

Economic Development Committee

Date: 13 October 1999
Venue: Committee Room 2, National Assembly Building
Title: Consideration of ETAG Report

Purpose

1. To agree the Committee's response to the ETAG report. The response will then be passed to the Post-16 Education and Training Committee.

Background

2. The Post-16 Education and Training Committee has been considering the ETAG report over recent months and has invited a wide range of organisations to give evidence both orally and in writing (list of contributors at Annex 1).
3. The Economic Development Committee considered whether outside organisations should be invited to give oral evidence to the Committee. The Chair and Clerk considered this, but given the range of organisations who had already given evidence it proved difficult to identify additional suitable objective organisations. Written submissions have been received from the CBI and the Council of Welsh TECs for its meeting on 15 September (EDC-05-99(p.4), EDC-05-99(p.5) respectively). Further relevant submissions from the WDA and TUC have been circulated (EDC-08-99(p6) and EDC-08-99(p7)).
4. Members may also wish to refer to the submissions to and minutes of meetings of the Post-16 Education and Training Committee on the intranet/internet.

Consideration

5. The ETAG Report recognises that Wales' economic future depends on a good infrastructure and high-level skills base. It states that the existing skills base is inadequate and that there is too much economic inactivity. The Committee will wish to consider how far the recommendations address these issues.

6. The document was drafted before the National Economic Development Strategy, the Objective 1 and crucially the Objective 3 documents and therefore takes no account of them.

7. The National Economic Development Strategy contains three policy priorities which relate directly to the ETAG report:

- work to improve standards of attainment and skills overall and to increase participation and attainment for those currently excluded or in need;
- ensure education and training programmes and priorities link clearly to our strategy for the economy and social inclusion;
- promote higher value skills, active citizenship, creativity and entrepreneurship.

8. The ETAG Report appears to go some way towards addressing the first, was not in a position to address the second, and appears to fall far short of the third.

9. The issue of the link between the ETAG report and the Objective 1 documents was raised during the Committee's recent consultation.

Issues

10. The issues fall into three main categories: strategy, targets, delivery mechanisms and implementation.

Strategy

11. The Committee may wish to consider:

- i) whether it is satisfied that the strategy proposed by ETAG reflects sufficiently the strategic objectives identified in the National Economic Development Strategy, and if not how this could be achieved;
- ii) whether the Community Consortia proposed will be compatible with the package approach to implementation being proposed for Objective 1;
- iii) whether Chapters 6 and 7 place enough emphasis on early intervention.

Targets

12. The Committee may wish to consider:

- i) Whether the targets should be extended to include NVQ level 5 and equivalent qualifications.
- ii) Whether the targets should identify individual sectors or subjects as deserving of particular

attention.

iii) Whether the NEDS targets for Equal Opportunities are adequately reflected in the ETAG Report.

iv) Whether there is sufficient emphasis placed on ICT-related skills (page 20-21 NEDS).

Mechanisms and Implementation

13. The Committee may wish to consider:

i) Whether it is content with the proposals for the dissolution of TECs. (page 21-22 ETAG)

ii) What will happen to the TECs' support for small businesses eg enterprise support, IIP, as well as training for those made redundant.

iii) Whether mechanisms will be in place to ensure sufficient demand-side representation on the proposed National Council for Education and Training in Wales (CETW).

iv) The appropriateness of the proposals for the constitution and objectives of the shadow CETW.

v) Whether the timetable for implementation of the proposals (page 13 ETAG) is compatible with implementation of Objective 1 funding arrangements.

vi) Whether it is content that 'Future Skills Wales' should form the basis of assessment of future skills needs (page 25 ETAG).

Committee Secretariat

October 1999

Annex 1

Organisations which have provided evidence for the Post-16 Committee

- Association of Directors of Education Wales (ADEW)
- CBI Wales
- Council of Welsh TECs (CWT)

- ETAG members
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Institute of Directors (IOD)
- National Council for National Training Organisations in Wales
- Secondary Heads Association (SHA)
- Unions (NATFHE: NUT: NASUT, NAHT, UCAC)
- Welsh Secondary Schools Association (WSSA)
- Further Education Funding Council for Wales
- Fforwm (national organisation representing all further education colleges in Wales)
- CYDAG
- Institute of Welsh Affairs
- NIACE (The National Organisation for Adult Learning)
- HHEW