

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

### **STRATEGIC FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME JUNE 2003-JULY 2004**

#### **Introduction**

1. The Social Justice and Regeneration Committee is one of the National Assembly's seven subject committees. The responsibilities of the subject committees are set out in Standing Orders, as reproduced at **Annex A**.

2. Standing Order 9.9 requires subject committees to maintain a rolling programme of work covering periods of at least 12 months. The Committee must consult other committees and the Assembly Cabinet on the programme before notifying plenary. The Panel of Chairs has agreed that committees' work programmes should be strategic and cover an 18-month to 2-year time frame, supported by more detailed work programmes covering a three-month period. This work programme sets out the Committee's strategic priorities between May 2003 and the end of the summer term in July 2004. A detailed work programme for the 2003 Autumn term is attached at **Annex B**.

#### **Remit**

3. The Committee's remit is based on the portfolio of the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, Edwina Hart, which covers the following:

- Communities First
- Cross cutting responsibility for Anti-poverty initiatives
- The Social Economy
- The Voluntary Sector
- Community safety and relations with the Police and Fire Services
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Youth justice
- Domestic Violence
- Equality and equal opportunities
- Allocation of resources for housing to local authorities and housing associations
- Oversight and regulation of Registered Social Landlords in Wales, and of the private rented sector
- The provision of Special Needs housing
- Regeneration of problem estates and of low grade housing in Wales
- The exemption of certain classes of building from Building Regulations and the determination of appeals
- Regulation of commercial tenancies let by local authorities
- Energy efficiency grants
- Regeneration of urban areas

## Aims

4 The Committee's aim is to address the anti-poverty agenda and achieve a better quality of life for the people of Wales and to promote better, simpler government. Its objectives are:

- To help local people, particularly those living in disadvantaged areas, develop confident communities, with decent housing, good facilities and a high quality environment, which is non threatening and free from crime.
- To deliver value for money for the people of Wales with better and more efficient services.
- To streamline the Assembly's work and give greater weight to the needs and views of its partners and the public, including under-represented groups.
- To lead in agreeing a co-ordinated approach necessary to tackle the problem of substance abuse.

## Priorities

5. With such a broad remit, the committee has developed a strategic approach to its work. Priorities for the coming year are as follows:

- *Policy development (SO 9.7(i))* - the Committee will focus on those areas of policy development where it may be seen to complement, rather than duplicate policies being developed by the Minister. In the first part of the period, it will look at the housing needs for older people as part of the wide ranging debate being conducted in accordance with the Welsh Assembly Government's "Strategy for Older People in Wales";
- It will also prioritise other housing issues that have been identified in the Welsh Assembly Government's Housing strategy; including those associated with Homelessness and the Ageing Housing Stock.
- the development and implication of a strategy to tackle substance abuse;
- the continued development and implementation of the Communities First Programme;
- contribute to the development of a national strategy on domestic violence and abuse;

It will receive regular presentations from interested organisations from the public, voluntary and community sectors to enhance its appreciation of all matters included in its remit.

- *Scrutiny of the Minister (SO 9.7(ii))* - the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration will provide a written report to the Committee at each three weekly meeting on current developments within her portfolio. Once a year the Committee will scrutinise the Minister on performance against targets,

but may also undertake thematic scrutiny sessions from time to time. The Committee also intends to carry out the following 'scrutiny':

- the Social Inclusion Report.
  - the Voluntary Sector Report
  - progress on considering the implementation of the recommendations included in the policy reviews carried out by the Local Government and Housing Committee
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- Scrutiny of sponsored bodies (SO 9.7 (iii)) - there is only one ASPB within the Committee's remit – the Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse (APOSIM).
  - *Other items (SO 9.8)* - the Committee will consider any relevant items as necessary
  - *Proposed legislation affecting Wales (SO 9.8(i) and 22)* – each term the Minister will outline forthcoming secondary legislation to enable the Committee to identify areas where it wishes to be consulted. Following the National Assembly's consideration of the Queen's speech, the Committee will consider any draft primary legislation remitted to it by plenary. Specifically the Committee will consider the implementation of the Housing Bill in Wales, This Bill has been introduced for consultation in draft , following which it will be introduced into Parliament (sometime in the Autumn). The Committee will also consider draft secondary legislation referred to it by the Business Committee.
  - *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 21)* – the Committee will consider any complaints referred to it.
  - *Public appointments (SO 9.8(iv) and 20)* – 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 Members to consult the Committee Chair before tabling motions inviting plenary to remit work to the Committee.

**Committee Secretariat  
June 2003**

**ANNEX A**

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUBJECT COMMITTEES**

1. Standing orders 9.7 and 9.8 set out the responsibilities of subject committees.

"9.7 Each subject committee shall

- (i) contribute to the development of the Assembly's policies within the fields for which the relevant Assembly Secretary is accountable to the Assembly;
- (ii) keep under review the expenditure and administration connected with their implementation; and
- (iii) keep under review the discharge of public functions in those fields by public, voluntary and private bodies.

"9.8 Each subject committee shall also, within the relevant fields,

- (i) advise on proposed legislation affecting Wales, including performing its functions under standing order 22;
- (ii) provide advice to the Assembly Cabinet on matters relating to allocation of the Assembly's budget in accordance with standing order 19;
- (iii) perform its function under standing order 21 (complaints);
- (iv) perform any functions assigned to it under the Code of Practice on Public Appointments Procedure made by the Assembly under standing order 20; and
- (v) consider matters referred to it by the Assembly within its fields."