

# Sustainability Committee

SC(3)02-07 (p1): 12 July 2007

## "Proposal for the Sustainability Committee's first scrutiny inquiry"

During discussions at the Sustainability Committee's informal meeting on 5 July, the following issues were raised as subjects for scrutiny inquiries:

Climate change including energy policy, carbon reduction and marine energy technology, also to link with TAN8;  
Planning - reviews of primary planning legislation and TAN 8;  
Woodlands in Wales - relationship with the Forestry Commission and impacts on climate change;  
Waste and recycling;  
Flood risk - coastal defences and inland flooding risks;

Members indicated that they would like to investigate the issues around reducing carbon emissions in Wales as their first scrutiny inquiry. The Committee secretariat will produce a paper for the first meeting of the Autumn term suggesting possible timings for reviews of all the issues raised. The UK Government has set a target to reduce carbon emissions in the UK by 20% below 1990 levels by 2010. The Climate Change Bill, published in March 2007, sets legally-binding targets of a 26-32% reduction by 2020 and a 60% reduction by 2050. In Wales, the level of carbon dioxide emissions has fluctuated over the past 10 years. The Welsh Assembly Government has expressed an aspiration for new buildings in Wales to be carbon neutral by 2011 and has set targets for levels of renewable energy generation. It is suggested that the Committee focuses on scrutinising the Welsh Assembly Government on its progress in meeting the UK emissions reduction target. The inquiry could:

Take evidence from stakeholders on the success and progress on meeting emission targets using existing Welsh Assembly Government policies;

Take evidence from stakeholders what further measures could be taken by the Welsh Assembly Government to meet emissions targets using their existing powers;

Take evidence from stakeholders on what further powers the Welsh Assembly Government could seek to enable it to meet emissions targets;

Take evidence from Ministers and officials from other administrations about targets and progress towards achieving them.

The Committee could then scrutinise the Minister for Sustainability and Rural Development using the evidence gathered and produce a report and recommendations for the Minister and the Welsh Assembly Government.

### Timescale for the inquiry.

**Summer recess 2007** Scoping study to be undertaken by Members Research Service Suggested terms of reference to be drafted by the clerking team List of potential witnesses compiled **First meeting of the Autumn Term** Discussion of the scoping paper Discussion and possible agreement of the terms of reference Discussion and possible agreement of the written consultation document and distribution list. **Second meeting of the Autumn Term** Possible 'scene setting' evidence session (e.g. Jonathan Porritt, the Carbon Trust, The Sustainable Development Commission) **Subsequent meetings in the Autumn Term** Stakeholder evidence - each meeting with a focussed 'theme' Production and discussion of a summary of the main themes from the oral evidence Summary and discussion of the written evidence Further focussed evidence session based on written consultations **Meetings in the Spring Term** Discussion of the key themes and issues and exploration of any additional evidence needed. Scrutiny of the Minister for Sustainability and Rural Affairs based on the evidence received. Production and discussion of draft final report and recommendations Agreement of final report and recommendations Report launch and plenary debate (before the Easter recess).