



Enterprise and Learning Committee

Economy; Enterprise; Transport; Lifelong Learning

Welcome to the final update on the work of the Enterprise and Learning Committee

The Enterprise and Learning Committee is one of the Scrutiny Committees of the **National Assembly for Wales**. Its main function has been 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**

Between June 2007 and March 2011 the Committee published 38 reports on subjects within its remit - economic development, transport, education, lifelong learning and skills. In its role of scrutinising the policies and expenditure of the Welsh Government, the Committee met 103 times in public, questioned witnesses 557 times and cross-examined Welsh Ministers on 51 occasions. The Committee made 349 recommendations to Ministers and was responsible for progressing the first and last Committee proposed Legislative Competence Order through the National Assembly and UK Parliament.

All the Committee's business, including agendas, papers, transcripts and reports are available on the National Assembly's website:
<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-els-home.htm>

From midnight on 31 March 2011, the National Assembly for Wales will dissolve until the elections on 5 May 2011. This means that the Enterprise and Learning Committee will cease to exist and its Members will cease to be Assembly Members.

Latest news – spring 2011

The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Agenda

The Committee published its report on the 'Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Agenda' on 28 January 2011. The report and the Minister's response were debated in Plenary on 16 March 2011.

The report, Ministers' 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-inquiry/el3_inq_stem/el_inq_stem_evidence.htm

Rapporteur Group on Bilingualism

The Committee published its report on the second stage of its inquiry into bilingualism in Wales 'Bilingual training and skills in the workplace and business interface with the public' on 1 February 2011. The report and the Welsh Government's response were debated in Plenary on 23 March 2011.

The report, the Welsh Government's response and the transcript of the debate 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_bilingual-work.htm

Review of the handling of the Committee's Proposed (Highways and Transport) Legislative Competence Order

The Committee's proposed Legislative Competence Order for the development and maintenance of a national network of routes for pedestrians and cyclists was laid in Parliament on 3 February 2011. The Committee withdrew the LCO after the referendum on 3 March 2011 as the successful 'yes' outcome meant that competence was automatically acquired by the National Assembly to legislate in this field.

In its Legacy Report to the Fourth Assembly the Committee recommended that a future committee of the National Assembly for Wales should bring forward early in the term an Assembly Bill that

would place a duty on highway authorities to develop and maintain a network of traffic free routes across Wales for walkers and cyclists.

Follow-up scrutiny

During the final term of the Third Assembly, there was insufficient time for the Committee to embark on new inquiries that required Ministerial responses and debates in Plenary before the National Assembly's dissolution at midnight on 31 March 2011. The Committee therefore focused its energy from January to March on following up previous reports of inquiries and on monitoring progress made in implementing its recommendations to Government. There emerged from those sessions a number of issues which the Committee believed warranted further inquiry, scrutiny or monitoring in the Fourth Assembly. The Committee held follow-up sessions on:

- The Implementation of the Welsh Government's Economic Renewal Programme;
- Structural funds: implementation of the 2007-2013 programmes;
- The economic contribution of higher education in Wales;
- The transformation agenda for post-16 education;
- The Welsh Government's Road and Rail Forward Programmes; and
- The Sector Skills Councils in Wales.

Legacy Report

On 30 March 2011, the Committee published its Legacy Report which makes a number of recommendations to be taken forward in the next Assembly. The report is dedicated to the some 350 organisations and individuals with whom the Committee has been in regular contact, both as a thank you for the contribution that you made to the Committee's work, and also as a testament to the importance for democratic maturity of holding Ministers to account on behalf of the people of Wales.

The Legacy Report can be found on the following link:

http://www.assemblywales.org/el_committee_legacy_report_-_e.pdf

A word of thanks from the Committee Chair

It has been a privilege to have chaired the cross-party Enterprise and Learning Committee during the Third Assembly. The last four years have been challenging but rewarding times. Our remit of economic development, education, skills and transport has covered issues of huge importance to the people of Wales, as well as future generations. We have seen the economic climate deteriorate, with the prospect of even greater austerity ahead.

My heartfelt thanks go out to all of you who have contributed to the work of the Committee over the years – as well as the many people who have worked behind the scenes in supporting the Committee. I would also like to pay tribute to all those Assembly Members who have sat on the Committee. Through their commitment and strength of purpose, we have been able to work together across political divides.

Yet our reports are only as good as the evidence presented to us. By listening to your views and reflecting your ideas I trust that our recommendations to Ministers have helped them to shape policy and even change direction.

Effective scrutiny is vital for a healthy democracy. I sincerely hope that by holding the Welsh Government to account on behalf of the people of Wales, we have helped change many people's lives for the better.

Gareth Jones AM
Chair, Enterprise and Learning Committee

Please feel free to forward this document to anyone you think would wish to know about the work of the Enterprise and Learning Committee during its final term.

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