

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE EDC-04-01 (p6)

Date:	7 March 2001, 2:00pm – 5:30pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1, National Assembly Building
Title:	WELSH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY: BUSINESS PLAN 2001-02

Purpose

1. For the Committee to note the Welsh Development Agency's draft Business Plan for 2001-02 (attached at Annex 1).

NB - This item will NOT be discussed at the meeting of 7 March.

Action

2. None for the Committee. Due to demands on the Committee's time, the Minister and the Chair of the Committee have agreed that this year the WDA's draft Business Plan should be provided to Committee members for information. This will free up valuable Committee time for considering more strategic issues.

3. However, should individual Committee members wish to raise questions on the detail of the draft Plan, then they can do so in writing, to the Minister for Economic Development, by no later than **Friday 10 March**. This tight timescale will allow any amendments to be made and the draft Plan to be approved prior to the end of the financial year.

Background

4. The Business Plan sets out in detail how the Welsh Development Agency intends to spend its budget for 2001-02. The draft Plan is drawn up within the policy framework set by the Assembly. In particular, it draws upon the Assembly's Strategic Guidance letter, issued by the First Minister in March 2000 - a copy of which is provided as an annex to Committee paper EDC-04-01(p2) - and

the Agency's own Corporate Plan - which is available on the Agency's website (www.wda.co.uk).

5. The Business Plan includes, at section 5.2, proposals for output targets for 2001-02. Assembly officials are working closely with those of the Agency to draw up targets for the Agency for 2001-02, and these will be announced by the Minister for Economic Development shortly. Officials are also working on drawing up new ways of target-setting for the Agency (see the Committee Paper on WDA Strategic Guidance).

6. Committee members should be aware that this draft Plan was written prior to Corus' decision to cut over 3,000 jobs in Wales. The Agency recognises that, in the light of this announcement, its priorities may need to be revised in order to best help the communities affected.

Compliance

7. The WDA was established by the Welsh Development Agency Act 1975 (as amended by the Government of Wales Act). Powers under that Act have been transferred to the Assembly and delegated to the Minister for Economic Development and his staff.

8. In accordance with section 1(14) of the Act, the Agency must submit a programme for approval by the Minister for Economic Development (under section 1(15) of the Act), in the form of an annual Business Plan.

Financial Implications

9. There are no financial implications as a consequence of this paper. In approving this draft Business Plan, the Minister for Economic Development will note that the figures within the draft Plan are based on the Assembly's budget (as adopted by the Assembly on 7 December 2000), together with indicative levels of European funding and self-generated receipts.