

Date: Friday 6 July 2001
Time: 10.00am to 1.00pm
Venue: Rhyl Town Hall, Rhyl

North Wales Regional Committee: Draft Report to the Assembly

1. Introduction

1.1 The North Wales Regional Committee is one of the Assembly's four regional committees. Standing order 10 sets out the geographical areas of the committees and also states their remit.

1.2 Between July 2000 and July 2001 the Committee was chaired by Ann Jones. The other members of are Alison Halford, Gareth Jones, John Marek, Tom Middlehurst, Alun Pugh, Rod Richards, Peter Rogers, Janet Ryder, Karen Sinclair, Dafydd Wigley and Ieuan Wyn Jones. Eleanor Burnham replaced Christine Humphreys in May 2001. Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas is a member but does not attend meetings in view of his role as Presiding Officer.

1.3 The Committee met six times between July 2000 and July 2001. Details of the dates, venues, topics discussed and subsequent action taken are at annex 1.

2. Remit and Method of Working

2.1 The role of the regional committees, as defined by Standing Order 10.2, is to advise the National Assembly on matters affecting their regions, the effect of Assembly policies in those regions and the work of public bodies there.

2.2 The committee places great importance on encouraging public participation in its meetings and ensuring that the views expressed are fed back to the Assembly via Ministers and committee Chairs. After each meeting the Chair summarises the issues raised in a letter to the appropriate Minister which is copied to the relevant subject committee chair. At the start of each meeting the committee receives a report on action agreed at the previous meeting and any responses received.

2.3 The committee arranges its meetings around a specific theme. This has the advantage of simplifying the meeting structure and delivering a more focused audience.

2.4 During the year, the committee twice contributed to public consultation exercises. The first such meeting considered the *Communities First* programme and the second the consultation document "*Extending Entitlement: Supporting Young People in Wales*".

2.5 Public attendance at committee meetings was consistently high throughout the year, averaging over 100. The meetings in Connah's Quay and Holyhead were particularly well attended.

2.6 In addition to the formal public meetings of the committee, informal briefing sessions were arranged with the North Wales Economic Forum and others. In November 2000 members met with the Forum to discuss the development of broadband capability in the region and North-South transport links. A briefing was also received from the Environment agency on the flooding at the time. In April 2001 members met with the Forum to discuss rail electrification, the development of the aerospace sector and ICT infrastructure.

2.7 These meetings proved a valuable means of exchanging views with the Economic Forum and ensuring that members were briefed on issues not covered at the committee's formal meetings.

2.8 Given his responsibility for the co-ordination of policy in North Wales, the committee issued a standing invitation to the First Minister to attend its meetings. The First Minister attended the meetings in Porthmadog, Holyhead and Rhyl and conducted open question and answer sessions with members of the public on each occasion.

3. Forward programme

3.1 A new Chair was elected at the committee's meeting on 6 July 2001. The new Chair, in consultation with Members, will develop a work programme to ensure that the committee continues to provide a link between the National Assembly and local communities in the region.

Ann Jones
Chair

July 2001

North Wales Regional Committee

Meetings July 2000 - July 2001

Date	Venue	Topics and action taken

14 July 2000	Denbigh Town Hall, Denbigh	<p>Crime reduction</p> <p>Letter to the Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee suggesting that the Committee look at the resourcing of the crime and disorder partnerships;</p> <p>Letter to the Finance Secretary, copied to the Chairs of subject committees and Assembly Secretaries seeking information on all the sources of funding for crime and disorder issues that could be accessed at the local level. Details were provided to the next meeting and circulated to all attendees and the Local Government & Housing Committee.</p> <p>Paper provided by Chris Ruane MP on Islington's "acceptable behaviour contract" forwarded to the Local Government and Housing Committee;</p> <p>Members of the Committee agreed to publicise Magistrates' Courts Committee public meetings;</p>
27 October 2000	North East Wales Institute of Higher Education, Wrexham	<p>Communities First</p> <p>Letter to the Minister for Finance and Communities setting out the main points of the discussion on Communities First;</p> <p>Letter to the First Minister on the subject of electrifying the North Wales mainline.</p>

8 December 2000	Dyffryn Madog Arts Centre, Porthmadog	<p>Health improvement & question and answer session with the First Minister</p> <p>First Minister gave assurance that officials would remedy issue raised by a member of the public regarding access to health information available in England but not Wales.</p> <p>Letter to Virgin Trains registering the Committee's dissatisfaction with the withdrawal of the Intercity service from North Wales to London. Reply received announcing the reinstatement of the service.</p>
26 January 2001	Deeside College, Connah's Quay	<p>Supporting young people in Wales</p> <p>Letter to Minister for Education & Lifelong Learning detailing responses received at the meeting.</p>
11 May 2001	Ucheldre Centre, Holyhead	<p>Transport & question and answer session with the First Minister</p> <p>Railtrack to provide information on the work being done to improve disabled access and journey quality. Railtrack to provide information on stations in North Wales with disabled access.</p> <p>First Minister to raise the issue of a link between the A55 and Holyhead port with Minister for the Environment.</p> <p>First Minister to ask Minister for Culture & Sport to look at funding for the Sportsmatch scheme.</p>
6 July 2001	Rhyl Town Hall, Rhyl	<p>Housing & question and answer session with the First Minister</p>