

## **ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

**Date:** Wednesday 21 March 2001  
**Time:** 2.00 to 5.00 pm  
**Venue:** Committee Room 3, National Assembly Building

### **DRAFT INTERIM REPORT ON THE QUINQUENNIAL REVIEW OF THE COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

#### **Purpose**

1. To consult the Committee on the draft Interim Report on the Quinquennial Review of the Countryside Council for Wales. Standing Order 9.7 provides that the subject committees shall keep under review the discharge of public functions in their field by public bodies. Following the receipt of the final version of the Interim Report and the Committee's views, the Environment Minister and the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities will come to a view on the Report's main findings. They will determine whether the Review should proceed to its second stage and whether the Terms of Reference need to be adjusted.

#### **Recommendation**

2. That the Committee comments on the findings of the draft Interim Report at Annex A and on whether the Terms of Reference for the second stage (Interim Report Appendix 1) need amending.

#### **Background**

3. The Quinquennial Review of the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) was formally commissioned by the Environment Minister and Minister for Finance, Local government and Communities in September this year following consultation with Committee on the Terms of Reference. The Review is being carried out by Ian Thomas, a member of the Assembly's staff, and his Interim Report covers the first stage of the Review. This addresses the question,

'In the light of the statutory duties of the Countryside Council for Wales, its remit in Wales and the UK, and the objectives of the National Assembly for Wales, is there a continuing need for all the functions of the Countryside Council for Wales

and, if so, is the current organisational framework the most appropriate ?’

4. The Committee is invited to discuss the reviewer’s draft before a final version of the Interim Report is submitted to ministers along with the Committee’s comments. The CCW is about to start recruitment for a new Chief Executive following Paul Loveluck’s retirement later this year but is first waiting on the outcome of the Interim Report. We are hoping that the consideration can be concluded by Easter. The next part of the Review will look at the Council’s strategic effectiveness and its corporate governance.

## **The Interim Report**

5. The Draft Interim Report is attached at Annex A. It sets out the findings of the reviewer following a wide-ranging consultation with stakeholders and partners as well as with the Council itself. The executive summary (pp 2- 5) sets out the findings of the Report. The main conclusion is that there is a continuing need for the Countryside Council for Wales undertaking broadly the current range of functions. The Report foreshadows a number of issues for the second stage of the review, including the investigation of alternatives for the delivery of a couple of specific activities. The Report looks at the functional relationship between CCW and other bodies including the Environment Agency, noting that the review of the Agency, lead by DETR, is ongoing.

## **Compliance**

6. The Review has been undertaken in accordance with the published Quinquennial Review guidelines. In addition to its participation in the Review, the Countryside Council for Wales has been consulted on all matters of fact.

## **Action for Committee**

7. The Committee is asked to comment on the draft Interim Report and on the terms of reference as they relate to the second stage of the Review.

## **Contact point**

8. Financial Planning Division.