

## ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 15 May 2002

Time: 2:00 pm to 4:45 pm

Venue: Blaenavon Workmen's Hall, Blaenavon

### Attendance:

#### *EPT Committee Members:*

Tom Middlehurst, Chair

Alyn and Deeside

Lorraine Barrett

Cardiff South and Penarth

(substituting for Richard Edwards)

Eleanor Burnham

North Wales

David Davies

Monmouth

Janet Davies

South Wales West

Sue Essex, Minister for Environment

Cardiff North

Brian Hancock

Islwyn

Ann Jones

Vale of Clwyd

(substituting for Karen Sinclair)

Val Lloyd

Swansea East

Phil Williams

South Wales East

#### *Officials:*

Keith Bush

Office of the Counsel General

Denzil Jones (items 2 and 3)	Head of Transport Policy Division
Andrew Hemmings (item 3)	Transport Policy Division
Gerry Quarrell (item 4)	Countryside Division
Angharad Huws (item 4)	Countryside Division
Martin Rolph (item 5)	Finance Division
Tom Cassidy (item 5)	Chief Executive, Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments

***Secretariat:***

Siwan Davies	Committee Clerk
Vaughan Watkin	Deputy Committee Clerk

**Opening Remarks**

0. 1 The Chair welcomed Members, officials and the public to the first meeting of the Committee in to be held in Blaenavon. He thanked Tom Cassidy and Peter Wakelin of Cadw for organising the Committee's morning visit to the Ironworks and surrounding parts of the world heritage site.

**Item 1: Apologies, substitutions and declaration of interests**

1.1 Apologies had been received from Richard Edwards, for whom Lorraine Barrett was substituting, and Karen Sinclair, for whom Ann Jones was substituting.

2. Val Lloyd declared an interest as a Member of Swansea City and County Council. Brian Hancock declared that prior to his election to the National Assembly he had worked as a Health and Safety and Environmental consultant.

**Item 2: Report from the Minister for Environment - EPT-09-02 (p 1)**

1. In addition to the items in her written report, the Minister advised the Committee of

the following issues:

- Wales and the World Conference – a report of the conference would shortly be available on the National Assembly website;
- Design Commission for Wales – the Commission would be launched on 16 May, its remit would be to raise design quality across Wales. **The Minister would provide Members with copies of the Design Commission's terms of reference;**
- FA Cup Final - transport had been well co-ordinated and feedback from visitors had been positive.

1. The following points were raised in discussion:

### *Environmental Protection*

- Waste - the Waste Strategy would be launched on 14 June. Waste minimisation was the preferred option, followed by recycling and composting, but there would be a role for incineration to deal with the substantial residue of waste that cannot be treated by greener methods. Members stressed the need to develop new markets for recycled materials;
- Flooding – Members were interested in the progress by local authorities in bringing forward details of recent feasibility studies for local flood defence projects.

### *Planning*

- Planning Green Paper – in her evidence to the Urban Affairs sub-committee of the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee of the House of Commons, the Minister had highlighted the distinctive approach to the review of the planning process in Wales;
- Health and planning – at the next meeting on 29 May the Committee would receive a report from the Minister on work underway to ensure that public health implications of proposed development are addressed during the planning process. Members of the Health and Social Services Committee had been invited to attend.

### *Transport*

- Transport Grant criteria - Members supported the proposals to invite new bids on the lines set out in the annex to the Minister's Report. Members referred particularly to the value of bus contracts and safe routes to schools. There was an issue of schools

accessed via unadopted roads which was a matter for local authorities. **The Committee asked for detailed information on the funding available, in particular the total costs of schemes and value of PFI projects, and the management of the budget.**

### **Item 3: Walking and Cycling Strategy - EPT-09-02 (p 2)**

1. The Minister sought the Committee's views on the draft Walking and Cycling Strategy. The main challenge would be the competition for land use amongst various transport users.

3.2 It was suggested that the Minister take account of experience in other European countries on the draft strategy, and the Committee offered the following comments:

- Accessibility of routes – it was important that there were continuous well-maintained routes away from busy roads that were safe for both walkers and cyclists. Members suggested consideration of segregation of routes, or a code of conduct for pedestrians and cyclists on use of shared routes;
- Travel to work – Members were keen that employees be encouraged to walk or cycle to work. It was suggested that planning consent for new commercial premises include a requirement for bicycle storage and showers and changing facilities for employees who walk or cycle to work. Local authorities might also consider closing some roads on 'car free days' to encourage walking and cycling;
- Funding – there was a need to increase funding for the maintenance of cycling and walking routes and also for promoting the health benefits of walking and cycling.

3.3 The draft strategy would issue for public consultation in June, the final strategy was expected to be published in the autumn.

### **Item 4: CROW Act: Draft Guidance on Rights of Way Improvement Plans - EPT-09-02 (p 3)**

1. The Minister sought the Committee's views on the draft guidance to local highway authorities on Rights of Way Improvement Plans. Discussion focussed on the following areas:
  - Existing rights of way – there was concern that no local authority in Wales had met the 2000 target for local rights of way to be well maintained, legally defined and well publicised. Additional funding had been made available to local authorities to implement the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, and funds were also available

from the European Structural Funds;

- Definition of rights of way - local authorities were responsible for drawing up definitive maps of public rights of way. Way-marking was important to minimise confusion and conflict about the precise location of rights of way;
- Diversions – the process for seeking diversions of rights of way was separate to the planning consent process, and there was a need for a more joined-up approach.

4.2 The draft guidance would issue for consultation later that month, and results reported to the Committee.

### **Item 5: Cadw quinquennial review: draft interim report - EPT-09-02 (p 4)**

5.1 Martin Rolph sought the Committee's views on the draft interim report, which would inform the final interim report to Ministers as well as the second stage of the quinquennial review, and set out the options for change. Members were invited to comment in discussion or in writing to Martin.

5.2 Discussion focussed on the following areas:

- Options for change – Members agreed that the feasibility of a merger of Cadw with the Countryside Council for Wales be considered as part of the future wider review of the current structures for delivering land and water use functions in Wales as a whole, and that consideration of any the advantages or disadvantages of a merger with the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments be deferred to the current quinquennial review of that body which Martin was also undertaking. The successful 'Cadw' brand should be retained;
- Mission – Members agreed that Cadw needed a broader mission focused on outcomes for the historic environment, which should refer to working in partnership with other bodies. Cadw should also have an objective to raise public awareness about the historic environment generally, and properties in its care in particular;
- Staffing – there was a need to reward and retain skilled staff if the historic environment was to be preserved and promoted. As an Executive Agency of the National Assembly, Cadw staff had the same pay and conditions as other Assembly staff. However, Cadw had certain personnel flexibility and had linked the pay of craftsmen with payscales of similar workers in the Ministry of Defence.

5.3 As issues related to the historic environment cut across both EPT and Culture portfolios, Sue Essex and Jenny Randerson had commissioned Martin to produce a paper for both EPT

and Culture Committees on linked issues arising from the Cadw and Royal Commission reviews. The Committee would consider these issues before reaching a final view about the organisational structure for Cadw.

**Item 6: Minutes of the meeting 1 May 2002 - EPT-08-02 (min)**

6.1 The Committee adopted the minutes of the meeting held on 1 May.

**Date of next meeting**

7.1 The next meeting of the Committee would be at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 29 May 2002 at the National Assembly for Wales.

**Committee Secretariat May 2002**