

Date: Wednesday 13 March 2002

Venue: Committee Room 2, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Economic Development Committee
Forward Work Programme : May 2002 To May 2003

Introduction

1. The Economic Development Committee is one of the National Assembly's seven subject Committees. The responsibilities of subject committees are set out in the National Assembly's Standing Orders, an extract from which is at Annex A.

Duties of the Committee

2. The remit of the Economic Development Committee is based on the portfolio of the Economic Development Minister which includes:

- Inward investment and trade, promotion of indigenous companies and regional development;
- European economic issues, including structural funding;
- Innovation, energy and ICT development in the business sector;
- Industrial policy and business support, including demand-side employment issues (minimum wage, working time, etc);
- Tourism.

The Committee's Aims and Objectives

3. The Committee's aim is to help build an advanced, dynamic and more diverse economy in which everyone has a chance to prosper. In particular it will contribute to the achievement of results in the following key areas:

- build an advanced, competitive and a more diverse economy with a dynamic small and medium enterprise sector;
- increase the number and quality of jobs and reduce economic inactivity particularly in less

prosperous areas;

- raise the international profile and influence of Wales and establish it as a first class place to live, study, visit and do business;
- stimulate development that conserves natural resources and respects the environment;
- put more of our investment in people and lifelong learning so that everyone, and particularly our youth, can gain the range of knowledge and skills required to fulfil their potential and prosper in the new economy;
- promote active citizenship, creativity and entrepreneurship;
- improve training, assist small businesses to grow, promote stability and encourage the new technologies;
- ensure we exploit the full range of development opportunities open to the Welsh economy through the granting of Objective One status;
- continue to seek high-quality inward investment and to strengthen support to overseas trade.

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

4. The Committee's work falls broadly into 2 categories – scrutinising the work of the Welsh Assembly Government and the Economic Development Minister, and contributing to the development of National Assembly for Wales policy through policy reviews and keeping abreast of, and responding to, issues as they arise. In practice, Agenda items often contain aspects of both of these.

5. Alongside these the Committee has a range of 'ongoing' business:

- receiving and considering the Assembly Minister's regular reports to it;
- annual reviews of the performance of the Welsh Development Agency and the Wales Tourist Board, and advising on their strategic development;
- considering proposals for the Assembly's budget;
- considering secondary legislation as appropriate.

A) Scrutiny

6. The Committee will receive and discuss reports on current and critical issues from the Assembly Minister at each of its meetings.

7. It will use these occasions to undertake a regular scrutiny of the Minister, his policies and their implementation.

8 It will obtain regular reports from the Minister and the Chairs of the Programme Monitoring Committees, on the progress of the various European programmes of support and will keep a close watch on the performance of the programmes.

9. It will consider the performance of the Welsh Development Agency and the Wales Tourist Board and

consider their forward plans. It will continue to maintain an overview of the development of Cardiff Bay and the implementation of the business plan for the new Cardiff Harbour Authority.

10. It will analyse progress towards the achievement of the targets laid out in the National Economic Development Strategy.

B) Development of Policy

11. The Committee's major contribution to the development of policy will be through its Review of Energy Policy in Wales. It will undertake this in phases starting with Renewable Energy followed by Energy Efficiency. It proposes then to look at Combined Heat And Power and other drivers.

12. The previous forward work programme also indicated as priority areas for consideration: a Review of Information and Communications Technology insofar as it affects the business sector - and Wales' tourism strategy. These will be kept under consideration as subjects for study in the future.

13. The Committee will also continue to maintain an overview of, and as appropriate advise on, further issues arising in connection with the recommendations in the Committee's Review of Business Support and Development.

14. The Committee will advise further on the development of the National Economic Development Strategy as this is developed.

15. It will advise on the Welsh Development Agency's and the Wales Tourist Board's forward plans and the Minister's strategic guidance letters to these bodies.

16. It will maintain an overview of progress in the development of EU policies and in particular enlargement and cohesion.

17. It will maintain an overview of and advise on, developments in the Welsh economy - responding to urgent and significant issues as necessary.

18. It will advise on budgetary, financial, legislation, appointments and other matters as necessary and as required under Standing Orders.

DETAILED PROGRAMME

The Committee will publish a detailed programme for each term at the times specified for all Committees in the Committee Secretariat Management Plan.

It will endeavour to hold at least two formal meetings a year outside Cardiff.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUBJECT COMMITTEES

Standing Orders 9.7 and 9.8 set out the responsibilities of Subject Committees:

9.7 Each subject committee shall

- (i) contribute to the development of the Assembly's policies within the fields for which the relevant Assembly Secretary is accountable to the Assembly;
- (ii) keep under review the expenditure and administration connected with their implementation; and
- (iii) keep under review the discharge of public functions in those fields by public, voluntary and private bodies.

9.8 Each subject committee shall also, within the relevant fields,

- (i) advise on proposed legislation affecting Wales, including performing its functions under SO22;
- (ii) provide advice to the Assembly Cabinet on matters relating to allocation of the Assembly's budget in accordance with Standing Order 19;
- (iii) perform its function under Standing Order 21(complaints);
- (iv) perform any functions assigned to it under the Code of Practice on Public Appointments Procedure made by the Assembly under Standing Order 20; and
- (v) consider matters referred to it by the Assembly within its fields."

2. Standing Order 9.9 requires the subject committee to maintain a rolling programme of work covering periods of at least 12 months.