

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

SCRUTINY PANEL

2 July 2004

Scrutiny Programme 2005

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To consider the future topics for Regional Strategic Reviews and their scope.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Panel

- (i) agree to Regional Strategic Reviews covering Renewable Energy in early 2005 and Key Sectors in late 2005;
- (ii) identify other appropriate areas, based on the RES, that might be considered as topics for a Regional Strategic Review

3. Background

3.1 The current Scrutiny Protocol and Programme were endorsed by the Assembly's Executive Committee on 12th December 2003 and then agreed with SW RDA.

3.2 The Programme agreed topics – taken from the RES - for Regional Strategic Reviews until the end of 2004. These were Broadband and Tourism. Further topics were suggested for 2005 – 'Renewable Energy' and 'Encouraging small businesses and social enterprise in disadvantaged areas' - although it was agreed to keep these under review.

3.3 It would be helpful to confirm the topics to be considered in 2005 to allow planning with SW RDA (particularly on the topic to be considered in early 2005). In assessing the suitability of topics for review Members may wish to have some regard to the following:

- the need to support the delivery of objectives in the Regional Economic Strategy;
- the need to assess the full range of topics and work areas in which SW RDA (and others) are involved;
- the need to highlight regional issues and encourage agreement about priorities;
- the desirability of drawing into the scrutiny process the widest range of SW RDA staff – to give the Scrutiny Panel the broadest view of the Agency's capability and spread the impact of scrutiny programme on the RDA's organisation;
- the opportunity to increase SW RDA's engagement with regional partners;
- the opportunity to tie-in with other reviews underway.

- 3.4 **Renewable energy** remains a constant source of debate in the region and an issue of significant importance. A Regional Strategic Review on this topic would provide a timely link to work on the RSS and engage the Planning, Transport and Environment Team of SW RDA, which has so far not participated in the Scrutiny Process. It would also allow engagement with a wide a range of regional partners and raise the profile of the issue within the region. It is therefore suggested that Renewable Energy is retained as the first topic for consideration of the programme in 2005.
- 3.5 The original suggestion for the latter half of 2005 was to assess support for **small businesses and social enterprise** in disadvantaged areas. However, Panel Members may wish to reconsider this proposal as:
- business support arrangements have now been considered in the Scrutiny Panel's Business Development report;
 - SW RDA will be reporting back to the Scrutiny Panel on progress on implementing the Business Development recommendations during 2005;
 - this topic will bring into focus the work of the same SW RDA staff that were involved in the Business Development scrutiny exercise.
- 3.6 SW RDA will be conducting a review of the **key sectors** in the Regional Economic Strategy towards the end of 2005. This will be informing the full Review of the Regional Economic Strategy that will take place shortly afterwards. The key sectors have provided an underpinning theme through all the previous scrutiny reviews. It is therefore proposed that instead of social enterprise, the key sectors in the Regional Economic Strategy form the basis of a Regional Strategic Review, in the second half of 2005.
- 3.7 Members' views on other topics for consideration are welcome.

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