the Committee, its membership, its remit and previous publications can be found at:

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-other-committees/bus-committees-third-sfm-home-.htm>

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1. Introduction

Role and Remit

1. Standing Order 19.1 provides for a Committee to be established and meet not more than twice a year to:

‘Take evidence from the First Minister on any matter relevant to the exercise by the Welsh Ministers and the Counsel General of any of their functions (other than in relation to the organisation of Government Business in plenary).’

2. The Committee was elected in February 2009 and met four times during the course of the third assembly. The Committee has played an important role in scrutinising the First Minister on key cross cutting issues, for example:

- the implementation of the One Wales agreement;
- the outcome of the Treasury’s Comprehensive Spending Review and the Welsh Government’s draft budget;
- the devolution settlement, the Barnett formula and the Holtham Report; and,
- the Welsh Government’s relationship with Westminster.

3. The Committee wrote to the First Minister following each meeting and copies of these letters, along with agendas, papers, minutes and transcripts can be found on the National Assembly website.

Future Role of the Committee

4. The Committee for the Scrutiny of the First Minister has provided a critical forum for scrutinising the Welsh Government across the breadth of its responsibilities and on overarching issues of a constitutional nature. It is strongly recommended that the functions of this Committee are retained in the fourth assembly.

5. Due to the small number of Members sitting on it, the Committee has sometimes experienced difficulties with quorum. It is therefore recommended that it has a larger membership in future. A larger membership might be achieved by involving more Chairs of other

Committees, though this must be balanced with retaining a range of experience on the membership.

6. It is also recommended that one of the two annual meetings should be held outside Cardiff, as long as this is feasible within the timetable, to broaden the reach of the Committee and enable consideration of issues relating to different regions across Wales.

Legacy to Successor Committee

7. Some areas that a future Committee with a remit for scrutinising the First Minister might wish to look at are:

- The Holtham Report and its implementation
 - A separate legal jurisdiction for Wales
 - The Welsh Government's legislative programme
 - Devolution of the criminal justice system
 - Public sector job losses
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