

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 7 March 2001

Time: 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly for Wales

Attendance:

EPT Committee Members:

Richard Edwards, Chair

Preseli Pembrokeshire

Mick Bates

Montgomeryshire

David Davies

Monmouth

Geraint Davies

Rhondda

John Griffiths

Newport East

Sue Essex, Minister for Environment

Cardiff North

Helen Mary Jones

Llanelli

Tom Middlehurst

Alyn and Deeside

Karen Sinclair

Clwyd South

Rhodri Glyn Thomas

Carmarthen East and Dinefwr

Officials:

Martin Evans

Director of Transport, Planning and Environment
Group

Keith Bush

Office of the Counsel General

Bob Macey (item 2)	Head of Environment Division
Tom Cassidy (item 3)	Chief Executive, Cadw
Richard Avent (item 3)	Head of Inspectorate, Cadw
Jean Booker (item 3)	Head of Administration, Cadw
Douglas Hogg (item 3)	Chief Architect, Cadw
Andrew Hood (item 3)	Head of Presentation, Cadw
Denzil Jones (items 4 and 5)	Head of Transport Policy Division
Jane Large (item 4)	Transport Policy Division
Chris Owen (item 5)	Transport Policy Division

In Attendance:

Denys Morgan (items 4 and 5)	Expert Adviser
------------------------------	----------------

Secretariat:

Siwan Davies	Committee Clerk
Vaughan Watkin	Deputy Committee Clerk
Juliette Selby	Committee Secretariat

Opening Remarks from Chair

0.1 The Chair welcomed members, officials and members of the public to the meeting, and advised members of the following changes to the work programme:

- progress report on the Financial Management and Policy Review (FMPR) of the Environment Agency would not be available by 21 March, and would be discussed next term;
- options for direct elections to the National Parks would be discussed on 9 May and not 4 April.

0.2 The committee agreed to defer the annual scrutiny of the Minister (scheduled for 4 April) to the summer term, as the performance report on which the scrutiny session would be based had not yet been published.

0.3 The meeting on 4 April would be held in Cardiff, and not Brecon as previously advertised. Two thirds of Powys was a foot and mouth infected area, and some members of the public would need to travel from these areas to attend the meeting. The committee would now meet in mid Wales in the summer term.

Item 1: Apologies, substitutions, and declaration of interests

1.1 The Chair invited members to declare any interests under Standing Order 4.5, which were as follows:

- Mick Bates - partner in a farming business;
- Geraint Davies - member of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and a pharmacist.

Item 2: Report from the Minister for the Environment – EPT-04-01 (p 1)

2.1 Prior to the discussion of the report, the Chair reminded members that an advance copy of OFWAT's proposed Dwr Cymru licence modifications had been circulated to committee members, followed by a note from the Minister for Environment suggesting that the matter proceed without further substantive discussion by the committee.

2.2 As the committee (together with the Economic Development Committee) had expressed its views on the principles of the Glas Cymru proposals, and the modifications were primarily technical, the way forward suggested by the Minister was agreed.

2.3 In addition to the items in the report, the Minister updated members on the following issues:

- Offshore Energy – the National Assembly consultation document had now issued;
- Welsh Property Conference - the Minister had given the keynote address at the inaugural Welsh Property Conference held on 20 February;
- A55 – the road across Anglesey was now open and fully operational, and a formal opening ceremony was scheduled for 10 April at Holyhead (foot and mouth outbreak permitting);

- Sustainable Development – the Minister had opened a seminar promoting Wales' contribution to Europe's Sustainable Development Strategy at the Wales European Centre in Brussels on 5 March.

2.4 The following points were made in discussion:

- Sustainable development – 'appropriate GDP' was suggested as a possible indicator for sustainable development, which could measure increase in the productivity of the economy as well as protection of the environment. The Minister would be meeting a cross-section of Assembly Members to work on mechanisms for mainstreaming sustainable development across all the National Assembly's policies and programmes;
- Offshore Energy – some concern was expressed about the limited role of local authorities following the new consent process giving control to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The Minister explained that many proposals could affect an area covered by several authorities. The DTI would be operating a one-stop-shop service for the UK, and consideration would be given to the National Assembly taking on this role in Wales;
- Renewable Energy - it was felt that the National Assembly should encourage renewable energy projects, and members welcomed the fact that the Minister was consulting widely on existing planning call-in criteria. A seminar on renewable energy would take place in May for representatives of the industry, committee members and members of the Economic Development Committee, who were undertaking a review of renewable energy. The Chair would discuss the committee's involvement in this review with the Chair of the Economic Development Committee;
- Contaminated land – there was some concern about the extent of local authority involvement in the consultation on the regulations. It was confirmed all local authorities had been consulted and officials had engaged in a collective discussion with authorities. The Minister offered to host a seminar for members.

Action Points

- *Chair to discuss committee's involvement in review of renewable energy with the Chair of the Economic Development Committee*

Item 3: Cadw – Corporate Plan and Strategic Targets - EPT-04-01 (p 2)

3.1 Tom Cassidy introduced the paper, which sought the committee's views on Cadw's draft corporate plan and targets for 2001-02. The committee had supported an increase in admission charges for the year, when consulted at their meeting on 15 November 2000.

3.2 It was noted that the foot and mouth outbreak would have an impact on Cadw's ability to meet targets for conservation and maintenance, and listing and scheduling, as monuments had been closed and workforce withdrawn from rural areas. The targets would be reviewed at the mid-term monitoring stage in the autumn.

3.3 The following points were covered in discussion:

- Targets - whether some targets were stretching enough. It was noted that two targets (3 and 6) would be increased. There was difficulty in increasing the target for resolving historic building grant applications (80% within 17 weeks), due to reliance on the role of the Historic Building Council, which met five times a year, in decision making;
- Target setting process - targets had been derived from the last review of Cadw, although they had become tougher over time. Targets would be re-assessed during the forthcoming quinquennial review of Cadw as an Executive Agency in September;
- Partnership - the need for local authorities to build up expertise and ensure consistency of approach was being addressed;
- Communities – Cadw had established contacts with local communities and were providing events to meet local needs and community celebrations;
- Listing Contractors – some but not all were Wales-based. Contracts had been let in accordance with public procurement rules, and although local companies would often have an advantage on costs and price, this did not always happen. It was not permitted to make a selection simply on grounds of location;
- Tourism - destination marketing was not currently carried out by Cadw, though the Wales Tourist Board and others represented Cadw at trade events outside Wales. Cadw had also taken advantage of televised archaeological digs in Wales, to raise the profile of their estate. Cadw sites were almost entirely consolidated ruins without potential for use as accommodation – Stack Square at Blaenavon was an exception – but there were a number of Victorian properties including mock castles throughout Wales which might be refurbished as tourist accommodation, and some would be eligible for Cadw grant towards historic repair;
- Themes and Access - Cadw's objectives were sufficiently broad to reflect the National Assembly's commitment to sustainability, equality and social inclusion. Disabled access was discussed as an example. As a contribution to presenting the historic environment of Wales and making it accessible Cadw had produced a booklet on disabled access to the monuments in consultation with Disability Wales, and after discussions with

Disability Wales and the Disability Rights Commission, would shortly put out to consultation an advice booklet on ways of adapting listed buildings to achieve the objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Actions:

- *Tom Cassidy to provide John Griffiths with further information on volume of grade 1 and 2 listed buildings per annum, and change in status of listed buildings from grade 2 to 1*

Item 4: Policy Review of Public transport: committee discussion of issues – EPT-03-01 (p 4) – deferred from last meeting, EPT-04-01 (p 3) and EPT-04-01 (p 4)

4.1 The Chair explained that the paper deferred from the last meeting took stock of issues emerging from the review, and sought the committee's view on priorities. Denzil Jones and Denys Morgan introduced their respective papers, which suggested priorities for short and longer term improvement and integration of services.

4.2 In discussion, members suggested the following priorities:

- Identifying a vision for public transport;
- Identifying existing impediments to achieving the vision;
- Assessing how well existing organisations and consortia were operating;
- Analysing alternative regional organisational structures (particularly in rural areas);
- Setting targets and measuring improvements.

4.3 Members suggested that the review also consider:

- Encouraging modal shift from the private car to public transport (particularly for journeys to work);
- Affordability of public transport;
- Accessibility;
- Convenience;
- Interchanges;
- Concessionary fares for younger people;
- Provision of information and interticketing;
- Safety and security issues;
- Walking, cycling and horse-riding as alternatives to the car.

4.4 Summarising the discussion, the Chair said that the committee would now identify quality standards for public transport enabling improvements to be measured, and assess the potential of existing organisational structures to deliver such improvements. Looking to the longer term, the committee would analyse alternative regional organisational structures, before

making any recommendations on changes needed to the existing structures.

4.5 The committee would consider extending the timetable for the review, should additional sessions be required.

Item 5: Transport Grant – discussion of criteria for 2002-03 - EPT-04-01 (p 5)

5.1 The Minister sought members' comments on the categories of Transport Grant bids to be invited for financial support in 2002-03. £5m was available for new bids in 2002-03, £53.5m had already been allocated via the Minister's five year investment programme announced in January.

5.2 The committee supported the Minister's approach, but asked that further work be done on the following issues:

- Ensuring that bids for Transport Grant fully supported the National Assembly's sustainability, equality and social inclusion objectives;
- Proposals for greater co-ordination between Safe Routes to School, local authority and trunk road safety projects.

Item 6: Minutes of meeting 14 February – EPT-03-01 (min)

6.1 The committee adopted the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February.

Date of next meeting

7.1 The next meeting of the committee would be at 2.00 pm on Wednesday 21 March at the National Assembly for Wales.

Committee Secretariat March 2001