

Local Government and Public Services Committee

LGPS 06-05(p3)

Committee's forward work programme

Purpose

1. To agree the Committee's forward work programme for the coming twelve to eighteen months.

Strategic work programme

2. Standing Order 9.9 requires subject committees to maintain a rolling programme of work covering a period of at least 12 months, and to report to plenary from time to time on progress.
3. The draft strategic work programme at Annex 1 suggests ways of working that aim to strike a balance between the policy development and scrutiny responsibilities of the Committee.
4. A more detailed draft programme for the autumn term is attached at Annex 2. It is based on key policy issues and priorities being taken forward by the Welsh Assembly Government and other matters identified as being of potential interest to this Committee.

Action for the Committee

5. The Committee is invited to comment on and agree the draft strategic and detailed work programmes attached at Annex 1 and 2, respectively.

Ann Jones AM
Committee Chair

Annex 1

Local Government and Public Services Committee

Strategic Forward Work Programme

May 2005 to December 2006

Introduction

1. This work programme sets out the strategic priorities of the Committee for the next twelve to eighteen months.

Remit and responsibilities

2. The Committee's remit is based on the portfolio of the Assembly Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services and covers local government, the development of a strategic approach to the delivery of public services and the Wales Spatial Plan. It does not cover the Minister's responsibilities in respect of the Assembly's finances or policy or financial matters falling solely within another portfolio.

3. The responsibilities of subject committees, as set out in Standing Order 9, are principally: policy development; scrutiny of Ministers and relevant bodies; and scrutiny of legislation.

Aims

4. The Committee will develop a strategic approach to its work and aim to balance consideration of subjects across the portfolio and its range of responsibilities.

Priorities

5. Priorities for the coming period will be:

Policy development (SO 9.7(i)) – the Committee will focus on those areas of policy development where it can make the greatest impact. It will continue with its project on electoral arrangements in Wales, for which the terms of reference¹ have been agreed. The Committee will continue to follow-up progress on implementation of recommendations from its inquiry reports The operation of new political management structures in local government and Regulation and Inspection of Public Services in Wales. In addition the Committee will seek to help shape any reform of the public services agenda in Wales, which is brought about as a result of proposals in Making the Connections.

- Scrutiny of the Minister (SO 9.7(ii)) - the Minister will report to the Committee at alternate meetings on current developments within the portfolio. The Committee may also undertake inquiries into particular topics in greater depth.
- Scrutiny of relevant bodies (SO 9.7 (iii)) – the Committee will consider the work of the Local

Government Boundary Commission for Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, the Local Government Equalities Unit and the Local Government Data Unit of Wales.

- Scrutiny of proposed legislation affecting Wales (SO 9.8(i) and 24) – the Committee will receive, at alternative meetings, a timetable of forthcoming secondary legislation within its remit. The Committee will identify for scrutiny those items of legislation where there is scope to influence content and will also consider draft secondary legislation referred by the Deputy Presiding Officer as appropriate. In addition, the Committee will be informed of relevant proposed primary legislation.

The Committee will consider the following items as they arise:

- proposals for the Assembly's budget (SO 9.8(ii)) – the Committee will indicate its budget priorities in the summer term and comment on the draft budget in the autumn term;
- complaints (SO 9.8(iii) and 23) – the Committee will consider any complaints referred to it under Standing Order 23;
- public appointments (SO 9.8(iv) and 22) – the Committee's two public appointment nominees will take part in the process of appointments to public bodies as vacancies arise;
- other matters referred by the Assembly (SO 9.8 (v)) – the Committee will consider other matters referred to it by the National Assembly, but would ask Assembly Members to consult the Committee Chair before tabling motions inviting plenary to remit work to the Committee.

The Assembly's Statutory Duties

6. The Government of Wales Act 1998 places certain duties on the National Assembly, the Committee's work will be guided by the following:

- Equality of Opportunity (s.48 and s.120) - Committee meetings will be held in public and on occasion away from the National Assembly building to increase the accessibility of its business to people across Wales. Over the range of issues within its portfolio, the Committee will have regard to equality of opportunity;
- Sustainable Development (s.121) - throughout its deliberations the Committee will focus on the need to balance economic and social growth with the conservation of the environment, through sustainable development. Its own policy review recommendations will reflect this principle.

Local Government and Public Services Committee May 2005

1 . To consider the issues surrounding the arrangements for local government and National Assembly elections in Wales, in particular, voter registration, voter turnout, the participation of young people and voting in languages other than English; To consider a range of measures used within other political systems to improve voter turnout, registration and the participation of young people and the extent to which they could be applied to local government and National Assembly elections in Wales; To consider

if any additional measures are required to ensure that voting arrangements in Wales are fully inclusive; and To make recommendations.

Annex 2

Local Government and Public Services Committee

Draft Forward Work Programme - Autumn Term 2005

First meeting

Minister's report

Welsh Assembly Government response to committee inquiry report - Regulation and Inspection of Public Services in Wales

Committee scrutiny project on 'Electoral arrangements in Wales' – oral evidence session

Presentation from the Office for National Statistics (to be confirmed)

Subordinate legislation - The Conduct of Members (Principles and Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) Order 2005

Subordinate legislation – The Local Authorities (Allowances for Members of County and County Borough Councils and National Park Authorities)(Wales) Regulations 2005

Second meeting

Committee scrutiny project on 'Electoral arrangements in Wales' – oral evidence session

Progress report on the implementation of recommendations in the committee inquiry report – The operation of new political management structures in local government (to include representation from the Welsh Local Government Association and consideration of the draft revised Guidance for County and County Borough Councils in Wales on Executive Arrangements 2001)

Plan rationalisation – consideration of consultation responses

Budget – consideration of draft budget for 2006-07

Legislative timetable

Subordinate legislation – The Local Authorities (Political Restrictions Regime) Order 2005

Half term recess

24 October 2005 – 30 October 2005

Third meeting

Minister's report

Committee scrutiny project on 'Electoral arrangements in Wales' – oral evidence session

Provisional local government settlement

Community Strategies – outcome of evaluation

Fourth meeting

Committee scrutiny project on 'Electoral arrangements in Wales' – oral evidence session

Legislative timetable

Christmas recess

12 December 2005 – 8 January 2006

Items to be included at an appropriate date:

- Presentation from Local Government Data Unit
- Presentation from the Equalities Unit
- Wales Spatial Plan
- Update on use of local authorities' powers to promote social, economic and environmental wellbeing (to include representation from the Welsh Local Government Association)
- Policy agreements – update (possibly to include consideration of outcome of review of first round and input into planning for the third round)
- Making the Connections (relevant follow-up work)
- Lyons Inquiry (relevant updates/follow-up work)

(plus any draft legislation previously identified by the Committee that was not dealt with in the summer term

Subordinate legislation:

- Local Authorities (Allowances for Members of County and County Borough Councils and National Park Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2005;
- Valuation Tribunals (Amendment)(Wales) Regulations 2004;
- Local Government (Assistants for Political Groups)(Renumeration) (Wales) Order 2005 (to be dealt with in the Political Restrictions Regime Order);
- The Conduct of Members (Principles and Model Code of Conduct) (Wales) Order 2005;
- Small Business Rate Relief Scheme Regulations.

Updates to be given in the Minister's report:

- Results of project to assess changes brought about by Past Service Awards
- Report on the outcome of the Taunton Deane pilot on the role of town and community councils in planning decisions