

NORTH WALES REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Report to the Assembly 2003-04

1. Introduction

1.1 The North Wales Regional Committee is one of the Assembly's four regional committees. It covers Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Isle of Anglesey, Wrexham and the area of Gwynedd made up of the former districts of Arfon and Dwyfor.

1.2 Between July 2003 and March 2004 the Committee was chaired by Janet Ryder. The other Members of the Committee are Eleanor Burnham, Mark Isherwood, Alun Ffred Jones, Ann Jones, Denise Idris-Jones, Ieuan Wyn Jones, John Marek, Sandy Mewies, Alun Pugh, Carl Sargeant, Karen Sinclair and Brynle Williams. Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas is a Member but does not attend the meetings in view of his role as Presiding Officer.

1.3 The Committee met five times between July 2003 and March 2004. Details are attached at **Annex 1**.

2. Remit and Method of Working

2.1 The role of the regional committees, as defined by Standing Order 10.2, is to advise the National Assembly on matters affecting their regions, the effect of Assembly policies in those regions and the work of public bodies there.

2.2 At its first meeting the Committee invited the views of the public on topics for discussion at future meetings. Proposals formed the basis for a work programme for the year, which was made available at the second meeting and published on the Assembly's website.

2.3 The emphasis of the meetings was on public participation, with a few presentations to get the discussion going. Following each meeting the Committee prepared a report summarising the views expressed by the people of North Wales. Copies were submitted to the relevant Assembly Minister, committee or public authority to respond to the points raised.

2.4 Public attendance was high throughout the year, averaging almost a hundred, with over a hundred people attending the meetings in Pwllheli and Llangollen. Following a request from the public, the Committee piloted an evening meeting and recommended to the Business Committee that the Assembly's Standing Orders be amended to allow the Committee to meet in the evenings twice a year (out of a total of six meetings).

2.5 The Committee has remained committed to an inclusive approach to its work. Meetings were held in each of the six local authority areas in North Wales at venues accessible by public transport. Comments were sought from the local Disability Access Fora before meeting venues were confirmed. The services of a palantypist were used at the last two meetings of the year, which received positive feedback from those who are hard of hearing.

3. Activities 2003-04

3.1 During the reporting year formal meetings considered the following topics:

- Waste management;
- The Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee inquiry into the planning aspects associated with affordable housing and sustainable communities in the countryside;
- Review of the Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme;
- The new planning and funding system for post-16 education in Wales;
- Fair Trade, to coincide with FairTrade fortnight 2004.

3.2 The Committee invited the Minister for the Environment, Planning and Countryside to attend the meeting considering the review of the Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme. Regional Committee Chairs subsequently wrote to the First Minister suggesting that this practice be extended to all regional committees.

3.3 In addition to the formal public meetings, an informal briefing session was held with the North Wales Police Authority to discuss the implications of their financial settlement for the region.

4. Forward programme

4.1 At the last meeting it was suggested that a future meeting consider the availability of hospice care in North Wales. I recommend that the Committee continue with the practice of inviting members of the public to suggest the topics to be covered during the year.

Janet Ryder AM
May 2004

DATE / VENUE	TOPIC	ATTENDANCE	REPORT	OUTCOME
4 July 2003 NEWI, Wrexham	Waste management	8 committee members 36 members of the public	<p>Report 1 raised concerns about the availability of sustainable waste management methods and called for greater promotion of waste awareness and increased sustainable waste management.</p> <p>The report was sent to the Minister for Environment, Chair of the Environment, Planning and Countryside (EPC), and Cyngor Gwynedd.</p>	<p>The Minister for Environment responded to the general points made in the report.</p> <p>The Chair of EPC welcomed the report, which would be used as the basis for scrutiny of progress towards meeting the targets of the waste strategy <i>Wise About Waste</i>, in particular the 2003-04 targets for recycling and composting targets.</p> <p>Cyngor Gwynedd responded to specific queries raised by a member of the public.</p>
3 October 2003 Neuadd Dwyfor, Pwllheli	EPC Committee inquiry into the planning aspects associated with affordable housing and sustainable communities in the countryside	5 committee members 137 members of the public	<p>Report 2 highlighted the need to maintain sustainable communities in rural areas, and the particular issues this posed in some areas of North Wales.</p> <p>The report was sent to the Chair of EPC Committee, Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, and Chair of the SJR Committee.</p>	<p>The Chair of EPC Committee thanked the Committee and members of the public for the report, which contributed to the EPC Committee inquiry.</p> <p>The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration responded to two specific queries raised by members of the public.</p>

<p>27 November 2003 (evening meeting pilot) Conwy Business Centre, Llandudno Junction</p>	<p>Review of the Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme</p>	<p>10 committee members 96 members of the public</p>	<p>Members of the public had the opportunity to question the Minister for Environment on Sustainable Development and comment on the revision of the Scheme. Report 3 summarised the proceedings and was sent to the Minister for Environment.</p>	<p>The report was considered as a contribution to the review of the Sustainable Development Scheme.</p>
<p>30 January 2004 Royal International Pavillion, Llangollen</p>	<p>New national funding system for further education</p>	<p>9 committee members 137 members of the public</p>	<p>Report 4 set out public concern about the impact of the new system on the viability of sixth forms in North Wales, and Welsh medium provision in particular, and the public accountability of ELWa. Concern was raised about the discontinuation of the Learning Challenge Fund.</p>	<p>The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning responded to concerns raised in the report. She confirmed that alternative funding sources were being sought for local LCF projects.</p>
<p>12 March 2004 Council Chamber, Llangefni</p>	<p>Fair Trade</p>	<p>7 committee members 76 members of the public</p>	<p>[Report 5 is to be agreed at meeting on 21 May and a copy sent to the First Minister and local authorities in North Wales.]</p>	