

SOUTH EAST WALES REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Report to Plenary: July 2000 to July 2001

Introduction

1. The South East Wales Regional Committee is one of the National Assembly's four regional committees. The geographic area of the Committee, as specified by Standing Order 10.1, is Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Torfaen and The Vale of Glamorgan.
2. During its second year of operation, the Chair of the Committee has been allocated to the Liberal Democrats, in line with the agreement between party groups. Initially Jenny Randerson was elected as Chair, but she was replaced by Peter Black following the advent of the Partnership Government and the related Cabinet changes.
3. The other Members of the Committee are Lorraine Barrett, Rosemary Butler, Alun Cairns, Christine Chapman, Jane Davidson, David Davies, Geraint Davies, Janet Davies, Jocelyn Davies, Ron Davies, Sue Essex, Michael German, William Graham, Janice Gregory, John Griffiths, Brian Hancock, Jane Hutt, Pauline Jarman, Carwyn Jones, Peter Law, Huw Lewis, Dai Lloyd, David Melding, Rhodri Morgan, Jonathan Morgan, Lynne Neagle, Owen John Thomas and Phil Williams.

Remit and method of working

4. 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.
5. With some refinements, the Committee has continued with the working practices established during its first year of operation. In particular, it has operated as a single committee covering the whole region, with a 'themed' approach to meetings. The main change is that the Committee now gives more prominence to public participation at meetings. At most meetings, there is an 'open mike' session as the first item on the agenda, and members of the public are able to ask questions during the rest of the meeting. Whenever appropriate, the Chair ensures that members of the public receive a written reply to their questions from the relevant Assembly Minister.

6. The Committee has met throughout South East Wales, and it has now visited each of the ten local authority areas in the region at least once. In line with the move to increase accessibility to the public, wherever possible the Committee meets in leisure centres or venues other than civic centres. Combined with improved publicity arrangements, public attendance at meetings has increased markedly over the year.

7. The Committee has continued to develop its links with key partners throughout the statutory, voluntary and private sectors in the region. The main bodies invited to meet the Committee during the year are shown in the table below.

Summary of meetings held

8. A summary of Committee meetings in 2000-01 is set out below:

Date	Venue	Topic
7 July 2000	Pontypool	The Committee considered the East Wales Objective 2 and Transitional Programme, with a presentation by the East Wales Partnership. It also discussed the Action Strategy for the South Wales Valleys.
20 October	Ebbw Vale	The Committee considered <i>Communities First</i> , with presentations from community groups, local government and other organisations concerned with community regeneration.
1 December	Chepstow	The Committee considered Health Improvement Programmes, with presentations by Bro Taf, Gwent and Iechydd Morgannwg Health Authorities and their partners.
2 February 2001	Cardiff	The Committee considered the policy towards children and young people, with presentations from young people as well as the voluntary sector and local government.
30 March		Meeting cancelled due to the foot and mouth outbreak.

18 May	Caerphilly	The Committee considered the Assembly Review of Procedures, with a presentation by Kathryn Hollingsworth of Cardiff Law School. It also considered regional land use planning issues, with a presentation by the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group.
13 July	Barry	The Committee considered the development of a waste strategy, with presentations from a number of organisations in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors.

Forward work programme

9. The next Committee meeting, to be held on 2 November, will consider the National Assembly's strategy for older people. The new Chair, in consultation with Members, will be developing the work programme to ensure that the Committee continues to provide a link between the National Assembly and local communities in the region.

10. The Committee has submitted its views on the role and effectiveness of the regional committees to the Assembly Review of Procedures. It is possible that the Review will result in changes over the coming year in the way in which the Committee operates, with a view to further developing its vital role in the work of the National Assembly.