

Economic Development Committee EDC-19-00 (p6)

Date: 13 December 2000

Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly Building

Title : Review of Business Support and Development Services

Purpose of Paper

1. To present a further draft of the full report of the Review of Business Support and Development Services. The Committee is asked to consider this report and discuss any further changes it would wish to see.

Background

2. The Committee will recall the discussion at its meeting on 29 November. Since then the executive summary has been expanded into a report which as the "Main Findings and Recommendations" can stand on its own. The full original text, and the remainder of the Annexes, will be available on request.

Next Steps

4. Subsequently, the report will be passed to the Clerks of the Agriculture and Rural development, the Education and Lifelong Learning, and the Local Government and Housing Committees so their members are aware of our thinking and to ensure co-ordination with their activities, particularly in relation to business support.
5. Once finalised the report will be published and formally submitted to the Economic Development Minister to consider its implementation. It will be submitted for debate in plenary in the next session.
6. The Assembly has a statutory obligation under section 115 of the Government of Wales Act, 1998 to consult with business on any matters that may affect them. The protocol agreed with the Business Partnership requires a two month consultation period. The legal advice is that this duty rests with the executive rather than with the committee. It is therefore proposed that this period should commence in the New Year. The committee's views are sought on whether the plenary debate should take place after or prior to this consultation. Attached at Annex 1 are questions proposed by the Economic Minister for the consultation exercise. It is suggested that the consultation be undertaken jointly by the Minister and the Committee.

Action Required

7. The Committee is asked to consider the draft report and make recommendations on any changes to the text, the recommendations and the further consultation procedure. The committee is particularly asked to comment on the questions to be asked during a formal consultation exercise.

Committee Secretariat

Possible Questions for EDC Business Support Review

<p>Business Connect:</p>	<p>Should Business Connect be renamed and rebranded?</p> <p>Would the loss of Business Connect as an independent all-Wales partnership be undesirable, or would closer integration with the WDA, in terms of executive support, be a price worth paying to underpin the network?</p> <p>What is the optimal geographical coverage for a Business Connect partnership?</p> <p>How can these partnerships be made more effective at local level?</p> <p>Would the proposed arrangements strengthen or weaken the local delivery of services?</p> <p>Should the Business Connect Board continue at national level or be regionalised?</p> <p>How can the number of organisations delivering business services on the ground be reduced or streamlined?</p> <p>How can the quality assurance of the network be delivered and by whom?</p>
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Economic Policy Board:	What is the optimum mix of roles and responsibilities for the Board? How should it interface with the Assembly and Assembly Committees; the Boards of Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies; the Business Partnership and others (e.g. the Employment Service)?
Economic Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit:	<p>Is there a consensus on the remit of the Unit as outlined in the report, and the proposal that it should be based in the Assembly?</p> <p>What should be the precise relationship between the Unit and the Board?</p>
Strategy and Delivery:	Are there any ways to simplify delivery which are not covered in the report?
Partnership working:	<p>How is greater coherence and co-ordination to be delivered?</p> <p>Which partnerships should disappear in the interests of rationalisation?</p> <p>How can synergy with the arrangements put in place for EU Structural Funds be achieved?</p> <p>Should the Assembly redirect funding to take account of the revised structure?</p> <p>How can the public sector be more responsive to needs/interests of the private sector in this regard? What should be the key elements of the Strategic Framework?</p>