

PREPARING THE POLICY

AGENDA IN WALES

**The NI Assembly - Relationships
with other UK Assemblies**

**24 September 1998
Wellington Park Hotel**

PRESENTATION TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND TRANSITION

PROGRAMME ON EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships with Other UK Assemblies

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THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S POLICY CHALLENGE

“Currently we are working for one Minister whose preoccupations are London rather than Wales centred. But once the Assembly is in being collective Cabinet responsibility will go out of the window. We are very close to being released from the strait jacket of thinking that Britain is a homogenous community where policy diversity is a dangerous activity.”

Senior Welsh Office civil servant

KEY QUESTIONS

Given that the Assembly will not be bound by collective Cabinet responsibility, how will it :

- Influence the content of primary legislation passed at Westminster and ensure it has the 'legislative space to develop its own coherent policies?
- Have access to the same information/intelligence as the Welsh Office does now?
- Ensure that Wales receives its "fair share " of public funds?
- Ensure that its voice is heard on EU matters?

WELSH OFFICE BLOCK
MAIN ALLOCATIONS: 1998-99

<i>Programme</i>	<i>1997-98 Plans</i>	<i>£ million 1998-99 Plans</i>
<i>Local Authority Total Standard Spending</i>	2,757.3	2,868.6
<i>National Health Service</i>	2,341.5	2,455.3
<i>Further Education Funding Council</i>	176.8	175.0
<i>Higher Education Funding Council</i>	236.8	232.3
<i>Curriculum Council and Assessment Authority</i>	9.9	9.4
<i>Training and Enterprise</i>	132.5	123.8
<i>Regional Selective Assistance</i>	70.0	61.3
<i>Welsh Development Agency</i>	84.7	114.0
<i>Development Board for Rural Wales</i>	9.5	9.0
<i>Cardiff Bay Development Corporation</i>	47.9	44.9
<i>Wales Tourist Board</i>	14.6	14.7
<i>Central Government Roads and Transport</i>	115.1	100.4
<i>Housing for Wales</i>	60.2	62.9
<i>Welsh Language Board</i>	3.7	3.8
<i>Arts Council of Wales</i>	14.5	14.3
<i>National Library for Wales</i>	6.0	6.0
<i>National Museums and Galleries of Wales</i>	12.4	12.4
<i>Cadw (include Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments)</i>	7.8	7.8
<i>Sports Council for Wales</i>	6.6	6.6
<i>Countryside Council for Wales</i>	23.2	23.7
<i>Local Government Capital Settlement (not include LGR and Fire Service)</i>	440.8	423.8
<i>National Assembly for Wales Capital Costs</i>		17.0

Government of Wales Bill

Schedule 2

1. Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food.
2. Ancient monuments and historic buildings.
3. Culture (inc. museums, galleries and libraries).
4. Economic development.
5. Education and training.
6. The environment.
7. Health and health services.
8. Highways.
9. Housing.
10. Industry.
11. Local government.
12. Social services.
13. Sport and recreation.
14. Tourism.
15. Town and country planning.
16. Transport.
17. Water and flood defence.
18. The Welsh language.

POSSIBLE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Focus of the Assembly's Economic Development Committee:

1. SUBJECT COMMITTEES

- Industry, Economic Development, Rural Affairs, Tourism
- Local Government Environment, Strategic Planning, and Transport
- Education, Training, Culture and the Arts
- Health, Housing and Social Services

2. PROGRAMME COMMITTEES

- European Affairs
- Sustainable Development
- Equal Opportunities

ECONOMY

Focus of the Assembly's Economic Development Committee:

- Develop an SME business birth-rate strategy.
- Address skills shortages.
- Create a culture of entrepreneurialism and innovation.
- Build supply chains and networks.
- Develop a distinctive approach to the global economy.
- Concentrate on the financial and business services.

EDUCATION

An agenda for the Education and Training Committee:

- Focus education and training more effectively on the skills needed by the Welsh economy.
- Revamp 16-19 year curriculum by introducing the Welsh Baccalaureate to broaden A-levels and give parity of esteem to GNVQs.
- Promote collaboration between schools and further education colleges.
- Upgrade R&D University-business links.
- Tackle social exclusion.
- Realise potential of IT.

EUROPE

Issues for the European Affairs Committee:

- Pushing the case for Objective 1 Funding for west Wales and the Valleys.
- Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.
- Impact of Monetary Union on Welsh economic policy.
- Representing the Assembly directly with UKRep in Brussels.
- Overseeing the work of the Wales European Centre in Brussels.
- Promotion of relations with other European regions.

A NEW POLICY-MAKING CULTURE - 1

A NEW POLICY-MAKING CULTURE - 2

"Instead of concentrating on policy and strategy the Welsh Office has become increasingly involved in the delivery of programmes and services."

There is very little communication between Whitehall departments. Its even difficult to get co-operation

"The present system is best described as a confused mixture of good intentions and poorly co-ordinated agencies. This explains why a regional or economic development strategy for Wales does not exist."

Source: Welsh office Civil Servant

A NEW POLICY-MAKING CULTURE - 2

There is very little communication between Whitehall departments. Its even difficult to get co-operation across divisions inside the Welsh Office. The Assembly should not be satisfied with sectoral solutions. Instead it should be pre-occupied with inter-sectoral solutions.

Senior Welsh office Civil Servant

A NEW POLICY-MAKING CULTURE - 3

“Believe me, a department that answers to sixty politicians who in turn answer to people from all over Wales is going to respond very differently from one that answers to one Cabinet Minister, whoever he or she is ...

“Instead of working to a Secretary of State who is a member of a Cabinet, and at best represents one Welsh constituency, most of us will transfer to the Assembly, where our political masters will be directly answerable to people from all over Wales ...

“We will have to listen more actively and respond more fully. We may increasingly become organisers of advice and expertise, rather than monopoly suppliers ... we will have to consciously shed the mindset which says that the only advice worth having comes from the civil service.

Rachel Lomax, Permanent Secretary, Welsh Office,