

NORTH WALES REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Report to the Assembly 2002-03

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 2002 and March 2003 the Committee was chaired by Peter Rogers. The other Members of the Committee are Eleanor Burnham, Alison Halford, Ann Jones, David Ian Jones, Gareth Jones, John Marek, Tom Middlehurst, Alun Pugh, Janet Ryder, Karen Sinclair, Dafydd Wigley and Ieuan Wyn Jones. Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas is a Member but does not attend the meetings in view of his role as Presiding Officer. David Ian Jones was elected to the Committee in November following the resignation of Rod Richards from the Assembly.

1.3 The Committee met 4 times between July 2002 and March 2003. Details of the dates, venues, topics discussed and subsequent action taken 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 The Committee has continued with the working practices established during the previous reporting years. This involves arranging meetings around a specific theme with a strong emphasis on public participation throughout discussion.

2.3 The Committee is keen to ensure that its work is fed back into the wider work of the Assembly. Generally, following each meeting the Chair summarises the issues raised in a letter to the appropriate Minister or subject committee chair. At the start of the following meeting the Committee receives a progress report of any subsequent response or outcome.

2.4 The Committee has remained committed to an inclusive approach to its work. Public attendance has remained consistently high throughout the year, averaging over 100 and with some 150 people attending the meeting in Ruthin. At the last meeting in Caernarfon we invited comments from the public on the work of the Committee to date and suggestion for future meetings.

3. Activities 2002-03

3.1 During the reporting year formal meetings were arranged around the following topics:

- The Review of Sport in Wales being conducted by the Culture Committee;
- The operation of local crime reduction partnerships and measures to tackle anti-social behaviour, with North Wales Police and Wrexham County Borough Council;
- Flood defence programmes in the region, with Environment Agency Wales and the Chair of the Wales Regional Flood Defence Committee;
- Rail services in North Wales, with the Strategic Rail Authority.

3.2 Given his responsibility for the co-ordination of policy of North Wales, the Committee issued a standing invitation to the First Minister to attend its meetings. The First Minister attended meetings in Amlwch and Ruthin. A substantial part of each meeting was dedicated to an open question and answer session involving the First Minister and members of the public.

3.3 In addition to the formal public meetings, four informal briefing sessions were held. Committee Members met with the North Wales Police Authority to discuss the implications of their financial settlement for the region. The other three sessions concerned the Wales & Borders rail franchise and associated rail issues: meeting first with representatives of the North Wales Economic Forum; second with the Strategic Rail Authority and Virgin Rail; finally with the bidders for the Wales and Borders rail franchise. The Committee then wrote the Minister for Environment setting out the Committee's aspirations for North-South rail services.

4. Forward programme

4.1 This is the final report of the Committee during this Assembly. The Committee invites the new regional committee to take into account of the views of the public expressed at the last meeting.

Peter Rogers AM
March 2003

DATE	VENUE	THEME	ACTION TAKEN
1 November 2002	Memorial Hall, Amlwch	<p>Review of sport in Wales</p> <p>First Minister's question and answer session</p>	<p>Minutes sent to the Culture Committee as a contribution to their review of sport.</p> <p>The First Minister passed on concerns raised about timing of consultation exercises, the code of conduct for councillors and fees for evening courses with his Cabinet colleagues.</p>
29 November 2002	Deeside College, Connagh's Quay	Crime reduction and tackling anti-social behaviour	The Chief Constable of North Wales Police responded to concerns raised by individual members of the public.

DATE	VENUE	THEME	ACTION TAKEN
31 January 2003	Theatr John Ambrose, Ysgol Brynhyfryd, Ruthin	Flood defence programmes First Minister's question and answer session	The Chair wrote to the Minister for Environment raising the need to review current responsibilities and funding arrangements for flood defence work. First Minister wrote to Denbigh Citizens Advice Bureau about eligibility for concessionary fares.
7 March 2003	Arfon Leisure Centre, Caernarfon	Rail services Review of the work of the Committee	The Chair wrote to the Minister for Environment reporting concerns raised about rail services. Feedback from members of the public would be presented to the successor committee after the election.

