

# Committee update

## Spring 2022

### Welcome to our first committee update

This is the first bulletin for the Senedd's Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee. It provides an overview of the Committee's recent activities to help you stay up to date and engage with the Committee's work.

It has been produced by the Clerking team which supports the Committee. If you have any feedback please let us know using the contact details below.

#### Contact details

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## Setting Priorities

The Committee consulted with stakeholders last summer on Sixth Senedd Priorities across the Committee's remit.

Sixty three responses were published on the Committee's website, including a combined response on shooting in Wales, reflecting the views of the British Association for Shooting and 34 individual responses in support of shooting activities.

In July the Committee held an introductory event as part of the Virtual Royal Welsh Show, where Members heard the views of a range of rural affairs stakeholders.

In September Members held a strategic planning session to discuss and agree shared priorities for the forward work programme. The summer consultation responses were considered as part of this discussion. The programme Members set out will include scrutiny of legislation referred to the Committee, including Legislative Consent Memoranda for UK Bills, and the forthcoming Agriculture (Wales) Bill.

Members also agreed a preference for short, sharp, forensic inquiries where possible. The Committee's goal is to be as effective as possible by undertaking rigorous scrutiny where it matters most.

The Committee continued to engage with stakeholders in the autumn term, including panel sessions on the ongoing effects of COVID on the economy and with the farming unions, the animal welfare sector, and environmental organisations.

Skills and research and development fall within the Committee's remit, and probably the most significant development in this sector is the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Bill. The Children, Young People and Education Committee is currently leading with scrutiny of the Bill, therefore the Economy Committee is keeping a watching brief on progress, and expects to engage more closely with the skills sector on this and other issues later in 2022.

## Current Work

### Review of the Water Resources (Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021

In June 2021 the Senedd voted to call upon a relevant Senedd committee to urgently review these regulations, which came into force in April 2021. The regulations designated the whole of Wales as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ), meaning farmers across Wales must comply with rules on the application of nitrates (slurry and fertiliser) on their land. Previously only 2.4% of the land area of Wales was designated as NVZs. The Committee is conducting the review, and received **32 responses** to consultation. It has taken oral evidence on the policy behind the regulations from **Natural Resources Wales, farming unions** and **environmental organisations**.

The regulations are currently subject to a judicial review, after a request by NFU Cymru was granted, and the court case was heard in October but a judgement has not yet been issued. The Minister for Rural Affairs was due to give evidence to the Committee on 9 December, but has since **written** to the Chair suggesting that consideration is given to postponing until after a judgement has been issued. The Chair has **replied**, and correspondence is still ongoing. The

Committee will not report until sometime in the New Year.

### HGV Driver Shortage and Supply Chain Issues - Inquiry

A consultation into the impact in Wales ran until 22 November, and on 9 December evidence was taken in a **one-day inquiry** from logistics and haulage, business and the union Unite Wales. The Citizen Engagement team also spoke with current and former HGV drivers. The Committee will report its findings as soon as possible in the New Year.

### Forward Work Programme

In November the Committee agreed its **work programme** into Spring 2022. The published work programme indicates the current intentions of the Committee at the time of publishing, however it may change at any time to respond to external events.

### Welsh Government Draft Budget: 2022-2023

At its next meeting, on **20 January**, the Committee will be joined by the Minister for Economy and the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, for scrutiny of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget for 2022-23. As in previous years, Committee reports on the draft budget will be published on the Finance Committee's webpage:

## Welsh Government Draft Budget 2022-23

### **Joint Fisheries Statement**

The Committee plans to take evidence from the Minister, Fisheries sector and environmental organisations on the Joint Fisheries Statement. This was scheduled for 3 February, however will now be rearranged in light of slippage with the statement's publication.

### **Development Bank of Wales**

Annual scrutiny of the Development Bank of Wales is planned for 3 February. This includes scrutiny of the Bank's latest annual report and reflecting on its current and future role in Wales's economic recovery.

### **Tourism, Hospitality and Retail Inquiry**

Reflecting Members' strong interest in the recovery and future development of these sectors, the Committee intends to conduct an inquiry in the spring - further details will follow. This builds on Covid-19 recovery work conducted by the predecessor Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee in the Fifth Senedd.

### **Trade Deals**

The Committee's work on trade will include examining future Trade deals with Australia and New Zealand, as well as progress with the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), a free trade agreement between 11 countries.

### **Common Frameworks**

These are non-legislative frameworks for continued cooperation between the UK Government and devolved administrations on certain areas of policy and legislation, following the UK's exit from the EU. Scrutiny of these frameworks will be an important matter for relevant Senedd Committees in spring 2022. The Committee will give further consideration to the emerging frameworks, initially in private, in February and March.

## Remit

The Committee was established on 23 June 2021, with a remit encompassing (but not restricted to): economic development, regeneration, skills, trade, research and development (including technology and science), and rural affairs.,

## Committee Members

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**Committee Chair:**

**Paul Davies MS**

Welsh Conservatives



**Hefin David MS**

Welsh Labour



**Luke Fletcher MS**

Plaid Cymru



**Samuel Kurtz MS**

Welsh Conservatives



**Vikki Howells MS**

Welsh Labour



**Sarah Murphy MS**

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