

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

STRATEGIC FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME MAY 2002-MAY 2003

Purpose

1. To invite the Committee to agree its strategic work programme for the year to May 2003.

Background

2. Subject Committees are required to maintain a rolling programme of work covering periods of at least 12 months (SO 9.9). All Committees are now in the process of agreeing programmes for the year to the Assembly elections in May 2003.

Recommendation

3. Members are invited to agree the attached work programme and to identify any additional items they wish to see included.
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AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

STRATEGIC FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME MAY 2002-MAY 2003

Introduction

1. The Agriculture & Rural Development Committee is one of the National Assembly's seven subject committees. The responsibilities of the subject committees are set out in Standing Orders, as reproduced at **Annex A**.

2. Standing order 9.9 requires subject committees to maintain a rolling programme of work covering periods of at least 12 months. The Panel of Chairs has agreed that committees' work programmes should be strategic and cover an 18 month to 2 year time frame, supported by more detailed work programmes covering a three month period. This work programme sets out the Committee's strategic priorities between May 2002 and the next Assembly elections in May 2003. A more detailed preliminary work programme for the period May-July 2002 is attached at **Annex B**.

Remit

3. The Committee's remit is based on the portfolio of the Minister for Rural Affairs, Carwyn Jones, which embraces all aspects of agriculture and fisheries, development and promotion of food production, forestry and the development of rural economy.

Aims

4. The Committee aims to promote a stronger, more diverse rural economy and sustainable rural communities in Wales.

Priorities

5. The Committee's priorities for the coming year are as follows:

- *Policy development (SO 9.7(i))* - the Committee will focus on those areas of policy development where it can make the greatest impact and will seek to complement, rather than duplicate, policies being developed by the Minister. In the coming year the Committee proposes to review topics from the following policy areas:
 - *The organic sector*
 - *An audit/progress report on the roll-out of European structural programmes in rural areas*
- *Scrutiny of the Minister (SO 9.7(ii))* - the focus for the Committee's scrutiny of the Minister for Rural Affairs will be a report submitted to each of its fortnightly meetings. Provided reasonable notice is given, the Minister will include in this report, and take questions on, issues requested by Committee Members. The Committee may also scrutinise the Minister on performance against targets and undertake thematic scrutiny sessions from time to time. The Committee also intends to scrutinise the delivery of the recommendations in its report *Diversifying the Rural Economy*.
- *Scrutiny of sponsored bodies (SO 9.7 (iii))* - Although no major Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies currently report directly to the Minister for Rural Affairs, the Committee will look to scrutinise the performance of public bodies in discharging their functions in rural areas. The Committee will also scrutinise the delivery by Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies of the recommendations in its report *Diversifying the Rural Economy*. The committee will continue to monitor regularly the work of the agri-food partnership.

- *Other items (SO 9.8)* - the Committee will also consider the following items as they arise:
- *proposed legislation affecting Wales (SO 9.8(i) and 22)* – each term the Minister will outline forthcoming secondary legislation to enable the Committee to identify areas where it wishes to be consulted. Following the National Assembly’s consideration of the Queen’s speech, the Committee will consider any draft primary legislation remitted to it by plenary. The Committee will also consider draft secondary legislation referred to it by the Business Committee, as appropriate;
- *proposals for the Assembly's budget (SO 9.8(ii))* – the Committee will indicate its budget priorities in the summer term and comment on the draft budget in the autumn term;
- *complaints (SO 9.8(iii) and 21)* – the Committee will consider any complaints referred to it;
- *public appointments (SO 9.8(iv) and 20)* – 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 Assembly Members to consult the Committee Chair before tabling motions inviting plenary to remit work to the Committee.

Committee Secretariat February 2002

ANNEX A

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUBJECT COMMITTEES

1. 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 standing order 22;
 - 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."
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ANNEX B

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Provisional Forward Work Programme; summer 2002

Meeting 1

Minister's report

Welsh Ewe Genotyping Scheme

Farming Connect - report on progress

Farming for the Future – report on progress

Committee policy review

Meeting 2

Minister's report

Response to *Diversifying the rural economy*

Pre-consultation on operation of sheepmeat regime national envelope

Committee policy review

Meeting 3

Minister's report

Rural Policy Division – introduction and priorities

Progress report on independent appeals mechanism

Committee policy review

Meeting 4

Minister's report

Alternative sectors – final draft action plans

Committee policy review

Meeting 5

Minister's report

Rural Development Plan – update on progress pre plenary debate in July

Committee policy review

Meeting 6

Minister's report

Consideration of report from Wales Co-operative centre on rural retailing

Committee policy review

Meeting 7

Minister's report

Fisheries strategy

Progress report on implementation of JIGSAW

Farming for the Future – report on progress

Committee policy review