

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE EDC-05-00 (p.6)**

Date: 15 March 2000

Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly Building

Title: Welsh Development Agency ("the Agency") Business Plan 2000-2001

### **Purpose**

1. In accordance with Standing Order 9.7 : To seek the Committee's views on the Agency's submitted Business Plan for 2000-01 (EDC-05-00 (p.7)). These views will assist the First/Economic Secretary in his detailed consideration of the Business Plan.

### **Summary/Recommendations**

2. This paper outlines the arrangements for consideration and approval of the Agency's Business Plan for 2000-01. The role of, and action for, the Economic Development Committee is contained in paragraph 1 above, and paragraphs 15 and 16 below.

### **Timing**

3. The Agency's Business Plan for 2000-01 must be considered and approved by the First/Economic Secretary before 1 April 2000.

### **Background**

4. Section 1(14) of the Welsh Development Agency Act 1975, as amended, places a duty on the Agency, after consulting with such local authorities and other bodies as appear to the Agency to have an interest, from time to time to prepare and submit to the Secretary of State [ this duty/power has been transferred to the Assembly and delegated to the First Secretary] for his approval programmes for the performance of such of their [sic] functions as he may direct.

5. Section 1(15) provides the basis for the Assembly/Assembly Secretary to approve a programme in whole or in part, with or without modifications, or to refuse to approve a programme.

6. Currently, 'a programme' means a single annual Business Plan, but this section of the Act also provides the basis for approval of individual projects which exceed the Agency's delegated limit(s).

7. Guidance and arrangements for the Business Plan are set out in sections 3.4 and 3.5 (some parts of 3.6 and 3.7 are also relevant) of the Agency's Management Statement and Financial Memorandum - a copy of which is in the Assembly Library.

8. A copy of the submitted Business Plan for 2000-01 has been circulated to Committee members separately as EDC-05-00 (p.7).

9. As explained in the Business Plan's introduction (section 1), the Business Plan is clearly linked to the Agency's Corporate Plan "*Promoting Prosperity*" 2000-2003 and starts to put into operation the priorities and actions which that document identifies. In a letter to Members of the Economic Development Committee, dated 7 February 2000, the Agency's Chief Executive advised that the Corporate Plan had been finalised and published. It is available on the Agency's website ([www.wda.co.uk](http://www.wda.co.uk)) and a small number of printed versions is available from the Committee Clerk. The Economic Development Committee considered a draft of the Agency's Corporate plan at its meeting on 15 September 1999 (EDC-05-99 p10).

10. Appendices 3 and 4 of the Business Plan indicates how the Agency's Programme Expenditure is allocated and profiled in terms of its new Programme Structure and the Agency's Divisions. Detailed schedules providing a breakdown of initiatives and projects in these Programmes have been provided to the First/Economic Secretary. These cannot be published in their entirety as much of the information is regarded as 'Commercial-in-Confidence'. Section 4 of the Business Plan, headed 'Making a Difference', together with 3.9 (Rural Development), provides information on each of the Programmes and other key areas.

## **Compliance**

11. See paragraphs 4 to 7 above under 'Background'. Function and power to approve or otherwise the Agency's Programme (annual Business plan) transferred to Assembly and delegated to Assembly Secretariat. Economic Development Committee's views are part of the consideration process.

12. There are no apparent issues of regularity or propriety, nor any novel or contentious proposals raised in the Business Plan. The Assembly Compliance Office is content with the compliance aspects of this paper.

## **Financial Implications**

13. Financial Planning Division has been consulted about this paper and noted that the expenditure proposals in the Business Plan can be accommodated within the Agency's budget for 2000-01 as determined by the Assembly.

## **Cross-Cutting Themes**

14. Section 3 of the Agency's Business Plan states that the Agency is committed to the fundamental principles of Equal Opportunities; Sustainable Development; and Social Inclusion - and explains how.

## **Action for Economic Development Committee**

15. To consider the Agency's Business Plan and offer any views to the First/Economic Secretary to assist his consideration.

16. Representatives of the WDA will be in attendance at the meeting and will be available to respond to any

questions which Committee Members may have about the Business Plan.

## **Contact Point**

17. For further information about this paper, the Agency's Business Plan, or the Agency generally, contact:

Keith Parsons, Regional Development Division 1

Tel : 029 2082 5046

Fax : 029 2082 3119

e.mail : [keith.parsons@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:keith.parsons@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Regional Development Division 1

March 2000