

Senedd Cymru  
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Masnach a Materion  
Gwledig  
Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd  
ETRA - 43  
Ymateb gan: Confor

Welsh Parliament  
Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs  
Committee  
Priorities for the Sixth Senedd.  
Evidence from: Confor

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Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee Future Work  
CONFOR RESPONSE

Introduction

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*About Confor*

Confor ([www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk)) is the not-for-profit organisation for the UK's sustainable forestry and wood-using businesses. It has 1,500 member companies, representing the whole forestry and wood supply chain.

*About the consultation*

The Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee is gathering views on the priority issues to consider when planning its future work in the context of examining legislation and holding the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising its expenditure, administration, and policy matters, encompassing (but not restricted to): economic development, regeneration, skills, trade, research, and development (including technology and science), and rural affairs

Response

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*What do you think the Committee's strategic priorities should be over the next six months?*

The committee has the capacity to review a broad spectrum of proposals and actions delivered by the Economic, Climate Change and Rural Affairs portfolio's of the current administration. Within the first 180 days of this new administration there need to be clear policies outlining:

- Delivery of the new sustainable farming scheme and how the significant change in the value and method of funding will impact on rural communities and employment.
- Development and role out of a forestry support mechanism that will allow Wales to start achieving its afforestation targets, as part of its decarbonisation program and transition to becoming a green economy. Alignment of Welsh Government policy with those afforestation guidelines derived to meet our 2030 & 2050 targets.

- How blended finance can be used in conjunction with community and stakeholder engagement to deliver the outcomes above for the highest benefit for Wales.
- How the performance of NRW as a commercial entity within the forestry and timber sector will be aligned with delivery of the administrations targets on the use of timber and fibre.
- Plans for the inclusion of timber and fibre as an element of the foundational economy essential for Wales to successfully deliver its green recovery.
- Innovation/industrial strategy to promote the use and re-use of timber, fibre, and derived products into the construction supply chain.
- A skills delivery program that will highlight opportunities for employment within the forestry and agriculture sector for school leavers through to professional service delivery.

*What do you think the Committee's longer-term objectives and priorities should be for the term of the sixth Senedd?*

Over the course of the term, these immediate objectives identified in the first question will need to be delivered and expanded to include:

- A priority to ensure security of employment and sustainability of rural communities including an increase in affordable high-quality housing.
- Consistent delivery of decarbonisation targets within industry as identified within UKCCC and CCERA recommendations, with a focus on construction and retrofit.
- Successful delivery of tree planting at a scale that will underpin forestry creation, management and timber processing jobs and businesses.
- Placing a focus on investing into technology to enable Wales to become a net exporter of innovative construction technology and other high value-added process's such as insulation or energy saving materials.

There is the real potential for forestry and forest related industries to become a £1 billion GVA element of the Welsh economy over the next 10 to 20 years with the capacity for 20-30,000 jobs to be based in these sectors.

The role of the rural community is structurally important to the culture of Wales. By seeking outcomes that secure employment in these areas there is greater chance of

maintaining and improving the sustainability of these rural communities. This provides options to families to grow and integrate into them.

Wales economy will be reliant on imports and exports from mainland UK and overseas over the next decade. By seeking to invest in our sustainable natural resources we can ensure that some of these offshoring effects are limited and that Wales grows to become a more prosperous and buoyant country.