

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 20 November 2002

Time: 9:00 am to 12:30 pm

Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly for Wales

Attendance:

Members:

Richard Edwards, Chair	Preseli Pembrokeshire
Eleanor Burnham	North Wales
David Davies	Monmouth
Janet Davies	South Wales West
Brian Hancock	Islwyn
Sue Essex, Minister for Environment	Cardiff North
Val Lloyd	Swansea East
Tom Middlehurst	Alyn and Deeside
Karen Sinclair	Clwyd South
Phil Williams	South Wales East

EDC Members (item 4):

Alun Cairns	South Wales West
John Griffiths (substituting for Andrew Davies)	Newport East

Officials:

Martin Evans	Director of Transport, Planning and Environment Department
Denzil Jones (items 2 and 4)	Head of Transport Policy Division
Gerry Quarrell (item 3)	Countryside Division
Richard Thomas (item 3)	Countryside Division

External Organisations:

Chris Cain (item 4)	Airports Policy Division, UK Department of Transport
David Swallow (item 4)	Welsh Development Agency

Secretariat:

Siwan Davies	Committee Clerk
Vaughan Watkin	Deputy Committee Clerk

Item 1: Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

1.1 The Chair welcomed Members, attendees and members of the public to the meeting and set out the new requirements for declarations of interest in line with Standing Order 4.5. Committee Members had been invited to the meeting of the Health and Social Services (HSS) Committee on 28 November, where the Children’s Commissioner would be presenting his first report.

1.2 The Committee agreed to write to the Governments of Galicia and Spain expressing support and sympathy following the Prestige tanker disaster. Representations would also be made to the UK Government urging them to assist the Spanish authorities with the environmental clean-up operation and to call for advancement of the EU ban on single-hulled tankers.

Item 2: Report from the Minister for Environment - EPT-16-02 (p 2)

2.1 In addition to the items in her written report the Minister reported on recent engagements and informed the Committee of the following:

- Scar sands windfarm proposals – any application would be considered by the Assembly

under the Transport and Works Act 1992;

- Nantygwyddon – the Minister for Health and Social Services and Chief Medical Officer would be reporting to the HSS Committee on action taken to implement the EPT Committee's Nantygwyddon recommendations relating to health;
- Ysgol John Bright, Llandudno – the Welsh Assembly Government had written to Conwy Council regarding planning, financial and health effects of the proposed development. Officials had met Council officers and had emphasised the need for the local and health authority to work together to rebuild public confidence.

2.2 The following were the main points covered in discussion:

Transport

- Community Transport – support for the extension of concessionary fares to cover travel by pensioners and disabled people on community transport, and the inclusion of passengers in the new Stakeholder Group;
- Concessionary Fares – support for the review of the formula and the formula for funding local authorities' delivery;
- Road Noise Levels – a repeated request for details of the programme for replacement of surfaces on the trunk road network near residential areas to be provided to Members;
- Wales and Borders Rail Franchise – the need at the meeting on 4 December to discuss with the Strategic Rail Authority their specifications to bidders for existing and enhanced services.

Planning

- Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Schemes – request for clarification on the transference of risk on publicly funded PFI schemes, which the Minister would pass on to the Finance Minister to provide out of committee;
- Technical Advice Notes (TANs) – request for details of those TANs under review and estimated publication dates, which the Minister would provide out of committee.

Environmental Protection

- Waste – concern about the disposal of tyres initially imported to the UK for second use;

- Requests for information – the Minister would provide the following information out of committee: timetable for implementation of Special Waste Regulations; details of EC mandatory standards for Bathing Waters; impact of Private Water Supplies Regulations.

Item 3: Proposed Review of National Parks Authorities in Wales –

EPT-16-02 (p 2)

3.1 The Minister sought the views of the Committee on the draft terms of reference for the review, which were as follows:

- Role of the Parks – the need to strike a balance between the national and local roles of the National Parks had implications for the membership of the Parks and consequent arrangements for accountability;
- Integration– the outcome of the review should be taken into in the wider consideration of the possible need, in the longer term, for an integrated environment and countryside agency for Wales;
- Crossing boundaries – the need for the Parks to inform and involve local communities, particularly those urban areas close to but outside the Parks, in their work;
- Promoting Sustainable Development – the need to clarify and increase the Parks' role in promoting sustainable rural and urban regeneration and social inclusion.

3.2 The terms of reference would be revised to take into account the Committee's views. The review was expected to get underway in February and would take five to six months to complete.

Item 4: The Future Development of Air Transport in Wales –

EPT-16-02 (p 3)

1. Chris Cain summarised the main issues for Wales arising out of the UK consultation on the future development of air transport (copy of presentation at Annex 1). The following were the main conclusions reached in discussion:
 - UK strategy – call for the strategy to reflect Welsh needs for increased European and international flights from Cardiff, new air developments to be west of London, and for improved rail links to Heathrow and Gatwick from South Wales and to Manchester from North Wales;

- Internal Wales air network – support for further work on the feasibility of internal air services as a means of linking North, Mid and South Wales, complementing other public transport services, and a recognition that air travellers in North and Mid Wales would continue to use English airports rather than Cardiff for international travel;
- Existing Welsh airports – the need to increase the capacity of Cardiff and other Welsh airports and improve their accessibility by public transport and private cars;
- Proposed new Severnside developments – the need to analyse and appraise the proposals for developing an international airport at Severnside, which had yet to be submitted;
- Environmental issues – the need to include an assessment of the acceptability of environmental impacts into the forecasts for future demand for air transport.

4.2 The Secretariat would send a copy of the minutes to the Department for Transport so that the Committee's views could be taken into account as part of the consultation.

Item 5: Minutes of the meeting 6 November 2002 - EPT-15-02 (min)

5.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November, subject to the following amendment to paragraph 4.1 bullet 2:

- National and local co-ordination – the need to ensure political leaders and senior managers understand why biodiversity is key to our future. The need for large scale habitat restoration projects, particularly marine, to supplement local initiatives. A plea not to neglect the marine environment. The impact of the CAP and Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) reforms on conservation priorities;

Date of next meeting

6.1 The next formal meeting of the Committee would be at 9.15 am on Wednesday 4 December at the National Assembly for Wales. There would be an informal seminar titled 'The Effects of the Environment on Human Health' at 2.00 pm on Thursday 28 November at the National Assembly.

Committee Secretariat November 2002