

Agenda – Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2 – Senedd

Meeting date: Thursday, 7 July 2016

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

Alun Davidson

Committee Clerk

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1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09:30–09:45)

Committee Members will be invited to introduce themselves.

2 Discussion of Early Business

(09:45–10:30)

(Pages 1 – 4)

The Chair will introduce a paper to start discussion of how the Committee might want to approach its work.

3 Papers to note

Introduction to Committee Support

(Pages 5 – 14)



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Wales

The Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

Early business

Purpose

This paper sets out a programme of early business that is focused on providing the Committee with the opportunity to set strong foundations for its future work.

Setting strategic objectives

“Before you even think about starting work, you need to have a clear idea of what you are trying to achieve. This applies to the overall direction of your committee as well as to specific inquiries.”

Dr Hannah White, Institute for Government

The Assembly Commission has a vision for world class committees and committee chairs have been set a range of expectation by the Llywydd. The approach suggested in this paper aligns with these aims and should prepare the committee well for delivering them.

This paper outlines a suggested approach to the initial business of the Committee. The approach will lead the Committee to a position where it can be clear about its objectives for the next five years and have a high-level work programme established.

The principle of setting clear objectives before embarking on scrutiny work is important. In previous Assemblies, committees have launched into inquiry work as soon as possible after their establishment. This has not allowed much time to consider what they want to achieve and how they want to approach their work – simply what they want to look at. The Assembly is not unique by any means in this regard, and [recent work that looked at House of Commons select committees](#) came to similar conclusions.

Whilst the drive to ‘get on with business’ is understandable, it is vitally important that this does not override the unique opportunity a committee has at this early stage to set a firm foundation for its future work.

Investing a comparatively short amount of time in understanding what the committee and its members want to achieve – its objectives - and how it will achieve these objectives will pay dividends as the Assembly progresses. In turn, this sets the framework for achieving good scrutiny outcomes and for providing a fulfilling experience for the Assembly Members that serve on the committee.

Outline timetable

The dates and activities that follow are only indicative. Stakeholders and witnesses have not been consulted and final arrangements will only be made once a programme of work has been agreed.

Beyond the meeting on (or near) the 22 September, the suggested work strands would allow the Committee to begin scrutinising the Welsh Government without compromising any decisions it might want to take on a longer-term work programme.

More detailed outline agendas are provided at the end of this paper.

Dates	Venue	Business and objective(s)
7 July	Senedd	Initial discussion of the approach to early business.
13 July	Senedd	Agree an approach to early business and activity during the Summer Recess.
20 July	Royal Welsh Show	Establish stakeholder relationships and gather work-programme intelligence.
14 September (tbc)	Senedd	Welsh Government Performance: Ministerial priorities and the response to Brexit.
20 - 22 September (tbc – could also be held in recess)	Pembrokeshire	Day 1: Build subject knowledge (marine policy). Day 2: Strategic planning session – possibly facilitated by the Institute of Government.
Other business that could be taken in the first half of the autumn term		
September/ October	Senedd / External events	Agricultural policy in Wales after Brexit
September/ October	Senedd	Climate change: Approach to scrutinising Welsh performance.
September/ October	Senedd	Welsh Government Performance: Draft budget for 2017-18.
September/ October	Senedd	Natural Resources Wales Performance: Performance during 2015-16 and future priorities (Chair and CEO).

The Committee has also been invited to undertake **a number of site visits around Wales**. Further details of these can be provided should members want to include them in this initial programme. Otherwise, they can be discussed at the strategic planning session.

Summer recess

If Members are content with the approach suggested, then the summer recess provides an opportunity to think about individual and collective objectives, to gather information on key stakeholder priorities; to find out more about the subjects within the committee's remit and consider any professional development that members might wish to target (individually or as a committee).

To facilitate the gathering of information and to enable the Committee to engage immediately with its stakeholders the Committee could consult informally over the summer recess. Utilising engagement technologies the Committee could invite views from the public and key organisation on the areas that they would like to see the Committee consider.

If this is an approach that the Committee wishes to pursue, then the Clerk and colleagues from the Communications team can provide further details at the next meeting.

It is usual for the committee with responsibility for agriculture to hold an event at the Royal Welsh Show. In the past, committees have held a variety of different events. This has included formal evidence sessions with Ministers, informal stakeholder lunches, launches, and 'off the record' briefings.

Past experience has shown that, given the nature of the event, less formal stakeholder lunches coupled with smaller informal meetings and one-to-ones with stakeholders provide the best outcomes for Members and stakeholders

If the Committee wishes to attend this year, there is an excellent opportunity for early engagement with stakeholders and to consider a more structured engagement with some priority stakeholders as a precursor to work on the future of agricultural policy in Wales.

Early business in the autumn

Two suggested early inquiries are outlined below. These inquiries could be explored without pre-empting decisions taken following the strategic planning session. Whilst initial work could begin on these, their future shape and scheduling could be adjusted to align with any strategic decisions taken.

The future of agricultural policy in Wales after Brexit

This inquiry could consider the future of the agricultural industry in Wales post-2020 including the opportunities and challenges facing the industry; future funding of the sector and rural communities and consider Welsh priorities for a new agricultural policy.

Climate Change: Developing an approach to scrutinising Welsh performance

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 set ambitious greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and a framework for delivering these reductions, introducing a carbon budgeting approach. The Committee will need to develop an understanding of the reporting and monitoring arrangements, the basis on which the targets and carbon budgets have been calculated, and how best to structure the Assembly's scrutiny of the Welsh Governments delivery of these targets.

Similar scrutiny regimes are in place in the House of Commons and in the Scottish Parliament. The Committee might wish to explore the approaches taken by these legislatures as part of its work to determine the optimum approach to take in Wales.

Action

Members are invited to:

- Note this paper and indicate how they wish to proceed; and
- Agree to a programme for the Royal Welsh Show on 20 July 2016.
- Agree on the level of formality to be observed when conducting any meetings at the Royal Welsh Show.

Alun Davidson

Clerk

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Outline agendas for early meetings

The dates and activities that follow are only indicative. Stakeholders and witnesses have not been consulted and final arrangements will only be made once a programme of work has been agreed.

First meeting - Thursday 7 July 2016 09:00 (1hr)

Introductions (30 minutes)

Early business (30 minutes)

Second meeting – Wednesday 13 July 2016 09:30 (3.5hrs)

Early business

Secretariat to return with more detailed plans based on discussions at the first meeting.

Third meeting – Wednesday 20 July 2016 [Royal Welsh Show]

Private roundtable with key stakeholders

Open stakeholder lunch

Autumn Term

Fourth meeting – 14 September 2016 [Cardiff Bay]

Welsh Government Performance: Ministerial priorities and the response to Brexit

An evidence session with the Minister for Environment and Rural Affairs and her officials.

Fifth meeting – 21-22 September 2016 [Pembrokeshire]

Day 1 – Marine policy priorities

Day 2 – Strategic planning session

Alternatively, dates in recess could be considered for this visit and meeting.

Other meetings that could be held prior to the agreement of a longer-term work programme

The future of agricultural policy in Wales after Brexit

Climate change: Approach to scrutinising Welsh performance

Natural Resources Wales Performance: Performance during 2015-16 and future priorities

Welsh Government Performance: Draft budget 2017-18

National Assembly for Wales: 2016–2021

Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

The Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee was established by the Assembly on 28 June 2016 with the remit:

‘To examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising expenditure, administration and policy matters encompassing (but not restricted to): climate change; energy; natural resources management; planning; animal welfare and agriculture.’

This ‘welcome pack’ includes information for Members of the Committee on the support available from Assembly Commission staff, sources of advice and guidance, and includes details on some of the general procedures and practice for Assembly Committees.

The areas covered include:

1. Integrated Team Support
2. Continuous Professional Development
3. Operation of Committees
4. Contact Details

1. Integrated Team Support

The Committee is supported in its work by an integrated team of Assembly Commission staff made up of clerks, researchers, lawyers, outreach and communications staff and translators who provide different aspects of specialist advice.

The integrated team is led by the Clerk who has overall responsibility for the support provided to the committee.

a) Clerking Team

The clerking team supports the day-to-day work of the Committee, planning and organising the business of the Committee. The Chair and Members drive the Committee's work; the Clerks and their team assist this. This work focuses on providing timely, accurate and relevant information and advice as well as managing Committee inquiries and drafting reports or other written documents.

The clerking team also ensures that information about the Committee's work is published to the Committee's web page and on relevant social media sites.

b) Legal Services

The Committee is supported by a legal adviser from Legal Services. They assist the Committee by advising on the legal aspects of any Committee work. In terms of legislation they support the Committee in helping to understand the technical and practical implications of legislation and the drafting of amendments for committee members.

c) Research Service

The Research Service and the EU Office provide specialist policy advice.

Further details can be found in the [Research Service Guide](#).

d) The Outreach Team

The Outreach Team provide support to Assembly Committees by facilitating engagement opportunities with a range of diverse citizens from across Wales, which specifically encourages and includes contributions from those who are otherwise unheard in the scrutiny process.

They do this by tailoring engagement programmes and activities, which complement committee consultations, to suit the availability of Assembly Members and participants, in an engaging and comfortable environment.

Further information on the support available can be found on the [Outreach and external engagement web page](#).

e) Translation and Reporting Service

The Translation and Reporting Service (TRS) provides text translation and simultaneous interpretation services, as well as full transcripts of committee meetings. Staff are available to help Members make best use of the services which enable each member to be informed and contribute fully in their official language of choice – Welsh or English.

Committee Members will be consulted on their preferences for how they wish to manage their work on Committees (including, for example, how they wish to receive papers), and the TRS team will help achieve this.

2. Continuous Professional Development for Committee Work

To support the work of committees, the Members' Liaison and Professional Development team has prepared a brochure which gives a flavour of the CPD opportunities available for committee members, committee Chairs and Members' staff. This is designed to help develop the knowledge, expertise and skills needed to undertake the different aspect of committee work – the main elements of the brochure are set out below.

Members can discuss any requirements they have for CPD with the Members' Liaison and Development team, or with the Committee Clerk.

Strategy and approach – Developing committee objectives and purpose; Developing a shared vision; identifying priorities and developing a strategic approach; measuring progress; committee working as a team; timetabling and forward planning; evaluating impact.

The committee's area of expertise / subject area – Understanding the subject, policy, legislative, and financial context and key issues of relevance in Wales, the UK and beyond; getting to know the stakeholders and different methods of public engagement.

Approach to evidence gathering and questioning – Preparation; different questioning techniques and ways of following up responses; dealing with different types of witnesses; objective setting for each piece of work; Evaluating evidence (oral, written and other); follow-up and evaluating impact.

Financial scrutiny – The budget process; impact of tax/borrowing powers; in-year financial scrutiny (policy and legislation).

Legislation – Recognising the key features of effective legislation; drafting amendments and use of the amending stages; conducting pre- and post-legislative scrutiny; the scrutiny of subordinate legislation.

3. Operation of Committees

The operation of Committees is governed by the rules set out in Standing Order 17. Advice on any aspect of SO17 is available from Clerks, some of the key elements of SO17 are set out below:

- Declaration of Interests (SO17.24A) – Before taking part in Committee proceedings, a Member must declare any interest, financial or otherwise, that they, or to their knowledge, a family member, has or is expecting to have which is relevant to those proceedings, and might reasonably be thought by others to influence their contribution.
- Quorum (SO17.31) – A committee meeting must be declared inquorate if there are fewer than three Members, or less than one-third of the committee's members, whichever is the greater, present. A committee meeting must be declared inquorate if, at the beginning of the meeting, the Members present represent only one political group.
- Openness (SO17.40) – Committees must meet in public and broadcasting access for public meetings must be permitted in accordance with such arrangements as the Commission agrees. Committee meetings are broadcast on Senedd TV and transcripts of committee meetings are made available in draft form within three to five working days, with a final version published within 10 working days.
- Meeting in Private (SO17.42) – A committee may resolve to exclude the public from a formal meeting or any part of a formal meeting for a specified purpose. These Standing Orders do not apply to informal meetings.

- Substitution (SO17.48) – A committee member who has given advance notice to the chair may be represented at a meeting, or a part of a meeting, by another Member from the same political group who has been identified in advance.

4) Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

Integrated Team - Contact Details

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