

The Rt. Hon Elin Jones MS

Chair of the Chairs' Forum

3 November 2025

Dear Elin,

Reviewing Committee Effectiveness in the Sixth Senedd

The Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure ('CCEI') Committee welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Chairs' Forum's review of committee effectiveness in the Sixth Senedd. This response draws on the experience of the current Committee membership over the course of this Senedd term and reflects our views on what has worked well and the challenges we have encountered.

Committee culture

We believe that a constructive, non-party-political approach is necessary for a committee to be successful in achieving its objectives.

We believe that the culture of the Senedd's committees would benefit from more diversity in its chairs. For example, over many years, there have been gaps in the representation of women chairs on committees covering key policy areas such as finance, the economy, and rural affairs. We believe that achieving a better gender balance in these roles would strengthen the scrutiny process.

We also believe there is scope to better reflect the collaborative nature of committee work in its promotion, beyond the role of the Chair. For example, we believe that more visibility for all committee members in report launches and media activity would reinforce the cross-party nature of the work.

The Committee believes that the overall timetable should be flexible enough to accommodate caring responsibilities and accessibility needs, ensuring that all Members can participate fully.



Organisation of Committee business

Some Members felt that committees with broad cross-cutting remits, which range across the portfolios of several Ministers, such as the CCEI Committee, can face severe challenges in terms of policy and legislative workload. The Committee believes that, in the next Senedd, consideration should be given to ensuring clear lines of ministerial accountability within committee remits, while retaining sufficient flexibility to enable cross-cutting scrutiny. This could be achieved by seeking to minimise the number of Ministerial portfolios covered in a committee's remit. However, the Committee did not favour continually reconstituting committee remits in response to changes in ministerial portfolios.

The CCEI Committee's heavy legislative workload has, particularly in the second half of this Senedd term, significantly reduced the time available for policy work. We acknowledge that while there are clear benefits to the dual policy-and-legislation model, including allowing Members to build expertise across both functions, it can lack flexibility. We discussed alternative models, including the use of ad hoc legislation committees. Certain members of the Committee had a negative experience of this approach during previous Senedd terms, including inconsistent levels of engagement depending on the subject of the legislation. We believe that alternative models should be considered with caution, as they can weaken continuity and the development of expertise within committees.

The Committee believes that the smaller size of the CCEI Committee during the Sixth Senedd term has enabled Members to contribute more fully to proceedings. Furthermore, our experience during this Senedd term suggests that Members should sit on fewer committees to allow for the development of subject expertise. We believe that an increase in the number of Members in the next Senedd should not automatically result in the creation of additional or larger committees, as this could have the effect of diluting specialisation and making it more difficult for members to contribute in proceedings.

We broadly support the continued use of hybrid working arrangements and recognise that they improve accessibility. However, there is agreement that in-person attendance should remain the default for Stage 2 proceedings. The Committee considers that clearer guidance on participation in hybrid proceedings would help establish consistent expectations for Members, Ministers, and witnesses.

The Committee recognises the importance of the Petitions Committee and believes that stronger coordination between it and policy committees could help inform forward work programmes and support the early identification of emerging issues.

Interactions with Committees

The Committee believes that effective scrutiny depends on a broad and diverse evidence base. Members support continued efforts to involve service users, citizens and community representatives

in committee inquiries. While we believe that engagement has improved during the Sixth Senedd, there remains scope to further broaden participation through visits and public engagement events, if committees have sufficient capacity and resources.

We believe that external engagement activities, including visits and events, are among the most valuable elements of committee work. Such activities provide important context that cannot be gained in a committee room, and can significantly impact thinking around legislation and policy, for example, our visit to Transport for Greater Manchester, which was invaluable in understanding the practical issues of the Bus Services (Wales) Bill.

Members value the support provided by research teams. The Committee emphasises the importance of ensuring that research outputs are concise and focused, given the demands on members, who may sit on several committees.

The Committee believes that a heavy legislative workload, weighted towards the second half of this Senedd term, and the limited notice of forthcoming business (including for LCMs) can constrain scrutiny and reduce opportunities for meaningful engagement. We have addressed such issues several times during this Senedd term in correspondence with the Business Committee. We believe that the Business Committee should engage with the Welsh Government early in the next Senedd to discuss how timetabling could be improved to ensure it does not negatively impact scrutiny.

Conclusion

The Committee welcomes the Chairs' Forum's work in this area and we hope that it will enable the next Senedd to learn from the lessons of the Sixth Senedd. Members would be content to discuss any matters in this response or to provide additional clarification should the Chairs' Forum find that helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Llyr Gruffydd MS,
Chair, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.