Welsh Parliament
International Relations

69th BIPA Plenary
Sheffield

18-20 October

Members of the Senedd attended the 69th BIPA Plenary in Sheffield between 18-20 October, held on the theme of ***Shared Futures: Democratic Partnership and Policy Success Across the British-Irish Isles***. The Senedd's BIPA delegation, led by the Deputy Presiding Officer Kerry Ferguson MS, attended sessions on devolution, youth participation, and the Baltic Assembly, and heard addresses from the UK Government's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sarah Owen MP, Irish Ambassador to Great Britain Sonja Hyland and British Ambassador to Ireland Kara Owen over the course of the Plenary.



Members of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly at the 69th Plenary in Sheffield

This was the first Plenary held since elections in May and provided an opportunity for members to attend meetings of their BIPA Committees, some for the first time, meet with counterparts from across the United Kingdom and Ireland, and to highlight the ongoing strong relations between Wales and Ireland on the floor of the Plenary. BIPA members from across the floor made references to the Northern Ireland Troubles Bill which was progressing through the House of Commons, bringing attention to the ongoing legacy of the Troubles and the experiences of victims, survivors and their families.

The Senedd's BIPA Delegation for the Seventh Senedd is:

- Kerry Ferguson MS, Deputy Presiding Officer
- Darren Millar MS
- Elyn Stephens MS
- Jayne Bryant MS
- Claire Archibald MS

Plenary Programme

BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

69th PLENARY SESSION

voco Hotel, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, 19 and 20 October 2026

PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

Shared Futures: Democratic Partnership and Policy Success Across the British-Irish Isles

MONDAY 19 OCTOBER 2026

1. OPENING OF THE PLENARY SESSION

2. ADOPTION OF PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF BUSINESS

3. DEMOCRATIC PARTNERSHIP ACROSS THE BRITISH AND IRISH ISLES: ADDRESS

Sarah Owen MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, UK Government, will address the Assembly and respond to questions.

4. DEMOCRATIC PARTNERSHIP ACROSS THE BRITISH AND IRISH ISLES: DEBATE ON MOTION

The Steering Committee

That the Assembly has considered democratic partnership across the British and Irish Isles.

5. INNOVATION, SKILLS AND REGIONAL GROWTH: LESSONS FROM SHEFFIELD

*To be confirmed: **Professor Ben Morgan**, Chief Executive Officer, Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC), University of Sheffield, will give a presentation to the Assembly and respond to questions.*

6. STRENGTHENING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY AND THE BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY: CURRENT PRIOIRTIES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BALTIC STATES

Mr Giedrius Drukteinis, Vice President of the Baltic Assembly will address the Assembly and respond to questions and observations.

7. DEVOLUTION, LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND DELIVERING CHANGE

Rt Hon Professor John Denham FRSA, a former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government UK Government and Director, Centre for English Identity and Politics, University of Southampton will address the Assembly.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS. ETC

PROGRESS REPORT FROM COMMITTEE A (Security, Justice and Global Issues)

Senator Niall Blaney

PROGRESS REPORT FROM COMMITTEE B (Climate, Energy, Science and Technology)

Darren Millar MS

PROGRESS REPORT FROM COMMITTEE C (Growth, Trade and Investment)

Sinéad Gibney TD

PROGRESS REPORT FROM COMMITTEE D (Peoples and Cultures)

Lord Dubs

PROGRESS REPORT FROM STEERING COMMITTEE

The Co-Chairs

9. PANEL DISCUSSION: WHAT GOOD GOVERNMENT LOOKS LIKE: UNDERSTANDING POLICY SUCCESS

*A panel discussion with **Professor Liz Richardson,** Professor of Public Administration and Head of Politics Discipline, University of Manchester; **Professor Catherine Durose,** Professor of Public Policy, University of Liverpool; **Dr Ian C. Elliott,** Senior Lecturer in Public Administration, Centre for Public Policy, University of Glasgow*

*Moderator: **Professor Matthew Flinders** Professor of Politics and Public Policy, University of Birmingham, (formerly of the University of Sheffield).*

Assembly members will have the opportunity ask questions and make observations on the discussion.

The day's sitting will conclude not later than 5.00 pm.

TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2026

10. WHY DO SOME UNION STATES ENDURE WHILE OTHERS FALL APART?

Professor Alvin Jackson FBA FRSE Hon. MRIA MAE, Childers Professor of Irish History and Fellow of Christ's College, University of Cambridge will address the Assembly and respond to questions.

15. YOUTH VOICE AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the UK Youth Select Committee will address the Assembly.

16. CURRENT AFFAIRS: DEBATE ON MOTION

The Steering Committee

That the Assembly has considered recent political developments.

Not later than 12.25 pm

17. ADJOURNMENT

The Steering Committee

That the Assembly do now adjourn.