

## **ENVIRONMENT PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

**Date:** Wednesday 15 November 2000  
**Time:** 2.00 to 5.00 pm  
**Venue:** Committee Room 1, National Assembly Building

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

#### **ENVIRONMENT**

##### **Flooding in North Wales**

The flooding, primarily in North Wales, became more significant at the beginning of the week and I visited a number of the affected areas, accompanied by local members, to see the effects at first hand - Ruthin, Mold, Rossett and Bangor on Dee. I discussed the issues with affected local residents and businesses, local authorities and the Environment Agency. I am looking to take forward the review of flood arrangements in Wales that we discussed at the last meeting, and have discussed some of the issues with the Environment Agency and John Hughes, Chairman of the Regional Flood Defence Committee.

##### **DETR Consultation Paper on the Landfill Directive**

On 19<sup>th</sup> October DETR issued a consultation paper covering England and Wales describing how it is intended to implement the regulatory elements of the Landfill Directive and inviting comments. The main aim of the Directive is to prevent or reduce as far as possible the negative effects of landfill on the environment and human health. The paper is aimed at the waste management industry, waste regulators and waste producers, all of whom will be affected by the Directive's implementation. Comments are requested by the 12 January 2001.

##### **Sustainable Development**

The debate to make the Sustainable Development Scheme is to take place on 16 November.

## **COUNTRYSIDE**

### **Natura 2000**

Following public consultation, 17 new candidate Special Areas of Conservation and amendments to 15 existing candidate sites in Wales have been submitted to the European Commission by the UK Government, fulfilling obligations under the EC Habitats Directive. The new sites are those that were announced for possible designation on 6 July 2000 and one site (Cernydd Carmel) from an earlier round of consultation.

### **Lead Gunshot**

The Minister recently agreed to introduce regulations to restrict the use of lead gunshot in Wales.

Lead shot has been identified as posing a particular risk to waterfowl from lead poisoning, by birds swallowing spent lead shot together with grit to aid their digestion. Regulations were introduced in England on 1 September 1999 prohibiting the use of lead shot:

- over specified Sites of Special Scientific Interest identified as important to waterfowl;
- over all areas below the high watermark; and
- for shooting certain species of waterfowl anywhere in Wales.

It is intended that the regulations in Wales will be similar in scope, and will take effect on 1 September 2001. Draft regulations will go out to consultation later this year.

## **PLANNING**

### **Telecommunications Mast Development**

On 8 November our consultation paper - covering proposals to amend planning controls over telecommunications masts together with draft related planning guidance/advice - issued to a wide range of interested bodies. Comments have been invited by 5 January 2001.

# **TRANSPORT**

## **Transport Grant**

Assembly officials have now met all Local Authorities in Wales to discuss their bids for the next financial year.

An Appraisal Board held to consider the schemes submitted for grant support has now concluded and is in the process of preparing its recommendations.

I expect to announce my decisions on the allocation of transport grant by the end of the year.

## **Rail - National Track Recovery Programme**

I attended a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister, the Chief Executive of Railtrack, the Rail Regulator and representatives of the train operating companies on 2 November to review progress towards the National track recovery plan, to repair those sections of track at risk of breakage.

I emphasized the importance of ensuring proper information for passengers about the necessary service revisions to accommodate these emergency works. I also stressed the importance of not delaying the significant infrastructure improvements we are looking for in Wales.

**Sue Essex**

**Minister for Environment**