

Culture, Welsh Language And Sport Committee Report To Plenary Under Standing Order 9.9 April 2005 – March 2006

1. Introduction

1.1 Standing Order 9.9 requires subject committees to report to the Assembly on their progress in fulfilling their forward work programme. This report covers the work of the Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006.

2. Membership

2.1 From 1 April – 31 December 2005 membership of the Committee was:

Rosemary Butler (Chair), Alun Pugh (Minister), Leighton Andrews, Lorraine Barrett, Eleanor Burnham, Lisa Francis, Denise Idris-Jones, Elin Jones, Laura Anne Jones, Owen John Thomas.

2.2 From 1 January – 31 March 2006, following the reduction in the size of Committees, membership was:

Rosemary Butler (Chair), Alun Pugh (Minister), Eleanor Burnham, Lisa Francis, Denise Idris-Jones, Laura Anne Jones, Val Lloyd, Owen John Thomas.

3. Remit and Responsibilities

3.1 The Committee's remit mirrors the portfolio of the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport, which covers arts, museums, ancient monuments, libraries, the languages of Wales, media and broadcasting, sport and recreation, and lottery issues. The portfolio also includes oversight of nine Assembly sponsored (ASPBs) or grant aided public bodies.

3.2 The responsibilities of subject committees are set out in Standing Orders 9.7 and 9.8. The remainder of this report details significant aspects of Committee work under each of these headings.

4. Work and Achievements to Date

4.1 During the period the Committee held 15 formal meetings. Two of these were held at external venues: Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil and Liberty Stadium, Swansea. The Committee held its first meeting in the Senedd on 8 March 2006.

Policy development (SO 9.7 (i))

Contribution of Arts and Sport to Community Regeneration

The Committee's report on its review of the contribution of Arts and Sport to Community Regeneration was debated in plenary on 26 April 2005. The Minister's response was made to plenary on 14 June.

Review of Dance in Wales

The Committee continued to take oral evidence up to July 2005 on its review of Dance in Wales. Its report "Dance in Wales: a Review" was launched in the Dance House, Wales Millennium Centre in December and debated in plenary on 24 January 2006. The Minister published his response to and plenary statement on the report in March 2006.

Visit to Scottish Parliament

The Committee visited the Scottish Parliament in June 2005 as part of its evidence gathering for the dance review and general exchange on cultural policy issues.

English Language Newspaper Industry in Wales

The Committee began a short review of the English Language Newspaper Industry in Wales following a request from individual Members and a debate in Plenary in December 2005 on the Trinity Mirror Group in Wales. During the period of this report, the Committee took formal evidence from a range of newspaper groups and the Cardiff School of Journalism on the issues facing English language newspapers in Wales.

Football in Wales

The Committee began a review of football in Wales in February 2006 with an overview of the issues from the Sports Council of Wales. This was followed by evidence from a range of interests in football, which continues.

Review of Expenditure and Administration (SO 9.7 (ii))

The Committee received regular reports (monthly from January 2006) from the Minister allowing scrutiny of policies and decisions for which he is accountable. From September the Minister included, at the Committee's request, termly reports on budget spend enabling the Committee to monitor progress on budget forecasting and outturn.

Review of Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs) (SO 9.7 (iii))

The Committee continued its practice of annual scrutiny of each of the five main cultural ASPBs within its portfolio:

- Arts Council of Wales
- National Library of Wales
- National Museums and Galleries of Wales
- Sports Council of Wales
- Welsh Language Board.

All five organisations were scrutinised in Committee during November and December 2005.

The Committee also considered the Minister's proposals in respect of the future of the cultural ASPBs and related policies at several meetings in autumn 2005 and early 2006.

Legislation (SO 9.8(i))

The only piece of primary legislation remitted by plenary to Committee was the National Lottery Bill. The proposals for the Bill were considered briefly by the Committee on 26 January 2005. The Committee subsequently considered the National Lottery Bill itself on 29 September and 19 October 2005. The Committee made no recommendations for change and its report was laid on 2 December 2005.

EU Annual Work Programme 2006

The Committee considered the European Commission's Annual Work Programmes in April 2005 and February 2006 identifying issues on EU cultural funds for further review later in the year.

Budget (SO 9.8 (ii))

The Committee set out its budget priorities at its meeting on 18 May 2005 (see the Chair's letter of 3 June at Annex 1) and commented on the draft budget at its meeting on 19 October 2005.

Public Appointments (SO 9.8(iv))

The Committee's public appointment nominees were Rosemary Butler and Owen John Thomas.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The Committee discussed proposals during the year on the most productive way of ensuring equal opportunity aspects of its work are fully considered. It also took account of sustainability in particular in its scrutiny of the work of the cultural ASPBs.

6. FORWARD PROGRAMME

6.1 The Committee's strategic work programme was agreed in June 2005 and is attached at **Annex 2**.

MRCS
April 2006