

Elin Jones MS, Llywydd
Chair, Chair's Forum
By email

6 October 2025

Dear Llywydd,

Review of Committee Effectiveness

Thank you for your letter of 8 July 2025 and for the opportunity to contribute to the Chair's Forum review of committee effectiveness in the Sixth Senedd. The Committee considered this matter at its meeting on 18 September and agreed to raise the following points in response to the areas outlined in the consultation document.

Committee Size and Ways of Working

As the Forum's consultation document states, the Committee is one of the two smallest in the Sixth Senedd. While this has not led to quorum issues to date, the size of our membership has meant that we have been close to being inquorate, especially when Members are unable to attend at short notice or due to unforeseen circumstances. It has made us more susceptible to logistical challenges and placed greater pressure on Members to attend every meeting than would be the case in larger committees.

A smaller membership also presents practical challenges in organising external visits and engagement events.

However, the Committee also acknowledges the benefits of a smaller membership, particularly in allowing Members more time and opportunity to scrutinise witnesses during evidence sessions. This has enabled Members to maximise developing their expertise on the topics being considered.

The ability for Members to attend meetings virtually has also been helpful in providing flexibility and mitigating quorum risks.

In terms of scheduling, the Committee's wide ranging responsibilities has meant that we have had to generally meet on a weekly basis, using both our scheduled and reserve slots in the fortnightly timetable. This has also enabled us to arrange visits, and events without significant practical difficulties.

Committee Remit

The Committee's current remit is substantial, encompassing scrutiny of Welsh Government and Directly Funded Bodies' budgets, as well as the financial implications of all Senedd Bills. We believe we have effectively delivered these responsibilities, however, we have also faced challenges which are outlined below.

During the Sixth Senedd, we have had to conduct budget scrutiny alongside the scrutiny of the general principles of two Bills, the Welsh Tax Acts etc. (Power to Modify) Act 2022 and Visitor Accommodation (Register and Levy) Etc. (Wales) Act 2025.

This overlap placed considerable pressure on our capacity to scrutinise both the budget and legislation in detail, and consideration should be given to the Standing Order responsibilities of committees when timetabling and referring bills in future to avoid overlap of budgetary and legislative scrutiny which need to be completed within rigid timescales.

As a Committee, we have prioritised strategic scrutiny of the Draft Budget, building on the work of our predecessor committee in the Fifth Senedd and enabling policy committees to focus on budget scrutiny within their respective policy areas. This can be challenging, particularly when the budget scrutiny timetable is constrained. However, our approach to consulting committees following each budget round has led to tangible improvements, particularly in terms of improving the quality of written evidence from the Welsh Government and in helping us understand the challenges faced by committees in conducting budget scrutiny. This collaborative approach has been beneficial and we would encourage that this culture is embedded further in the Seventh Senedd.

Our role in considering the financial implication of legislation has also ensured that the costs of each Bill in the Senedd is subject to detailed consideration. This is essential to ensure the robust scrutiny of legislation and we believe that a dedicated committee should continue to scrutinise such costs in the Seventh Senedd.

The Committee's scrutiny role in relation to the Directly Funded Bodies has also had a significant impact on its workload during the Sixth Senedd.

The Committee has acted as the Senedd's de facto public appointments committee, undertaking significant work in appointing and recommending candidates for key roles, including:

- appointing Non-Executive Members to the Wales Audit Office Board;

- recommending two Chairs for appointment by the Senedd;
- recommending the preferred candidate for nomination as Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW); and
- initiated the recruitment process for the Auditor General for Wales, with a nomination to be considered by the Senedd prior to dissolution.

Our remit has also encompassed oversight responsibilities for the PSOW, which led to the Committee being instructed to conduct a review into the operations, processes and investigations carried out by the PSOW by the Senedd.

While these pieces of work are of high public importance, their mandatory nature has had a knock-on effect on our capacity to undertake proactive inquiries. Although we have produced policy reports in key strategic areas, such as Post-EU Funding and Fiscal Intergovernmental Relations, our Standing Order obligations has limited our ability to pursue specific issues due to lack of time and capacity.

Support for Innovation and Engagement

The Committee is pleased to highlight several innovative practices developed during the Sixth Senedd. Notably, we established the Interparliamentary Finance Committee Forum with counterparts in other devolved legislatures. This has been effective in advocating for collective concerns, such as the timing of UK fiscal events and the attendance of UK Treasury officials at devolved committees.

We have also continued our engagement work on the budget, including pioneering collaboration with the Welsh Youth Parliament and other stakeholders which forms the cornerstone of our annual budget priorities debate in the Senedd. This has ensured our work is informed by lived experiences and that our recommendations reflect the views of those we represent. The significant increase in the written consultation responses received during the course of the Senedd demonstrates the depth of public concern regarding the financial pressures being felt across Wales.

We believe these approaches are vital. The ability of committees to operate beyond formal meetings is crucial to fulfilling broader strategic responsibilities as well as enabling the building of effective relationships with other parliaments, stakeholders, and the public. Any future committee structure and timetable should enable similar practices to continue.

We hope these reflections are helpful to the Forum and would welcome further engagement on these issues. We also look forward to receiving the findings of the review in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS, Chair of the Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. | We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

