

Chair
Climate Change, Environment, Sustainability and Rural Affairs Committee
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8th September 2026

Dear Chair,

Priorities for the Climate Change, Environment, Sustainability and Rural Affairs Committee during the Seventh Senedd

The National Infrastructure Commission for Wales (NICW) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's consultation on its priorities for the Seventh Senedd.

NICW was established in 2018 as an independent, non-statutory advisory body to Welsh Ministers. Its purpose is to analyse, advise and make recommendations on Wales' longer-term strategic economic and environmental infrastructure needs over a 5 to 80-year period. In that context, we believe the Committee has an important opportunity to make climate adaptation, infrastructure resilience and long-term infrastructure governance central features of its work programme.

NICW recommends that the Committee consider the following priority inquiries during the first half of the Senedd term.

1. An inquiry into whether Wales has adequate legal, institutional and financial arrangements for climate adaptation

NICW's October 2025 report, [A Perfect Storm: Is Wales doing enough to co-ordinate action and engage communities in adapting our infrastructure to a changing climate?](#), concluded that Wales needs to raise its level of ambition on adaptation and place adaptation on a more equal footing with emissions reduction.

The report identified the scale and urgency of the challenge. It drew attention to projections including sea level rise of up to 1.1 metres by 2100, average summer temperature increases of more than 4°C, and the potential doubling of extreme rainfall frequency by the 2050s. It also noted that more than 245,000 properties in Wales are currently at risk of flooding. This summer's intense and prolonged heat have also had a great impact on Wales' infrastructure.

The Committee should consider undertaking an early inquiry into whether the Welsh Government's current governance arrangements are sufficient to manage these risks. In particular, we suggest the Committee examine:

- whether Wales requires dedicated climate adaptation legislation

- whether a national infrastructure resilience unit or equivalent body is needed to coordinate adaptation across sectors;
- whether Welsh Ministers should make greater use of adaptation reporting powers;
- whether adaptation funding is sufficiently visible, long term and outcome focused;
- whether public bodies and infrastructure operators are using consistent climate risk data; and
- whether climate adaptation is being integrated into planning, appraisal and investment decisions.

NICW's recommendations in A Perfect Storm included a Climate Adaptation Act, a Climate Futures Hub, a Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Fund, improved data platforms, revised planning guidance, and infrastructure project investment assessment. These are specific, testable proposals which would lend themselves well to formal committee scrutiny.

2. An inquiry into community-centred adaptation, flood resilience and coastal change

NICW believes that adaptation policy will fail unless communities are involved much earlier and more meaningfully in decisions about their future. A Perfect Storm was informed by [engagement in Grange town](#), including with the Grange Pavilion Youth Forum, SEF Cymru and Green Soul, alongside Cardiff University's Community Gateway project. The report emphasised that authorities should move beyond formal consultation and towards co-designed adaptation strategies with affected communities.

NICW has previously visited Fairbourne and Barmouth, where we explored how communities and public bodies are responding to coastal flooding and climate change. Our conclusions from speaking to people living in these areas has reinforced the lesson that Wales cannot simply build its way out of flood risk.

The Committee could add real value by examining how the Welsh Government, local authorities, Natural Resources Wales, infrastructure operators and communities are preparing for locations where long-term adaptation may require difficult choices. This inquiry could examine:

- the adequacy of current flood and coastal erosion risk governance;
- whether community engagement is beginning early enough;
- whether adaptation decisions are transparent and evidence based;
- whether vulnerable communities have the capacity and support to shape local adaptation plans;
- whether engagement practice is consistent across Wales; and
- whether infrastructure, housing, transport and land-use decisions are being aligned in high-risk areas.

The Committee may also wish to examine progress since NICW's [October 2024 flooding report](#), including the Welsh Government's response and subsequent engagement between NICW, Ministers and officials on implementation.

Conclusion

The Committee's work programme should not treat climate adaptation as a narrow environmental issue. It is a matter of infrastructure resilience, public safety, community confidence, intergenerational fairness and value for money.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Jenifer Baxter
Cadeirydd Dros Dro / Interim Chair