

STRATEGIC FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME MAY 2002- MAY 2003

Date: Wednesday 1 May

Purpose

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

Background

2. Standing Order 9.9 requires each subject committee to maintain a rolling programme of work covering periods of at least 12 months, and to consult other committees and the Assembly Cabinet on the programme before notifying plenary. The forward work programme is a strategic document, providing an overview of the Committee's broad priorities for the next 18 to 24 months, which is supported by a more detailed work programme.

3. The Committee approved a draft strategic forward work programme at the 7 February meeting (ARD 03-02(p2)). The work programme has subsequently been put to the other subject committees and the Assembly Cabinet, none of which made any comments on the draft.

4. A final draft is attached at Annex 1 and includes the Committee's detailed work programme for the summer term.

Recommendation

5. The Committee is invited to approve the attached work programme.

Committee Secretariat April 2002

Annex 1

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 summer term 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."

ANNEX B

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Forward Work Programme

Wednesday 17 April

Minister's report

Farming for the Future – report on progress

Antur Cig Cymru

Draft terms of reference for review of organic farming

Consideration of draft findings from the Committee’s inquiry into the handling of foot and mouth

Wednesday 1 May

Minister’s report

Pre-consultation on operation of sheepmeat regime national envelope

Policy review of organic farming - Agri food partnership

Committee annual report

Strategic Forward Work Programme

Subordinate Legislation

Wednesday 15 May

Minister’s report

Response to *Diversifying the rural economy*

Progress report on independent appeals mechanism

Policy review of organic farming – Representatives from YFC Wales

Wednesday 29 May

Minister’s report

Bovine TB – Interim Strategy

Alternative sectors – final draft action plans

ICT – Consideration of the Committee’s draft report

Policy review of organic farming – Food Standards Agency,

Soil Association (to be confirmed)

Wednesday 19 June

Minister's report

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

Hunting – Consideration of findings into the Committee's investigation into hunting with dogs

Policy review of organic farming – Representatives from the supermarket sector (to be confirmed)

Wednesday 3 July

Minister's report

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

Policy review of organic farming

Thursday 11 July

Slot for informal Committee activities, or subject to Business Committee agreement, a formal committee meeting

Wednesday 17 July

Minister's report

Fisheries strategy

Progress report on implementation of JIGSAW

Budget – Consideration of the Minister's issues paper

Farming for the Future – Progress report

Policy review of organic farming