

Answers issued to Members on 5 June 2009

[R] signifies that the Member has declared an interest.

[W] signifies that the question was tabled in Welsh.

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Questions to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): What plans does the Minister have to develop a nationwide sustainable development fund to support local energy production conservation schemes? (WAQ54240)

The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing (Jane Davidson): We are developing proposals for a Community Scale Renewable Energy Generation Project to be supported from the European Structural Funds. The business plan is at an advanced stage of development and the procurement process to secure a service delivery partner is underway.

The project is intended to support around 22 sustainable social enterprises based on new community scale renewable energy installations.

As part of the National Energy Efficiency and Saving Plan and the Climate Change Strategy we are developing a range of other proposals to bring together investment in energy efficiency and microgeneration measures.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on her plans to promote local action to reduce carbon emissions? (WAQ54241)

Jane Davidson: Supporting local action to tackle climate change is critical to making a difference on this issue.

Some examples of work underway include:

- support and guidance to community groups through our Community Information Pack and a DVD of good practice, which supports the resources available through the Cynnal Cymru website.
- in May in Cardiff, Llangollen and Aberystwyth, we delivered the first Community Action for Climate Change events. These are intended to take place twice a year and aim to strengthen local groups to share expertise and resources and to have inputs from those who can showcase good practice.
- a major Wales-wide media campaign and the Climate Change Challenge, which using the carbon calculator encourages people to make changes to reduce their carbon footprint. These initiatives sit alongside the actions of our Climate Change Champions within their schools and communities and so help to spread messages.
- Local Service Boards (LSBs) are providing local strategic leadership in tackling climate change and other cross-cutting issues. A number of LSBs have identified tackling climate change as a project area for their Local Delivery Agreements.
- through the Spatial Plan Area Groups we are developing the concept of 'low carbon regions' to identify the most appropriate actions for their regions. Workshops have been held throughout April in all regions, and the resulting report will feed into our future work national and in each Spatial Plan area.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on the involvement of the Welsh Assembly Government in examining the options of utilising the Severn bore for the generation of energy? (WAQ54247).

Jane Davidson: The bore is a graphic example of the tidal energy in the Severn Estuary. It occurs during the highest tides as the rising water moves up the narrowing and rising estuary against the river current. The Severn Tidal Power feasibility study is looking at ways to harness the energy of each tide, not only during the periods when the bore forms. Most of the study's emphasis is on using the energy generated by tidal range (height difference) but devices that exploit the energy of tidal currents are also being considered as part of an assessment of emerging technologies.

These emerging technologies are being considered in addition to the options short-listed by the feasibility study, using an additional fund of £500,000 set up by the Assembly Government, together with the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA). The Severn Tidal Power Embryonic Technology Scheme (SETS) was officially launched with a call for proposals on 2 April this year. Applications for the scheme are now closed, and the assessment of those received is underway. (182 words).

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister provide details of how she is seeking to mitigate the effect of the impact of new regulations on the testing of private water supplies in Wales? (WAQ54248)

Jane Davidson: The proposed new Regulations for private water supplies replace the existing 1991 Regulations. They are the subject of a consultation closing on the 8 June which includes an impact assessment which will be updated to reflect the consultation responses.

The consultation and accompanying draft Regulations propose the introduction of a risk based approach to ensure the level of monitoring is appropriate and to help local authorities focus their resources on the most vulnerable supplies. This will enable them to adapt the monitoring of supplies to reflect the individual circumstances and need, resulting in a more focused approach and reducing monitoring costs in the longer term.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on the status of unadopted sewers and plans to have these adopted by Dŵr Cymru? (WAQ54287)

Jane Davidson: I launched the Welsh Assembly Government's Strategic Policy Position Statement on Water on 31 March 2009. The Statement sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's core principles and policies on a number of key areas relating to water in Wales, including the transfer of private sewers.

As outlined in the Statement, in the first instance we want to ensure that new sewers are built to an adoptable standard and we are working with the UK Government and other stakeholders to achieve this.

The Statement sets out our intention to pursue the development of Regulations that will facilitate the transfer of private sewers. We plan to undertake a consultation exercise on the Regulations once they are drafted towards the end of this year.

Transferring the ownership of private sewers to water and sewerage companies will help relieve the burden on individual householders but the work on these sewers will still need to be planned and undertaken and the costs of this work will still need to be met. The water companies will need to raise these funds through the normal route of price reviews of customer bills.

Affordability of water and sewerage bills is a key concern of the Welsh Assembly Government and so I intend to give full consideration to all the evidence available to adopt the most appropriate mechanism for the transfer of ownership to help individual householders while protecting the generality of customers.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

David Melding (South Wales Central): What was the cost to the NHS of treating fragility fractures in women in each of the last three years for which figures are available? (WAQ54309)

David Melding (South Wales Central): What was the cost to the NHS of treating fragility fractures in men in each of the last three years for which figures are available? (WAQ54310)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart): This information is not collated centrally.

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

Brynle Williams (North Wales): Will the Minister provide details on the number of heroin, morphine, and methadone related deaths in Wales in each year since 1999? (WAQ54288)

The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government (Brian Gibbons): This information is not available in the format you have requested. This is because the toxicology screens for many of these tragic deaths will show a number of substances and it is not always possible to identify with any certainty which substance has been the primary cause of death.

We do however, monitor the number of drug related deaths in Wales which is published in the Welsh Assembly Government's Annual Report of Substance Misuse and can be accessed at www.substancemisuse.gov.uk.