

Economic Development Committee

Date: 1 December 1999

Venue: Committee Room 1, National Assembly for Wales

Title: Education and Training Action Plan for Wales (ETAG)

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the current position on the ETAG report and the timetable for implementation of the proposed new arrangements, and to decide how the Committee wishes to be involved in the process (with particular regard to the skills and enterprise issues).

2. The paper considers the outcome of the Post-16 Education and Training Committee's consideration of the ETAG report, and focuses on two key issues for the Economic Development Committee:

- Timetable for Implementation (including TEC Enterprise Functions)
- Skills Audit

Recommendations

3. That the Committee:

i) considers the future of the enterprise function of the TECs as part of its review of business development;

ii) agrees that the Chair should write to the Chair of the Post-16 Education and Training Committee to stress:

- the importance the Economic Development Committee places on ensuring that the future skills needs of the economy, in line with the National Economic Development Strategy, are considered when education and training provision is made,
- the need to ensure that CETW works closely with other agencies such as the WDA, and
- that the Committee wishes to take a close interest in the work of the Skills Task Force.

BACKGROUND

Post-16 Education and Training Committee's Consideration of ETAG

4. The Post-16 Education and Training Committee's draft report on ETAG was tabled at its meeting on 24th November (ETR-13-99 (p.1)). This, refined in the light of the discussion at that meeting, will constitute the Post-16 Education and Training Committee's final recommendations on the report itself.

5. The Committee's draft report picks up a number of the recommendations made by the Economic Development Committee (EDC-09-99 (p.7)).

6. A list of recommendations in which the EDC is likely to have an interest and arising from the Committee's draft report (or identified during the ETR meeting on 24th November) is attached at Annex 1.

Timetable for Implementation/Enterprise Function of TECs

7. The draft implementation plan for ETAG (ETR-08-99(p.2)) indicates that the TECs' functions will be transferred on 31 March 2001. It suggests that the Committee will be invited to consider proposals for the transfer of TECs' functions in August 2000 (though for forward planning purposes the sooner the Assembly makes decisions on these matters in the coming year the better). The Post-16 Education and Training Committee also indicated during its meeting on 24th November that the Economic Development Committee's views needed to be sought on the specific proposals relating to the relocation of TECs' enterprise functions, particularly those functions not directly related to skills/workforce training. These proposals do not form part of the legislation and so are not so time-critical. A paper containing proposals on the options for transferring these functions will be put to the Economic Development Committee at its first meeting in the New Year. Members will be aware that ETAG will not now be debated in plenary in December.

8. The Committee will therefore have the opportunity to look at the issue in the near future. It would seem appropriate to consider this along with the other issues surrounding business support and development in the review which the Committee will undertake in the New Year.

Skills Audit

9. The Post-16 Education and Training Committee's draft report on ETAG makes very few recommendations with respect to skills. The majority of the debate at that Committee has been on the delivery structures. The (ED) Committee may wish to make representations to the Post-16 Committee on what should be included on the skills issue, given earlier concerns about how the priorities set out in the National Economic Development Strategy, Programme documents etc will be delivered. The Committee has also previously expressed concern about how CETW will link with other economic agencies such as the WDA.

10. The Assembly Secretary for Post-16 Education and Training announced details of the Skills Taskforce for Wales on 9 November. Its remit is to analyse the results of the Future Skills Wales study alongside other key evidence, and suggest how education and training provision can more effectively respond to the skills needs which have been identified. The Task Force will advise on the practical measures which can be taken to ease skill shortages, to improve the extent and quality of learning in the workplace and to ensure that providers of education and training are responsive to the skill needs of employers and individuals. (Further details are in Annex 2.)

11. The Taskforce has been charged with preparing a Strategy for Skills for submission to the Post-16 Education and Training Committee. The Economic Development Committee will have a strong interest in this and it may be appropriate that the Task Force should report to both committees. Members views are invited.

Committee Secretariat

November 1999

EDC-11-99(P.3) Annex 1

Issues for consideration by the Economic Development Committee arising from the Post-16 Education and Training Committee's draft report on ETAG

Section 1: Background and General principles

The Post-16 Education and Training Committee strongly endorsed the proposition that "...the economic and social prosperity of Wales is crucially dependent upon the skills of its populations..." and that "...The participation of business at all levels in the new arrangements will be exceptionally important to give a national, regional and local perspective on the skills needed to generate substantial improvements in wealth creation in Wales".

During the Committee meeting, members also agreed that the report should refer to concerns expressed during consultation that any changes should not occur at the expense of the effective delivery of Objective 1 programmes.

Section 2: Organisation and Administration

The Committee endorsed the proposal that CETW's functions should include the development and maintenance of systems for the collection and dissemination of information on education, labour market and skill trends.

Regional Organisation

The Committee recommended that the National Council should establish regional offices with regional staff line-managed by the Council etc. Regional Advisory Panels should also be established, and these would have close links with Regional Economic Fora, the WDA regionally, and the National Training Organisations in order to widen the range of business involvement in the planning and delivery of work-based training and help the local consortia extend their engagement with business.

During discussion, the Committee also agreed that the Assembly should have maximum flexibility with respect to Regional Panels.

Community Consortia for Education and Training

The Committee endorsed the concept of establishing Community Consortia for Education and Training, but that the exact size and boundary, and their composition should be decided by the National Council

During discussion, the Committee also agreed that the development of a framework for establishing the size and composition of CCETs should fall to the CETW.

TEC Responsibilities

The draft report acknowledged the Economic Development Committee's concern about the location of the TECs' enterprise functions. The draft report indicated that the specific proposals being put forward were subject to further consideration by the Committee.

Annex 2

SKILLS TASK FORCE FOR WALES

The Skills Taskforce for Wales was announced by Tom Middlehurst on October 18th.

Further details were announced by Tom Middlehurst on 9 November, a copy of the full press release is attached at Annex A.

Membership of the Task Force is as follows:-

Brian Connolly

Chairman of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales, formerly the Divisional Officer for the Iron and Steels Trades Confederation.

Stephen Best	Managing Director of European Electrical Steels Ltd., Chairman of Gwent Careers Company
John Clarke	Regional Director Barclays Bank PLC (currently on secondment to the National Assembly)
Gilli Davies	Managing Director, Gilli Davies Ltd, Board Member of Welsh Food Promotions Ltd, Manager Taste of Wales Hospitality Scheme
Sandra Davies	Head Ogmore School, lately member, National Council for Education Technology
Sheila Drury	Director of Kemitron Group, Chief Executive CELTEC, Governor Yale College
Ian Rees	Managing Director Riverside Water Technologies, Chairman Wales Management Council
Peter Rees	Head of Enterprise Resources Carmarthen College of Technology and Art

The remit of the Skills Task Force for Wales is to analyse the results of the Future Skills Wales study, which was published in February, alongside other key evidence, and suggest how education and training provision can more effectively respond to the skill needs which have been identified. The Task Force will advise on the practical measures which can be taken to ease skill shortages, to improve the extent and quality of learning in the workplace and to ensure that providers of education and training are responsive to the skill needs of employers and individuals.

The Task Force is expected to exist for around 3 to 6 months, and will prepare a Strategy for Skills for submission to the National Assembly.

TOM MIDDLEHURST ANNOUNCES MEMBERS OF SKILLS TASKFORCE FOR WALES

Assembly Secretary for Post -16 Education and Training Tom Middlehurst today announced the membership of a new Skills Task Force for Wales.

Mr Middlehurst said: "The Skills Task Force is an influential team with substantial expertise and experience over a whole range of business support, economic and education and training issues. They will take a crosscutting view of the strategic implication of the Future Skills Wales findings, which were published in February, and make recommendations to the Assembly on a strategy for skills which will put Wales at the leading edge of economic development as we enter the new millennium.

"It is an advisory Task Force with a limited lifespan, not a "quango", and its members will be unpaid. There is widespread agreement that in the global economy of the 21st century it will be the skills, inventiveness and creativity of the workforce that will give companies - and nations - their competitive edge.

"Quite simply, if we do not have adequate skills we cannot be the high value, high quality, high income economy we want to be. This will be a key theme in our National Economic Development Strategy and European Union Strategies. The findings of the Future Skills Wales study provide sound information upon which we can begin to develop policies and make decisions concerning skills and employment to help us achieve our aim to compete on equal terms with the best world economies.

"Future Skills Wales is the largest and most sophisticated project of its type undertaken in Europe to date. For the first time survey data from employers and individuals has been integrated with economic forecasts to produce a detailed and consistent picture of the skills needed to support a successful economy. The Task Force's remit will be to analyse the results of the study alongside other key data and suggest how our education and training provision can more effectively respond to the skill needs which have been identified.

"It will advise on the practical measures which can be taken to ease skill shortages, to improve the extent and quality of learning in the workplace and to ensure that providers of education and training are responsive to the skill needs of employers and individuals.

"I place great importance on the work this Task Force will carry out. I am delighted that members of such exceptional ability have agreed to take part. Their report will set us on a path to replace the short term planning and complacency of the past with a more positive and dynamic means of tackling opportunities and challenges of the future."

Brian Connolly will chair the Task Force. He is chairman of the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales and was formerly the Divisional Officer for the Iron and Steels Trades Confederation.

The other members will be:

Stephen Best : Managing Director of European Electrical Steels Ltd.;

Chairman of Gwent Careers Company

John Clarke: Regional Director Barclays Bank PLC (currently on secondment to the

National Assembly)

Gilli Davies: Managing Director, Gilli Davies ltd, Board Member of Welsh

Food Promotions ltd and Manager Taste of Wales Hospitality Scheme

Sandra Davies: Head Ogmore School: lately member, National Council
for Education Technology

Sheila Drury: Director of Kemitron Group; Chief Executive CELTEC;
Governor Yale College

Ian Rees: Managing Director, Riverside Water Technologies, Chairman, Wales

Management Council

Peter Rees: Head of Enterprise Resources, Carmarthen College of Technology and Art

Notes

The Skills Taskforce will exist for around 3-6 months. It will prepare a report for submission to the National Assembly on a Strategy for Skills.

Membership of the Task Force is unpaid. The Secretariat for the group will be provided by officers from the National Assembly and additional support will be provided by member bodies of the Steering Group for the Future Skills Wales project.