

Social Justice & Regeneration Committee

SJR(2)-09-06(p2)

Date: Thursday 8 June 2006

Time: 1.30pm-4.30pm

Venue: National Assembly for Wales

Title: Social Justice Report 2006

Purpose

To seek the Committee's views on the Welsh Assembly Government's 2006 Social Justice Report.

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the content of the Assembly Government's 2006 Social Justice Report.

Summary

This paper seeks the Committee's views on the 2006 Social Justice Annual Report. The format of the 2006 Report reflects the views made by Committee during its consideration of the 2005 Report and also views expressed during Plenary consideration of the Report in September 2005.

Background

'Wales: A Better Country' commits the Welsh Assembly Government to action on social justice that tackles poverty and poor health, and provides people and their communities with the means to help themselves and break out of the poverty trap. The Assembly Government has a commitment to report regularly on what it is achieving in tackling poverty and social disadvantage and it has done that on an annual basis since 2001.

Social Justice is a major theme that flows throughout all relevant Assembly policies and programmes and it is important that Ministers and officials work across portfolios to ensure that the needs of deprived communities and excluded groups are central to the delivery of existing policies and programmes; and in the development of new initiatives. The annual Social Justice Report provides a valuable focal point for the Assembly Government's work in tackling social exclusion across Government Departments.

The 2006 Report retains the cross-cutting nature of previous reports but is intended to be shorter and

more tightly focused than in previous years. Greater use of cross-referencing and web links has resulted in the production of a comprehensive picture of key social inclusion activity across the Assembly Government without the need to describe each policy or programme in detail. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report, "Monitoring Social Exclusion in Wales" has provided a good evidence base in relation to the key (measurable) problems to be tackled and, where possible, the 2006 Report uses that evidence as its primary focus for outlining Assembly Government action.

The use of case studies has continued to help demonstrate how social justice initiatives are making a practical difference to people on the ground and the new indicators, introduced in the 2005 Report have been updated for 2006. However, in order that progress can be tracked year on year, Annex A of the Report outlines the robust and quantifiable indicators included in previous reports dating back to 2001. In response to comments made by members of the Committee in 2005 Annex B outlines a cross-Government picture of existing targets for the Assembly Government's main social justice programmes. Committee will also note the inclusion in the Report of the Assembly Government's commitment to develop new milestones and targets to monitor our progress in eradicating child poverty by 2020.

Consideration

The Committee will wish to note that [the Report has been endorsed by the Assembly Government Cabinet]. In addition, the official level Social Justice & Regeneration Policy Group, which comprises senior representation from all relevant Assembly Government Departments, [has endorsed the 2006 Report].

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this paper.

Cross-cutting Themes

Promoting Social Justice is one of the Assembly's major cross-cutting themes. The Social Justice Annual Report is the main vehicle for pulling together all the activity across the Assembly Government that contributes to the social justice agenda.

Publicity Arrangements

Copies of the full Report will be available on the Assembly Government's Internet site. In addition, a bilingual summary leaflet will be produced and copies distributed to, amongst others, all branch libraries in Wales.

Action for Subject Committee

The Committee is invited to note the content of the 2006 Social Justice Report. The Report will be

debated subsequently in Plenary.

Edwina Hart AM

Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

Contact point: Tracey Breheny/ Lynne Schofield , Communities Directorate – ext: 1586