

Education Lifelong Learning and Skills Committee

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Local Government and Public Services Committee Strategic Forward Work Programme May 2006 to April 2007

Introduction

1. This work programme sets out the strategic priorities of the Committee for the next twelve 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 reference 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. The Committee will continue with its scrutiny project in Electoral Arrangements in Wales and will publish its final report in the autumn of 2006. 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 2006