

Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee

Minutes EPC(2) 10-06

Meeting date: 28 June 2006

Meeting time: 9.30am – 12.30pm

Meeting venue: Committee Room 1, Senedd

Assembly Members in Attendance

Assembly Member	Constituency
Glyn Davies, Chair	Mid and West Wales
Lorraine Barrett	Cardiff South and Penarth
Mick Bates	Montgomeryshire
Janet Davies	South Wales West
Tamsin Dunwoody	Preseli Pembrokeshire
Carwyn Jones, Minister	Bridgend
Elin Jones	Ceredigion
Brynle Williams	North Wales

Officials in Attendance

Name	Job title
Gareth Jones	Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside
Rory O'Sullivan	Countryside Policy Division
Claire Bennett	Air and Environment Quality Branch
Ross Hunter	Air and Environment Quality Branch
Christianne Glossop	Chief Veterinary Officer,

Rosemary Thomas	Planning Division
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Witnesses

Name	Job title
Dr Wynne Davies	Deputy Chairman, CORWM
Stuart Eke	Political Affairs Manager, Mobile Operators Association
Mike Dolan	Executive Director, Mobile Operators Association
Dr Kevin Bishop	Head of Regeneration and Environment, WLGA
Cllr Delme Bowen	Deputy Spokesman on Environment & Planning, WLGA
Rob Thomas	WLGA Planning Adviser
Catherine Milner	Head of Development Control, Pembrokeshire National Park Authority

Committee Service

Name	Job title
Kathryn Jenkins	Committee Clerk
Dan Collier	Deputy Committee Clerk
Joanest Jackson	Legal Adviser

Item 1: Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions, Quorum and Declarations of Interest

1.1 The Chair welcomed the Committee, officials and members of the public to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from Jocelyn Davies, for whom Janet Davies was substituting.

Item 2: Minutes of the last meetings

Paper: EPC(2) 09-06(mins)

2.1 The Committee ratified the minutes of the 15 June meeting.

Item 3: Minister's Oral Report

3.1 The Minister informed the Committee of the following issues:

- Action had been taken to prevent the discharge of oil from a facility in the Menai straits. Police were investigating possible malicious intent. The Minister reported that the matter was in hand and that the leak caused conditional problems rather than environmental problems.
- Following a statement by the Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks on oil and gas licensing round applications in Cardigan Bay, the Minister clarified that seismic surveys would require permission. The UK Government would consider applications following full consultation during which Welsh Assembly Government would be a consultee. The Countryside Council for Wales would advise the Welsh Assembly Government on its response. No work would continue without appropriate assessments. The DTI would carry out the assessments.
- Atypical scrapie was a newly identified prion disease in sheep and goats. Unlike classical BSE it has rarely caused spongiform changes. SEAC had issued a statement that there was no risk to human health. The Food Standards Agency would keep the situation under review.
- Under Standing Order 26 the Minister would be bringing forward amendments to the Transport and Works (Model Clause for Railways and Tramways) Order 1992, which would be debated in Plenary on 12 July.

Action point

The Minister agreed to provide the Committee with the timescale of the assessments conducted by the DTI.

Item 4: Subordinate Legislation: The Environmental Noise (Wales) Regulations 2006 Paper: EPC(2) 10-06(p1) & Annex

4.1 Members requested clarification on the noise mapping process.

4.2 Members were informed that funding for the noise mapping exercises had already been included in the existing EPC MEG budget.

4.3 Members recommended approval of The Environmental Noise (Wales) Regulations 2006 without amendment.

4.4 During this item, the Chair was forced to halt proceedings because of severe problems with the audio system. The Committee agreed that the Chair should write to the Finance Minister highlighting the Committee's displeasure with the quality of the translation and recording equipment in the Committee room. Lorraine Barrett, Chair of the Buildings Sub Group of the House Committee notified the Committee that examples of problems experienced were being taken to the Panel of Chairs for discussion.

Item 5: Draft Rural Development Plan for Wales

Paper: EPC(2) 10-06(p2) & Annex

5.1 The Minister introduced the paper on the consultation draft Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013.

5.2 The Minister announced that from 1 January 2007 the Welsh Assembly Government will be the single payment agency in Wales for Tir Gofal. Potentially there could be 100 staff redundancies in the Countryside Council for Wales.

5.3 The Committee agreed to consider a response to the Minister on the Draft Rural Development Plan for Wales at its meeting on 13 July 2006.

Action points

The Clerk would produce a draft response.

Item 6: CORWM – Emerging Conclusions

Paper: EPC(2) 10-06(p3)

6.1 The Committee welcomed Dr Wynne Davies, Deputy Chair, CoRWM to the meeting. He outlined the key points in his paper on CoRWM's draft recommendations and rationales.

6.2 Members requested clarification on the options of storage and geological disposal of radioactive waste at centralised, regional and local levels and the long-term plans for waste being stored and disposed at present.

6.3 The Clerk would circulate information on the definition of different types waste and its location to the Committee.

Item 7: Planning Aspects of Electronic Communications Apparatus

Paper: EPC (2) 10-06(p4), EPC(2) 10-06(p5)

7.1 The Committee welcomed Stuart Eke and Mike Dolan of the Mobile Operators Association, Dr Kevin Bishop, Delme Bowen, Rob Thomas of the Welsh Local Government Association and Catherine Milner of the Pembrokeshire National Park Authority to the meeting. Representatives outlined the key points in their respective papers.

7.2 The Committee questioned witnesses on their written and oral evidence.

7.3 The Clerk would draft a report on the evidence session to be discussed in Committee during the Autumn term.

Item 8: Next Committee meeting

8.1 The Committee decided to postpone its visit to north Wales for its meeting on 13 July but resolved to consider holding two off-site meetings next term.

Members' Research and Committee Services June 2006