

MID WALES REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Report to the Assembly 2002-03

Introduction

1. The Mid Wales Regional Committee is one of the Assembly's four regional committees. It covers Ceredigion and Powys and the area of Gwynedd comprising the former district of Merionnydd.
2. Mick Bates chaired the Committee for the session that began in November 2002, taking over from Delyth Evans. A new Chair will be elected in May 2003. Other members were: Nicholas Bourne, Cynog Dafis, Glyn Davies, Elin Jones and Kirsty Williams. Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas is a Member but does not normally attend the meetings in view of his role as Presiding Officer. The Committee met 3 times between July 2002 and March 2003.

Remit and Method of working

3. The role of the regional committees' remit, as defined by Standing Order 10.2, is to advise the Assembly on matters affecting their regions, the effect of Assembly policies in those regions and the work of public bodies there.
4. The Committee has developed an open and participative style of working with all of its meetings held in public. A summary of the items considered by the Committee is shown below. It has invited a number of outside bodies to contribute to its discussions, for example, Mid Wales Partnership, Powys County Council, School pupils from Mid Wales who attended the Earth Summit 2002 in Johannesburg, the University of Wales Lampeter, Ceredigion County Council, Ymlaen Cerdigion, Gwynedd Council, Mid Wales TUC, JW Greaves and Sons Limited, Blaenau Ffestiniog and the Forestry Commission, Aberystwyth.
5. The Committee has included an "open microphone" session at each meeting where members of the public and local organisations can ask questions and give their opinions to both panel and Assembly Members on the topics being discussed.

6. The Committee's agendas reflect its objective of achieving a balance between strategic issues and responding to issues of concern to the communities the Members represent - therefore items considered have been a mixture of strategic issues and items that are responsive to local concerns.

Issues Considered (from July 2002-April 2003)

Date	Venue	Topic
1 November 2002	Newtown	<p>The Committee held an evidence taking session receiving evidence from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mid Wales Partnership on its operation, aims and activities, • From Powys County Council as part of the Committee's Sports Review • From pupils in Mid Wales Schools who had attended the Earth Summit 2002 in Johannesburg. <p>The Committee also held a Question and Answer session which covered topics on sustainable development, various farming issues including falling visitor numbers caused by the foot and mouth outbreak and, working from home.</p>
24 January 2003	Lampeter	<p>The Committee met at University of Wales Lampeter and held a discussion session with Professor Keith Robbins, Vice Chancellor and Ben Allen President of the Student's Union regarding Top-Up Fees and the future development of University of Wales Lampeter. The Committee also discussed the issues of Small Rural Schools in Ceredigion and received a presentation on the work of Ymlaen Ceredigion in relation to sustainability</p>

		<p>issues in Mid Wales.</p> <p>Members of the public were encouraged to ask questions and offer their views during the course of the meeting.</p>
14 March	Dolgellau	<p>The Committee received a presentations from various bodies including issues affecting Green Tourism from Gwynedd Council, the priorities for the future prosperity of Mid Wales from Mid Wales TUC, a renewable energy project at the Llechwedd Slate Mines and another renewable energy project from the Forestry Commission.</p> <p>Members of the public were encouraged to ask questions and offer their views during the course of the meeting.</p>

Forward programme

7. The new Chair, in consultation with the other Members, will be developing the work programme in the new Assembly term to ensure that the Committee continues to provide a link between the National Assembly and local communities in the region.

Conclusion

8. The Mid Wales Regional Committee fulfils an important role in acting as a bridge between the National Assembly for Wales and the people it represents in their localities. The Committee's method of working has developed throughout the year, moving away from a scrutiny role, into the realm of contributing to the Assembly's policy development process and focussing on matters of local interest. This change in emphasis seems to

have been a success with Members and public alike. It has resulted in an increase in attendance and attracted much local media publicity. It is hoped that this method of working will continue into the new term.

Mick Bates AM
March 2003