

Rt Hon Elin Jones MS
Presiding Officer
Chair of Chairs' Forum

06 October 2025

Consultation: Reviewing Committee Effectiveness in the Sixth Senedd

Dear Llywydd,

Thank you for your letter of 8 July 2025, seeking the Committees' views on committee effectiveness in the Sixth Senedd, which we considered at our meeting on 17 September 2025.

Although our Committee has not scrutinised a bill during this Senedd term, we were invited by the Children, Young People, and Education Committee to contribute to Stage One scrutiny of the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill ("the Bill") in the Autumn Term of 2024. We undertook this work using a rapporteur model. The following observations are based on our experience with that model and on individual Members' reflections on the Bill process.

We are grateful to the Children, Young People, and Education Committee for enabling our involvement. However, as a Committee, we felt strongly that this Bill required thorough scrutiny from both education and Welsh language perspectives. We found the rapporteur model to be less effective due to scheduling conflicts, as both committees involved meet during the same time slot. This made it difficult for the rapporteurs to fully engage with the Bill's examination while managing ongoing committee responsibilities. They were also unable to provide meaningful feedback to our Committee, limiting its overall contribution. As a result, we believe Welsh language considerations did not receive the attention they merited.

Our experience highlights the importance of examining all draft legislation holistically to ensure comprehensive and balanced scrutiny of all policy aspects. The Senedd Commission may wish to revisit the model of Bill Committees, introducing flexible membership determined on a bill-by-bill basis to ensure the inclusion of Members with appropriate subject matter expertise.

More broadly, we observed that committees face considerable disruption when attempting to balance the scrutiny of bills with their wider responsibilities. The burden of legislative scrutiny has also not fallen evenly across committees, often resulting in extended periods for some during which little policy scrutiny can be undertaken.

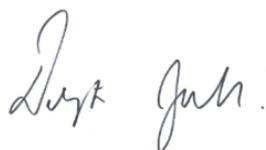
The Committee reflected on the frequent changes in Committee Membership during the Sixth Senedd. This has an impact on continuity and the development of in-depth subject knowledge, which is vital for effective scrutiny and to support follow-up work. We hope that in future Senedd terms, with more Members sitting on fewer committees, it will be easier to maintain continuity and build expertise.

The challenge of Members serving on multiple committees, combined with timetabling constraints, has meant that we have not had the flexibility to meet as frequently or for as long as we would have liked. This has limited our ability to cover the full breadth of subjects within our wide remit, and to do so in the level of detail we would have preferred. In practical terms, maintaining quorum has been a challenge, and scheduling of business has often been difficult, particularly on Wednesdays, when the Committee is only able to meet until 12.30. We suggest that consideration is given to how committee timetables can be managed more strategically in the Seventh Senedd to make the best use of the time available for scrutiny with fewer membership clashes and competing demands.

At the beginning of the Sixth Senedd, the Committee undertook training to establish how we wanted to work together and approach scrutiny. We found this to be a valuable exercise and would welcome the opportunity to be able to do this annually and whenever there are changes to committee membership. Unfortunately, the current timetable has not allowed for that kind of strategic planning, which would have been beneficial to our work.

I hope our reflections are useful to the Chairs' Forum in undertaking your review.

Yours sincerely,



Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.