

SEWR- 01-99 (min)

SOUTH EAST WALES REGIONAL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Friday 9th July 1999

Time: 10:30am to 12:30pm

Venue: Plenary Chamber, National Assembly for Wales

Attendance:

Members

Lorraine Barrett	Cardiff South and Penarth
Peter Black	South Wales West
Rosemary Butler	Newport West
Christine Chapman	Cynon Valley
Jane Davidson	Pontypridd
Jocelyn Davies	South Wales East
Ron Davies	Caerphilly
Janet Davies	South Wales West
Geraint Davies	Rhondda
David Davies	Monmouth
William Graham	South Wales East
Janice Gregory	Ogmore
John Griffiths	Newport East

Brian Hancock	Islwyn
Jane Hutt	Vale of Glamorgan
Pauline Jarman	South Wales Central
Carwyn Jones	Bridgend
Peter Law	Blaenau Gwent
Huw Lewis	Merthyr Tydfil & Rhymney
David Melding	South Wales Central
Rhodri Morgan	Cardiff West
Jonathan Morgan	South Wales Central
Lynne Neagle	Torfaen
Jenny Randerson	Cardiff Central
Phil Williams	South Wales West

Secretariat

Martin Stevenson	Clerk
Vaughan Watkin	Deputy Clerk

The meeting began with the Clerk to the Committee in the Chair.

Item 1: Apologies

1.1 Apologies for absence were taken on behalf of Alun Cairns, Sue Essex, Michael German, David Rhys Lloyd and Owen John Thomas.

Item 2: Election of Chair: SEWR-01-99 (p.1)

2.1 The Clerk invited nominations for the Chair of the Committee. John Griffiths proposed Carwyn Jones and the nomination was seconded by Janice Gregory. There were no other nominations and Carwyn Jones was duly elected and took the Chair.

Item 3: Forward Work Programme and Methods of Working:

SEWR-01-99 (p.2)

3.1 The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting. He said that the Committee was the largest of the regional committees, and that there were marked variations in social and economic conditions within the region, including some areas of serious deprivation. There was a need to improve the fortunes of all the people within the area.

3.2 The Chair suggested that Members should first put forward subjects for inclusion in the forward work programme and then go on to discuss the structure of the Committee and the agenda for the next meeting.

3.3 The following subjects were suggested for inclusion in the forward work programme:

- Post Office policy in relation to postal addresses, as the requirement to include in the address the postal town (that is the town with the sorting office) had caused problems in a number of constituencies. Members were not satisfied with the responses which had been received from the Post Office;
- European Structural Funds policy, where it was suggested that an analysis should be undertaken of the take-up of funding over the last four years, as well as the development of an implementation strategy for the Objective 1 programme;
- The economic strategy for the South East Wales region;
- Integrated transport in the region, particularly links between Cardiff and the Valleys;
- The development of Cardiff International Airport, including surface links to the Airport;
- The diffusion of economic prosperity from Cardiff to the surrounding areas;
- The links between the Universities in the area and small and medium-sized enterprises;
- Local waste strategies, including recycling policies;

- The compulsory teaching of Welsh at GCSE level in Monmouthshire;
- Education policy at secondary level, which it was suggested might involve a meeting with the Head Teachers of secondary schools in the region;
- The adoption of standard boundaries within the region by public sector bodies;
- Social exclusion and poverty;
- Local health inequalities;
- Tourism;
- The take-up of National Lottery grant funding;
- The development of youth services;
- The Assembly's relationship with black and ethnic communities;
- How best to avoid duplicating the work of subject committees.

3.4 There was some discussion about whether it was appropriate for the Committee to divide into sub-committees, each covering part of the South East Wales region. The general feeling was that it was not appropriate to create sub-committees, particularly in view of the likely focus on Objective 1 funding over the first few meetings. If needed, it was agreed that 'task and finish' groups would be a more appropriate mechanism than sub-committees to consider local area issues.

3.5 The Committee also considered whether it was appropriate for Members to raise issues which were specific to their constituency. Some Members felt that the Committee should consider constituency issues only when they were of wider application, whereas others were keen to ensure that local issues could be discussed. In the absence of a clear consensus on this point, the Chair suggested that the way forward was for the Committee to keep this issue under review, noting that there was a mechanism for Members to raise issues of concern under Standing Order 10.2.

3.6 It was also suggested that there was a need to define the role of the regional committees in general and the South East Wales Regional Committee in particular, given its size in population and economic terms. One of the main issues was the contribution which South East Wales could make to the development of Wales as a whole. There was also the question of how the South East Wales region could avoid the charge that it had attracted more than its fair

share of economic activity at the expense of the other regions in Wales.

Item 4: Practical Issues: SEWR-01-99 (p.3)

4.1 In terms of venues for future meetings, there was a strong feeling that the Committee should meet throughout the region. It was suggested that the aim should be for the Committee to meet in every constituency, even if it was necessary to make compromises in terms of the facilities offered by some of the venues.

4.2 There was also concern that the Committee should allow time to meet the public, as well as local community groups and voluntary organisations. Meetings could be split between formal and informal sessions, or informal meetings could be held separately in local venues such as school or village halls. It was important for the public to be aware of the meetings, and the Secretariat would consider the most cost-effective way of securing local publicity.

4.3 It was agreed that the priority issues for the next meeting were:

- postal addresses, for which the Chairman and Operations Manager of the Postal Board would be invited to attend;
- the local economic strategy for the South East Wales region, for which a representative of the Welsh Development Agency would be invited to attend;
- an analysis of the take-up of European Structural Funds funding in the region over the last four years;
- the implementation strategy in relation to the Objective 1 programme.

4.4 The Committee's forward work programme would reflect the other issues identified at the meeting.

4.5 It was agreed that the meeting should be held in September and that, subject to availability, the venue should be the Council Offices in Merthyr Tydfil. Members asked to be notified of the date of the meeting prior to the summer recess.

