

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 1 May 2002
Time: 2.00 to 4.45 pm
Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly Building

REVIEW OF BIODIVERSITY: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

1. To consider draft terms of reference and programme for the proposed review of biodiversity.

Background

2. At the Committee meeting on 9 January the Wales Biodiversity Group (WBG) presented a report highlighting the significance of the UK Biodiversity Group's Millennium Biodiversity Report findings for Wales, and proposed actions to promote biodiversity conservation in Wales. Members flagged up the importance of local action across Wales to promote biodiversity. The Committee indicated that it planned to undertake further work on biodiversity later in the year, and would aim to complement the work of the WBG.

3. At the last meeting the Committee agreed to undertake a review of biodiversity. The review will need to be short and focused, so that it can be completed before the Assembly elections in May 2003.

Wales Biodiversity Group (WBG)

4. The Wales Biodiversity Group brings together the key players from the public, private and voluntary sectors to promote, monitor and advise the National Assembly for Wales on action to maintain and enhance biodiversity in Wales. WBG was established in 1996, alongside parallel groups for other parts of the UK following the recommendations of the UK Biodiversity Steering Group.

Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs)

5. LBAPs are produced by local partnerships of public, voluntary and private sector organisations to promote, and focus resources to implement, the conservation action for UK priority habitats and species and locally important biodiversity. LBAPs include actions that reflect the values of local people, and local distinctiveness while also providing a mechanism for meeting national conservation targets.

6. The Welsh Assembly Government has made a commitment to enhance biodiversity by supporting the development of local action plans. A new National Assembly for Wales Performance Indicator for 2002-03 requires LBAPs to be in place for all local authority areas. *Planning Policy Wales* encourages local authorities to adopt LBAPs as supplementary planning guidance. In March the Welsh Local Government Association reported that ten local authorities had agreed LBAPs, a further eight were developing plans.

Terms of reference

7. The Committee is invited to approve the following draft terms of reference:

To consider progress towards the milestone of having Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) in place for all areas in Wales, and identify further action needed at the national and local levels to support LBAP implementation through partnerships.

Programme

8. The Committee is invited to agree the draft programme attached at the **Annex**. The main activities are as follows.

This term

- agree scope of the review (today);
- consider the legislative and policy background, the role of the Assembly and its partners;
- agree consultation questions and list of consultees;
- consult on progress in developing and implementing LBAPs and key issues (over summer recess).

Autumn term

- hear evidence from local and national groups;
- undertake a fact-finding visit;
- raise public awareness of local action by meeting in different parts of Wales and/or attend Regional Committee meetings;
- analyse key issues;
- agree draft recommendations.

Spring term

- agree final report and recommendations;
- report to plenary.

Recommendation

9. The Committee is invited to agree the draft terms of reference and programme for the review.

Footnotes

1. Welsh Assembly Government, Plan for Wales 2001, October 2001, ISBN 0 7504 2773 6
2. Local Government (Best Value Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2002 No.757 (W.80)
3. Welsh Assembly Government, Planning Policy Wales, March 2002, ISBN 0 7504 2854 6
4. Welsh Local Government Association, Towards Sustainable Communities - A Stocktake of Local Authority Action to Promote Sustainable Development, March 2002, ISBN 1 901719 25 1

Committee Secretariat

May 2002

ANNEX

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Summer term 2002

1 May	Agree terms of reference
19 June	Consider legislative and policy background, role of the Assembly and its partners Agree areas for consultation and list of consultees
Summer recess	Consultation on progress and key issues (12 weeks 1/7 – 20/9)

Autumn term 2002

1st meeting

Consider responses to consultation

2nd meeting [off-site]

Evidence and public awareness session (local groups)

[Informal visit

Fact finding visit to local project]

3rd meeting

Evidence session (national organisations)

[Regional Committees

Raise public awareness/discuss issues]

4th meeting

Analyse key issues

5th meeting

Agree draft recommendations

Spring term 2003

1st meeting

2nd meeting

Agree text of final report

3rd meeting

[TBC - late Feb?]

Present report and recommendations to plenary

+ 4 weeks

Publish printed report