

Social Justice and Regeneration Committee

SJR(2)-09-06(p.4) Annex

Date: Thursday 8 June 2006

Time: 1.30pm-4.30pm

Venue: National Assembly for Wales

Title: Strategic Forward Work Programme 2006/7

Introduction

1. The Social Justice and Regeneration Committee is one of the Assembly's seven subject committees. Standing Order 9.9 requires subject committees to maintain a rolling programme of work covering periods of at least twelve months. The Strategic Forward Work Programme sets out the Committee's priorities for the period July 2006 – April 2007. It is complemented by detailed programmes covering each term.

Remit and Responsibilities

In accordance with s57(4) of the Government of Wales Act 1998, the Committee's remit is based on the portfolio of the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration which covers: the Government's programme for regenerating the communities of Wales; anti-poverty initiatives; the social economy; the voluntary sector; community safety and relations with the Police and the National Offender Management System; the Fire Service; drug and alcohol misuse, youth justice, Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) and housing.

3. The responsibilities of subject committees as set out in Standing Order 9.7 and 9.8 are principally: policy development; scrutiny of Ministers and relevant bodies; and scrutiny of legislation.

Aims

4. With such a broad remit, the Committee will develop a strategic approach to its work and aim to balance consideration of subjects across the portfolio and its range of responsibilities.

Priorities

5. Priorities for the coming periods will be:

Policy development (SO 9.7(i)) - the Committee will focus on those areas of policy development where it can make the greatest impact. In the coming period the Committee will continue with its review into drug and alcohol misuse specifically looking at prevention and complete its second review into Restructuring the Constabulary – Democratic Structures. The Committee will consider undertaking an inquiry into youth homelessness.

Scrutiny of the Minister (SO 9.7(i)) - the Minister will report at alternate Committee meetings on current developments within the portfolio. In particular the Committee will be interested in monitoring the implementation of the Domestic Violence strategy, the continuing development of the various components of the Housing Strategy, Communities First, the devolution of the Fire Service to Wales, community safety, child anti-poverty strategy and how equality is being mainstreamed.

Scrutiny of sponsored bodies (SO 9.7 (iii)) - there is only one ASPB within the Committee's remit – the Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse. This is an advisory panel only with no financial responsibility.

Other items (SO 9.8) - the Committee will consider the following items as they arise:

Scrutiny of proposed legislation affecting Wales (SO 9.8(i) and 24) the Minister will regularly outline forthcoming secondary legislation. The Committee will be informed of relevant proposed primary legislation and will scrutinise and report on any such legislation remitted to it by Plenary. The Committee will identify for scrutiny those items of legislation where there is scope to influence content and will also consider draft secondary legislation referred by the Deputy Presiding Officer, as appropriate. With regard to EU legislation, the Committee, in line with the method of working and protocol agreed by the Panel of Chairs, has identified the following thematic strategies it wishes to influence, Rights of the Child, Drugs Policy, Alcohol-related Crime and Postal Services, and will seek to do so in a timely and appropriate way.

Proposals for the Assembly's budget (SO 9.8(ii) and 21) – the Committee will indicate its budget priorities in the summer term and comment on the draft budget in the autumn term. It will monitor the Welsh Assembly Government's progress in the areas that the Committee will identify as priorities in the 2006 –07 budget.

Complaints (SO 9.8(iii) and 23) – the Committee will consider any complaints referred to it under Standing Order 23

Public appointments (SO 9.8(iv) and 22) – the Committee's two public appointment nominees will take part in the process of appointments to public bodies as vacancies arise.

Other matters referred by the Assembly (SO 9.8 (v)) – the Committee will consider other matters referred to it by the National Assembly, but would ask Members to consult the Committee Chair before tabling motions inviting plenary to remit work to the Committee.

The Assembly's Statutory Duties

6. The Government of Wales Act 1998 places certain duties on the National Assembly; the Committee's work will be guided by the following:

Equality of Opportunity (s.48 and s.120) – Committee meetings will be held in public and on occasion away from the National Assembly building to increase the accessibility of its business to people across Wales. Over the range of issues within its portfolio, the Committee will have regard to equality of opportunity notably, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, welsh language, religion and beliefs and age.

Sustainable Development (s.121) – Throughout its deliberations the Committee will focus on the need to balance economic and social growth with the conservation of the environment, through sustainable development

Committee Services

June 2006