



Committee Portfolios and Responsibilities in the 4th Assembly

Introduction

1. On 22 June, the Assembly approved motions to establish its committee system.
2. The Standing Orders require all areas of government responsibility to be open to scrutiny by the Assembly's committee system. Hence, no areas of ministerial responsibility should be out of bounds for examination by at least one Assembly committee. At the same time, the Business Committee intends the system to allow for cross-cutting examination of all areas of government responsibility. So, whilst this report indicates the lead committee for each broad area of ministerial responsibility, all committees are free to examine any issue from their particular perspective.
3. The core roles of the Assembly's committee system can be summarised as follows:
 - scrutinising Bills and other Assembly, UK and EU legislative proposals, reporting to the Assembly with recommendations for their improvement, and considering and making amendments to Bills;
 - examining the finance and performance of relevant parts of the Welsh Government, associated public bodies and others of relevance to Wales; and

- examining and reporting on the implementation of Welsh Government policy, legislation and other commitments, including identifying and scrutinising areas of existing or emerging Welsh Government policy, or areas where existing policy is deficient, and making proposals for improvements.

4. This report sets out in more detail the remits of the various committees.

Children and Young People Committee

5. The Children and Young People Committee's role is to consider expenditure, administration, policy and legislative matters within its remit. The main areas of ministerial responsibility falling within the committee's remit are listed below.

The rights and entitlements of children and young people
 Child Poverty
 Social care for children
 Child health
 Adoption and fostering services
 Play
 Parenting and Families
 Childcare
 Children's Commissioner for Wales;
 The Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (CAFCASS)
 Safeguarding children
 Schools, including teaching standards, curriculum, governance and effectiveness
 Welsh medium and bilingual education
 Additional learning needs
 Inclusion in schools
 Pupil attendance and behaviour
 Early years education
 14-19 learning
 Youth work
 Relevant EU policy matters

Environment and Sustainability Committee

6. The Environment and Sustainability Committee's role is to consider expenditure, administration, policy and legislative matters within its remit. The main areas of ministerial responsibility falling within the committee's remit are listed below.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Water resources, control and quality (including the marine environment) Wildlife, biodiversity and nature conservation National Parks Countryside and open spaces Forestry Waste management Energy policy and fuel poverty (including steel and coal) Animal health and welfare Planning and Building Regulations Climate change Sustainable Development Common Agricultural Policy Relevant EU policy matters

Health and Social Care Committee

7. The Health and Social Care Committee's role is to consider expenditure, administration, policy and legislative matters within its remit. The main areas of ministerial responsibility falling within the committee's remit are listed below.

National Health Service Social care Mental health services Public health and health protection Health improvement Carers Social services activities of local authorities Regulation of residential, domiciliary, adult placements Aids, adaptations and support at home Independent living Care in the community
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The Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Food safety
Research and development in health and social care
Prison Service health service
Relevant EU policy matters

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

8. The Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee's role is to consider expenditure, administration, policy and legislative matters within its remit. The main areas of ministerial responsibility falling within the committee's remit are listed below.

Housing and housing-related activities
Homelessness and housing advice
Affordable housing (including quality)
Local Government and Communities
Public Service Ombudsman Wales
Public service improvement
Equal opportunities
Domestic violence
Asylum, immigration and migrant workers
Community cohesion
Community Safety
Gypsies and travellers
Culture
Welsh language
Welsh heritage and the historic environment and buildings
Museums, public libraries and archives
Arts
Tourism
Sport, physical activity and active recreation
Fire and Rescue Services
Civil Contingencies
Broadcasting
Relevant EU policy matters

Enterprise and Business Committee

9. The Enterprise and Business Committee's role is to consider expenditure, administration, policy and legislative matters within its remit. The main areas of ministerial responsibility falling within the committee's remit are listed below.

Business and enterprise, including inward investment / exports
Research, development and innovation
Higher education
Technology and Science
Strategic, physical and legacy regeneration
Employment
Workforce development
Skills
Vocational qualifications
NEETS
Adult community learning and work based learning
Employability and careers advice
Welfare reform
ICT Infrastructure
Transport
Social Enterprise
EU structural funds programmes
Relevant EU policy matters

Finance Committee

10. The Finance Committee's role is to carry out the functions of the responsible committee set out in Standing Order 19. This includes consideration of the use of resources by the Assembly Commission or Welsh Ministers and in particular reporting during the annual budget round. The Committee may also consider any other matter relating to expenditure out of the Welsh Consolidated Fund.

11. In respect of the examination of the financial implications of Bills the Business Committee considers that the Committee should be selective, focusing its scrutiny on Bills of greatest financial significance, and take a strategic overview of financial matters relating to legislation.

Public Accounts Committee

12. The Public Accounts Committee's role is to carry out the functions of the responsible committee set out in Standing Order 18. The Committee will consider reports prepared by the Auditor General for Wales on the accounts of the Welsh Government and other public bodies, and on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which resources were employed in the discharge of public functions. Its remit also includes specific statutory powers under the Government of Wales Act 2006 relating to the appointment of the Auditor General, his or her budget and the auditors of that office.

Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee

13. The Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee's role is to carry out the specific functions of the responsible committee in Standing Order 21 and to consider any other constitutional or governmental matter within or relating to the competence of the Assembly or Welsh Ministers. This includes the consideration of statutory instruments, draft statutory instruments, any other subordinate legislation laid before the Assembly, Assembly and UK Bills as well as a wider remit to consider the subsidiarity implications of draft European Union legislation and other constitutional matters. In particular they also have an overview of the First Minister's functions as they relate to constitutional or overarching governmental matters.

Petitions Committee

14. The Petitions Committee's role is to consider all admissible petitions which are submitted by the public. Its specific functions are set out in Standing Order 23

Standards Committee

15. The Standards committee's role is to carry out the functions set out in Standing Order 22. These include the investigation of complaints referred to it by the Standards Commissioner, consideration of any matters of principle relating to the conduct of Members, establishing the procedures for the investigation of complaints and the arrangements for the Register of Members' interests and other relevant public records determined by Standing Orders.

European and External Affairs

16. The Business Committee agreed to mainstream European policy matters across committees rather than have a single, dedicated committee. The Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee will be responsible for subsidiarity monitoring checks as well as considering any other constitutional or governmental matter within or relating to the competence of the Assembly or Welsh Ministers.

Review

17. The Business Committee has agreed that it will review the operation of the committee system in 2012. As part of that review, it will consider the impact of the decision to mainstream European matters.

The role of committee chairs

18. Committee chairs play a vital role in the delivery of the strategic objectives of the Assembly. Given this, and the fact that each Chair is elected by the Assembly as whole, we feel it is appropriate to set out in more detail the role that committee chairs must fulfil on behalf of the Assembly.

19. The key responsibilities of committee chairs are to:

- set the strategic direction of the committee and ensure the transparent prioritisation of its activity so as to deliver a balanced, comprehensive and effective programme of legislative, policy and financial scrutiny;
- maximise the relevance and influence of the committee whilst maintaining its clear independence from the Welsh Government;
- act impartially at all times, decisively, fairly and in a manner that maintains the confidence of the committee;
- command the confidence of Members, witnesses and the public at large through knowledge of the subject matter of the committee's remit; demonstration of effective legislative, policy and financial scrutiny techniques; maintenance of order; and the application of all relevant legal and procedural requirements on the committee;

- secure the commitment and engagement of all committee members and build cross-party consensus wherever possible;
- build the culture and skills mix within the committee required to maximise its effectiveness as a scrutiny body;
- ensure that the committee receives the expert advice, information and other support it requires to fulfil its objectives effectively;
- drive the delivery of all aspects of the committee's work with pace and quality;
- represent the committee publicly, in the media and in formal Assembly business; and
- ensure critical analysis and evaluation of the committee's work and drive innovation in its operation so as to increase effectiveness, public engagement and impact.