

## **ENVIRONMENT PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

**Date:** Wednesday 7 March 2001  
**Time:** 2.00 to 5.00 pm  
**Venue:** Committee Room 2, National Assembly Building

### **REPORT BY MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

#### **IWA Seminar at the National Botanical Gardens**

I chaired the final session of this conference on 16 February, which looked at the successes and potential of the Garden, and explored ways in which others could build upon this.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Waste strategy**

The Wales Waste Forum had a successful second meeting on 16 February, during which there was considerable evidence of the hard and effective work done by the Forum's working groups after the first meeting.

Progress has been made in the areas of recycling, composting, the effects of the Landfill Directive on the management of hazardous waste and on targets for recycling and composting for local authorities. The Forum also considered the role of energy from waste in the developing Wales Waste Strategy.

It remains my intention to present a draft of the Strategy to the Assembly during May.

#### **Contaminated Land Seminar**

The Welsh Collaboration for Health and Environment organised a joint training event on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001 with the Chemical Incident Management Support Unit, Cardiff, on the proposed new controls on contaminated land.

I gave the Key Note Address and the programme included speakers from various organisations who have expertise in particular aspects of the new regime, including legal,

toxicological, environmental and epidemiological aspects.

The aim of the seminar was to develop an understanding of the contaminated land regime and the implications for regulators and Public Health physicians. Some sixty delegates from a wide variety of organisations attended the event.

## **PLANNING**

### **Offshore Energy**

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has issued a consultation document on a new consents process for offshore wind or water driven generating stations, and is seeking views on the appropriate way forward. The reason for the review of the consents process is to rationalise and simplify the consents process and comply with the requirements of the European Community Directive 85/337/EEC, as amended by Directive 97/11/EC (the "EIA Directive"). The Assembly has been fully involved in the process leading to the launch of this consultation, and will continue to ensure that Welsh interests are fully taken into account during the analysis of responses, decision-making on the way forward and implementation.

Responsibility for statutory consent for all power stations with a generating capacity in excess of 50 MW rests with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI); for those onshore power stations of 50 MW or less responsibility lies with local planning authorities. The consultation paper suggests bringing all proposals for offshore power stations of 50 MW or less but over a threshold (to be fixed – 1 MW is suggested) within the same procedure with DTI determining consent in England and Wales.

In addition to this new requirement for consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 the totality of such developments will still be subject to various other consents operating in the offshore environment, include those under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 and the Coast Protection Act 1949. Planning permission from the relevant local planning authority will probably be required for the onshore development.

The National Assembly is to issue the consultation document in Wales seeking views first and foremost on the proposed consents process but also on the role it might play in the consent process for applications in Welsh territorial waters. In particular, the potential benefits and/or disadvantages of the Assembly having responsibility for consent, for example, for schemes of between 1MW and 50 MW in its territorial waters.

### **Planning Policy Wales**

Following the EPT Committee's agreement, Draft "Planning Policy Wales" issued on 27 February for a 2-month period of public consultation. All AMs have been sent a hard copy of

the document, which is also available on the Assembly's web site. Members' further contributions to the consultative process are welcomed.

## **Presentation on Sand Dredging**

The presentation on Sand Dredging was held at the Guildhall, Swansea on 16 February for the benefit of local MPs, AMs and councillors who had missed the original presentation at the Assembly office, Cardiff Bay in November 2000. It illustrated the techniques used to monitor the hydrographics of the Bristol Channel in relation to the marine dredging for aggregates.

## **Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Inaugural Welsh Property Conference**

I gave the Keynote Speech at the first conference of this type organised by the recently established RICS in Wales on 20 February.

The conference covered a number of current professional topics including a discussion on the position with regard to the 'roll-out' of European Objective One grant funding.

## **TRANSPORT**

### **Transport Framework - Consultation**

A consultation paper in respect of the draft Transport Framework, based on the paper endorsed by Committee on 29 November, is currently in preparation for issue on 21 March. Members will receive their own copy of the consultation paper direct. The consultation period will run to 18 May. Constructive contributions will be welcomed to help inform the development of the Framework document in the coming months.

A summary of the responses received to the consultation will be passed to the Committee to help with their review of public transport.

A plenary debate on the draft Transport Framework is scheduled for 5 April.

### **Pan-Pembrokeshire Greenways Project**

On 22 February I launched the Pan-Pembrokeshire Greenways Project at Manorbier. Greenways is a project that seeks to promote sustainable recreational transport for all, throughout Pembrokeshire.

**Sue Essex**  
**Minister for Environment**