

Agenda – Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2 – Senedd

Meeting date: Thursday, 14 July 2016

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Sarah Beasley

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddCommunities@assembly.wales

Informal pre-meeting 09.00 – 09.15

**1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of
interest**

**2 Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government – discussion
of early priorities**

(09.15 – 10.15)

(Pages 1 – 11)

Mark Drakeford AM, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

Amelia John, Deputy Director, Fairer Futures Division, Welsh Government

Reg Kilpatrick, Director for Local Government, Welsh Government

**3 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the
public from the remainder of the meeting**

For consideration of:

- evidence given by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, under item 2
- the Committee's early business and forward work programme



4 Consideration of the evidence given by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

(10.15 – 10.25)

5 Forward work programme – discussion of early business

(10.25 – 10.45)

(Pages 12 – 37)

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Agenda Item 5

Myrfa Iddon, Yr Aelod, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
ELGC(5)-02-16 Papur 1 / Paper 1

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Meeting: 14 July 2016

Committee role and responsibilities

Purpose

1. This paper sets out the main responsibilities of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee ('the Committee') for the Fifth Assembly.

Establishment and remit of committees

2. Standing Order 16.1 requires the Assembly to establish committees with power within their remit to:

- (i) examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the government and associated public bodies;
- (ii) examine legislation;
- (iii) undertake other functions specified in Standing Orders; and
- (iv) consider any matter affecting Wales.

3. In doing this, the Business Committee has to ensure that every area of responsibility of the government and associated public bodies, and all matters relating to the legislative competence of the Assembly and functions of the Welsh Ministers and of the Counsel General, are subject to the scrutiny of a committee or committees.

4. On 28 June 2016, the Assembly established six subject-specific committees¹ to carry out the functions described above, as well as a reserve policy and legislation committee. A further six committees² have also been established to undertake functions specified in

¹ Children, Young People and Education Committee; Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee; Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee; Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee; Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee; Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

² Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee; Finance Committee; Petitions Committee; Public Accounts Committee; Scrutiny of the First Minister Committee; Standards of Conduct Committee

Standing Orders, including the Finance and Public Accounts Committees.

The Committee's role and responsibilities

5. The Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee was established with a remit "to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising expenditure, administration and policy matters, encompassing (but not restricted to):

- local government;
- housing, community regeneration, cohesion and safety;
- tackling poverty;
- equality of opportunity and
- human rights".

6. A more detailed list of the committee's remit is attached at Annexe 1. More detail on the wider roles and responsibilities of Assembly Committees is set out in the Business Committee's report '[Committees in the Fifth Assembly](#)' laid before the Assembly on 23 June 2016.

Role and responsibilities of the Chair

7. The Presiding Officer has written to all Chairs following their election, outlining the Assembly's expectations of Chairs and Committees, as well as the support available to them. A copy of the letter is attached at Annexe 2.

Operation of the Committee

8. The operation of Committees is governed by the rules set out in Standing Order 17. Advice on any aspect of SO17 is available from the clerks. Some of the key elements of SO17 are set out below:

- Declaration of Interests (SO17.24A) – Before taking part in Committee proceedings, a Member must declare any interest, financial or otherwise, that they, or to their knowledge, a family member, has or is expecting to have which is relevant to those

proceedings, and might reasonably be thought by others to influence their contribution.

- Quorum (SO17.31) - A committee meeting must be declared inquorate if there are fewer than three Members, or less than one-third of the committee's members, whichever is the greater, present. A committee meeting must be declared inquorate if, at the beginning of the meeting, the Members present represent only one political group.
- Openness (SO17.40) - Committees must meet in public and broadcasting access for public meetings must be permitted in accordance with such arrangements as the Commission agrees. Committee meetings are broadcast on Senedd TV and transcripts of committee meetings are made available in draft form within three to five working days, with a final version published within 10 working days.
- Meeting in Private (SO17.42) - A committee may resolve to exclude the public from a formal meeting or any part of a formal meeting for a specified purpose. These Standing Orders do not apply to informal meetings.
- Substitution (SO17.48) - A committee member who has given advance notice to the chair may be represented at a meeting, or a part of a meeting, by another Member from the same political group who has been identified in advance.

Support for the Committee

9. The Committee will be supported in all aspects of its work by a dedicated integrated team. The integrated team is made up of Commission staff from the following areas:

- Committee Clerking Team
- Research Service
- Legal Services
- Communications (Outreach and Youth Engagement)
- Translation and Reporting Service.

Issues to be considered as part of the Forward Work Programme

10. Alongside the policy inquiries agreed by the Committee, there are also specific matters that will need to be incorporated within the Forward Work Programme, including:

Legislation

11. The First Minister made a statement in plenary on Tuesday 28 June outlining the Welsh Government's Legislative Programme for the first year of the Fifth Assembly. The programme includes a Bill to abolish the Right to Buy and the Right to Acquire, and a Bill relating to the Trade Union Act.

12. The First Minister's statement does not include a specific timetable for introduction of the individual Bills. Subject to the Business Committee agreeing to refer specific Bills to the Committee, it may need to be flexible when planning its forward work programme in order to be able to respond to the demands of legislative scrutiny.

Scrutiny of Cabinet Secretaries

13. As an early priority, Members may wish to invite the relevant Cabinet Secretaries to attend scrutiny sessions to outline their vision and priorities for the next 18 months or so, and to follow up any legacy issues.

Budget Scrutiny

14. Scrutiny of the Welsh Government's budget will remain a routine part of the Committee's work programme. The Business Committee is currently considering the proposed timetable for the Welsh Government's forthcoming budget. Scrutiny sessions with relevant Cabinet Secretaries will be arranged to meet the agreed timetable.

Consideration of the Annual Report of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

15. Consideration of the PSOW's annual report will also remain a routine part of the Committee's work programme. The clerking team will make time for this in the Forward Work Programme.

Y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb, Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau
 Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee
 ELGC(5)–02–16 Papur 1 Atodiad 1 / Paper 1 Annexe 1

Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

To examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising expenditure, administration and policy matters encompassing (but not restricted to): Local Government; housing, community regeneration, cohesion and safety; tackling poverty; equality of opportunity and Human Rights.

Ministerial responsibilities covered

Responsibility	Cabinet Secretary or Minister responsible
City Deals;	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
Oversight and implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and liaison with the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales;	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
Strategic approach to the delivery of devolved public services, performance management, digital and data driven transformation, workforce matters, collaboration, audit, inspection, regulation and public involvement;	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
Structural, democratic, financial and constitutional reform of Local Authorities, including co-ordination of regional delivery models and their coherence with Local Government Reform;	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
The Local Government Partnership Council;	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
Local Government constitutional matters, scrutiny arrangements, cabinets, elected mayors, the role of councillors, their diversity, conduct and remuneration;	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
Local Government electoral arrangements, sponsorship of the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales and the timing of Local Authority elections;	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
Local Government finance policy and the un-hypothecated funding of Local Authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners through the Local Government revenue and capital settlements;	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
Financial governance, financing and accounting relating to Local Government;	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
Local taxation, including Council Tax, non-domestic rates, council tax reduction and the Sponsorship of the Valuation Office Agency and the Valuation Tribunal Service;	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
Local Government workforce matters (principally arising from reform) and the sponsorship of the Public Services Staff Commission;	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government
Equality covering the protected characteristics under	Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local

the Equality Act 2010 and human rights in relation to UN and EU Conventions.	Government
Communities First;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Welfare Reform;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Financial inclusion, including credit unions;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Regeneration, including Strategic Regeneration Areas; legacy regeneration; and provision of sites and premises, derelict land and environmental improvements relating to regeneration;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
The housing and housing-related activities of Local Authorities and housing associations, including housing management and the allocation of social and affordable housing;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Supply and quality of market, social and affordable housing;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Homelessness and housing advice;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Matters relating to housing provided by the private rented sector, including regulation of registered social landlords;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Aids and adaptations, including Disabled Facilities Grants and Physical Adaptation Grants;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
The provision of housing-related support (but not the payment of Housing Benefit);	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
The regulation of commercial tenancies let by Local Authorities;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Co-ordination of issues relating to gypsies and travellers, asylum-seekers, immigration, migrant workers and community cohesion (except where they relate specifically to other portfolios and counter terrorism measures);	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Crime and Justice policy, including Youth Justice;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Community Safety, including relations with the Police and Crime Commissioners, Police and other Criminal Justice Agencies, civil contingencies, resilience and counter-terrorism issues;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
The Fire and Rescue Services including community fire safety;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Lead on policy in relation to the Armed Forces in Wales and Veterans;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Anti-slavery, domestic abuse, gender-based violence and sexual violence;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
The Voluntary Sector and Volunteering;	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children
Lead responsibility for monitoring Post Office and Royal Mail matters in Wales.	Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children

John Griffiths AM
Chair
Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee

Your ref:
Our ref:

30 June 2016

Dear John

Congratulations on your appointment as a committee chair. By electing you to this role, the National Assembly has entrusted you with significant responsibilities. On behalf of the Assembly Commission and the Business Committee, I am writing to explain the Assembly's expectations and the support available to you and the Members of your committee.

The Assembly's committees are at the heart of the democratic process and the chairs of those committees are critical to their success in holding the Government to account, making laws and engaging directly with the people of Wales. I strongly endorse the vision set out by the Commission and Business Committee of the Fourth Assembly:

Committees of the Assembly should demonstrably improve the quality of policy outcomes, legislation, public services and government spending for society as a whole in Wales. They should be respected, influential and accessible, acting with integrity and independence. Their work should be strategic and rigorous.

This vision is underpinned by 10 strategic objectives, which are set out in the Annexe to this letter.

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



I have also included in the Annexe the key responsibilities of a committee chair. These have been endorsed by the Business Committee. They also form the basis for the independent Remuneration Board's assessment of the additional remuneration you will receive for the role. They therefore represent the expectations placed on you in your new role. I understand that the Remuneration Board will be considering the matter of chairs' pay for the Fifth Assembly at their next meeting in July.

You have been allocated a committee clerk to help you establish the committee before Summer recess: Sarah Beasley. Sarah manages a small team providing you and your committee with strategic, procedural and administrative support and advice. Sarah also leads an integrated team of specialists from other services (in research, communications, legal, and translation), and works with staff from across the Commission to deliver the services your committee requires. Sarah is your first point of contact for committee business, but I would encourage you to get to know, and work directly with, all other team members. Though Sarah will typically spend a large proportion of her time working with you, her role also involves supporting the other Members of the committee, and providing support for the scrutiny of Bills even after your committee has finished its consideration of them. As the number of committees has increased since the Fourth Assembly, work is underway to finalise the staffing structures, and my officials will contact you about this before the start of the Autumn term.

Your clerk and integrated team will assist you in convening your committee and designing its initial programme of work. I recommend that you set aside time early in your tenure to work with all Members of your committee on strategic planning and your preferred ways of working. Experience in the previous Assembly suggests that time dedicated for this, away from the routine of Assembly business, will be well spent. A comprehensive programme is available for your continuing professional development (CPD) as chair, and for your committee Members, to help with this process.

I intend to convene a Chairs' Forum meeting as soon as possible. This will provide an opportunity for you to discuss and agree with your peers, on a cross-party basis, how best to maximise the impact of scrutiny through the committee system. I hope that the Forum will meet regularly and I would urge you to



participate actively in order to drive the strategic agenda for committees over the course of the Fifth Assembly.

I am copying this letter to your Party Leader and Business Manager. I will also arrange for a copy to be published on the Assembly website. This will ensure that everybody who has an interest in your committee, from your colleagues to the people of Wales, has clarity on your role and the parameters within which you are operating.

I wish you every success in your role as a chair, and I would encourage you to contact me at any time if you would like to discuss any aspect of your committee's work. Furthermore, please be assured that all Commission staff, from the Chief Executive throughout the organisation, are ready and willing to help your committee achieve its objectives.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elin Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E'.

Elin Jones AM
Presiding Officer



Annexe

1. Strategic objectives for Assembly committees

Committees will:

- a. have a clear, agreed, strategic plan for their work that prioritises their activities and focuses their use of time and resource;
- b. be a top priority for the Members who serve on them;
- c. be guided by chairs who fulfil all of the expectations set for them by the Assembly;
- d. be respected and listened to by the Welsh Government because of the quality of their inquiries and scrutiny, the rigour of their questioning, the depth of their analysis and the value of their legislative amendment. The Government will be mindful of the reaction of committees as it formulates its policy, spending and legislative plans;
- e. scrutinise policy, spending and legislation within their portfolio in the round, not as isolated aspects of their responsibilities;
- f. offer and expect constructive engagement with the Welsh Government but retain their detachment and ability to offer objective criticism;
- g. not be limited by constraints on access to Ministers, information or witnesses and will be able to draw on the expert advice and support they require;
- h. engage with a wide diversity of people, be seen by stakeholder groups as important, influential players and as the natural place to go to with concerns and ideas, and undertake work that enhances the public reputation of the Assembly. Their outputs will be accessible to as wide an audience as possible;



- i. ensure that those who contribute to their work see the value of their participation; and
- j. seek critical analysis and evaluation to improve their performance.

2. Key responsibilities of committee chairs:

The key responsibilities of committee chairs are to:

- set the strategic direction of the committee and ensure the transparent prioritisation of its activity so as to deliver a balanced, comprehensive and effective programme of legislative, policy and financial scrutiny;
- maximise the relevance and influence of the committee whilst maintaining its clear independence from the Welsh Government;
- act impartially at all times, decisively, fairly and in a manner that maintains the confidence of the committee;
- command the confidence of Members, witnesses and the public at large through knowledge of the subject matter of the committee's remit; demonstration of effective legislative, policy and financial scrutiny techniques; maintenance of order; and the application of all relevant legal and procedural requirements on the committee;
- secure the commitment and engagement of all committee Members and build cross-party consensus wherever possible;
- build the culture and skills mix within the committee required to maximise its effectiveness as a scrutiny body;
- ensure that the committee receives the expert advice, information and other support it requires to fulfil its objectives effectively;
- drive the delivery of all aspects of the committee's work with pace and quality;



- represent the committee publicly, in the media and in formal Assembly business; and
- ensure critical analysis and evaluation of the committee's work and drive innovation in its operation so as to increase effectiveness, public engagement and impact.



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