

Dr David Clubb

Chair, National Infrastructure Commission for Wales

26 February 2026

Dear David,

Annual scrutiny of the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales

I would like to extend the Committee's thanks to you, Dr. Jenifer Baxter and Helen Armstrong for attending its meeting on 21 January to give evidence on the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales' (NICW) latest annual report and on-going work.

While the Committee would usually publish a report following annual scrutiny sessions, as time is limited before dissolution, Members agreed that it would be more appropriate to follow-up issues raised during the session in correspondence. These are set out in the Annex.

We would like to thank all Commissioners and secretariat for the constructive way in which they have engaged with the Committee throughout the Sixth Senedd. We hope that engagement continues between the Committee's successor and the NICW in the Seventh Senedd. We also note your intention to step down as Chair in the summer and would like to thank you for your contribution as Chair of the NICW. We wish you every success in the future.

A copy of this letter has been sent to Huw Irranca-Davies MS, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, and to Rebecca Evans MS, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, who will be appearing before the Committee during her final general scrutiny session on 5 March 2026.

It would be helpful if you could provide a response by Friday 13 March.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Llyr', with a stylized flourish underneath.

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

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



Annex: Annual scrutiny of the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales

The Welsh Government's review of the NICW

We welcome the update on progress made towards implementing the recommendations arising from the Welsh Government's review of the NICW. On the matter of performance metrics, you indicated that you are in the process of developing a suite of KPIs.

We are keen to ensure that KPIs are in place for any successor NICW to help monitor its impact and improve performance reporting throughout its tenure.

NICW's role and relationship with Welsh Government

We welcome your openness in discussing the challenges the NICW has faced in communicating and engaging with the Welsh Government. The Committee remains concerned about the Welsh Government's responsiveness to the Commission's work and the lack of consistent, structured engagement between the NICW and the Welsh Government.

We were disappointed to hear that Commissioners often learn of developments linked to its own recommendations through indirect or informal means - including social media.

We expect the Welsh Government to work with the NICW, supported by its Welsh Government-provided secretariat, to put in place appropriate arrangements aimed at ensuring that the Commission is routinely informed of developments pertinent to its recommendations and on-going areas of work.

Influence and impact

We explored how effectively the Welsh Government engages with and responds to the Commission's recommendations. You told us that responses have been superficial, and that, at times, it has been difficult to determine whether the Welsh Government has accepted or rejected the Commission's recommendations. We are concerned that this lack of clarity makes it harder for the Commission to assess the impact of its work and to plan future activity effectively.

We were also concerned to hear that limited technical capacity within Welsh Government could be leading to technical recommendations being misunderstood or addressed only at a surface level. We note your evidence that this contributes to a disconnect between what the NICW hears from its professional advisory groups and what the Welsh Government perceives to be happening on the ground.

We are aware that the Welsh Government is due to respond to the NICW's report on climate adaptation before the end of the Sixth Senedd. We expect the Welsh Government to provide a considered and substantive response to the report. In doing so, it should set out clearly whether it has accepted or rejected the NICW's recommendations and provide detailed rationale for its decision. As

you know, we have raised the issue of Welsh Government's responsiveness to you in our previous reports and we intend to raise this matter further with the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning when she appears before us later in the spring term.

We welcome the positive impact of NICW's work in engaging communities across Wales, particularly in Crickhowell and Grangetown, and its efforts in raising public awareness of climate change and infrastructure.

NICW's climate adaptation report

We welcome the publication of the NICW's report on climate adaptation.

You told us that climate adaptation has not been given "equal consideration" as climate mitigation in terms of investment, policy and planning by the Welsh Government. The Committee shares the NICW's view and questioned the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs on this issue during his appearance before us on 11 February 2026. The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged that there had "been more focus on climate change mitigation rather than adaptation" but that this was not unique to Wales. He also asserted that "this is changing", highlighting the Welsh Government's need to drive forward its 2024 climate adaptation strategy. We expect our successor committee will wish to scrutinise the Welsh Government's progress on climate adaptation during the Seventh Senedd.

We were pleased to hear that you have shared the findings of your climate adaptation report with the UK Climate Change Committee's (UK CCC) Adaptation Committee. You told us that you expect the findings to be reflected in the UK CCC's climate change risk assessment, due in May 2026. We would be interested to hear how you intend to assess the extent to which your findings have influenced the risk assessment.

The Future of the NICW

We considered the future role and positioning of the NICW. You told us that the Commission has exceeded expectations despite resource constraints and has "created a brilliant framework for the next commission to take on". You added:

"We will be pushing the new Welsh Government to invest further in this commission, because I think that we've demonstrated a big impact, and we can do more with a bit more resource."

We acknowledge that decisions about the NICW's future will be a matter for the next Welsh Government. We welcome your paper on the evolution of the NICW, which we would expect the next Welsh Government to give careful consideration to, when reaching its decision.

We expect the future Welsh Government to reach an early decision on the NICW's long-term status in the Seventh Senedd, and to ensure that any future Commission is adequately resourced.