

Date: 31 October 2001,
Time: 2.00pm – 5.30pm
Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly Building
Title: WELSH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY: Half-Year Review

Purpose

1. This paper provides the Committee with background to the Welsh Development Agency's Half-Year Review (at Annex A).
2. The Committee is invited to note the Agency's progress against its strategic targets in the Half-Year Review.
3. WDA officials will attend the Committee meeting to present the Half-Year Review and field questions. They are:
 - Graham Hawker – Chief Executive
 - Gareth Hall – Executive Director, Strategy Development

Background

4. The Welsh Development Agency's Half-Year Review (at Annex A) sets out the Agency's achievements against its strategic targets in the first six months of the financial year 2001-2002. The Minister for Economic Development announced these targets in a written statement to the Assembly on 3 April 2001. (Reported to the Committee on 4 April 2001 (EDC-06-01)).
5. The Minister also outlined in his statement a shift away from the normal pattern of setting annual strategic targets for the WDA. From April 2002, the Agency will be set:
 - Annual Output Targets – which relate specifically to actions as set out in the Agency's annual Business Plan; and
 - Strategic Targets – which will be linked to the Agency's three year Corporate Planning cycle.

The Agency's proposals for the new three year Strategic Targets were outlined in their draft Corporate Plan for 2002-2003 to 2004-2005, which was presented to the Committee on 11 July 2001 (EDC-11-01).

Summary

6. Tables one and two respectively set out the year to date outturns against the Agency's strategic targets for the whole of Wales, and for the Objective One West Wales and the Valleys area.
7. The document also identifies target revisions, which the Agency will be submitting to the Economic Development Minister for consideration.

Consideration

8. The Committee will note that the WDA is already exceeding its targets for 2001-2002 in a number of areas, (the Agency has provided an explanation for the variations in its report), and is forecasting that it will exceed one of its key targets, jobs created, again this year.

Compliance Aspects

9. The WDA was established by the Welsh Development Agency Act 1975 (as amended). Powers under that Act have been transferred to the Assembly and delegated to the Minister of Economic Development and his staff. There are no issues of regularity or propriety.

Financial Implications

10. The costs associated with the WDA's activities during this financial year will be met from within the WDA's existing budget provision. The Assembly's draft budget published on 10 October 2001 includes planned expenditure by the WDA for each of the next three financial years. There are no additional financial implications for the Assembly.