

Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 17 November 2010

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

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

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To ask the First Minister

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Since the establishment of the Third Assembly in 2007, has the Cabinet met outside of Cardiff, either formally or informally, and if so will the First Minister please provide dates, times and locations of any such meetings. (WAQ56756)

Answers issued on 16 November 2010

Cabinet has met once outside Cardiff since the establishment of the Third Assembly in 2007. A meeting of the Cabinet took place at the Welsh Assembly Government Merthyr Tydfil Office on Monday 16th November 2009 between 13:00 – 16:00

To ask the Minister for Business and Budget

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): What was the planned original budget for the construction and furnishing of all three new WAG office buildings in Merthyr, Llandudno and Aberystwyth. (WAQ56745)

Answer issued on 13 April 2011

The construction and fit out costs for the three new offices were established in conjunction with our professional advisers over a number of years following extensive work to determine location, user requirements and design proposals. Construction contracts were then tendered in accordance with OJEU procurement procedures. In recognition of the complexity and commercial nature of these contracts, no overall budget was set for the construction and furnishing of the three new offices with budgets being determined over a number of years instead.

Merthyr Tydfil costs are outlined in the Project Closure Report on the internet which can be found at <http://wales.gov.uk/about/programmeforgovernment/strategy/locstrat/publications/merthyrclosure/?lang=en>

The construction contract for Aberystwyth was an NEC3 Contract based on a Target Price which was agreed by all parties at commencement of the contract as a realistic estimate of the outturn cost of the project. The final agreed Target Price was £20.991m. The Welsh Assembly Government's final liability was £20.878m representing a saving of £112,920 against the agreed contractual Target Price.

The construction contract for Llandudno Junction was agreed with Pochin Construction at around £20m. The current construction contract outturn is expected to be £20.74m. The final account is currently being agreed with the Managing Agent.

All figures are exclusive of VAT.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister detail the overall development costs for the Aberystwyth WAG offices, in terms of professional fees, loose furnishings and IT equipment, with a separate figure for each aspect. (WAQ56746)

Answer issued on 29 November 2010

I will write to you and a copy of the letter will be placed on the internet.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): With reference to the WAG office at Aberystwyth, what was the anticipated number of posts at the site prior to its building, and how many currently exist. (WAQ56747)

Answer issued on 13 April 2011

The Aberystwyth office has capacity to accommodate 535 staff on an 8:10 basis (that is 8 desks for every 10 members of staff). This is a highly efficient use of space and is widely adopted in modern office environments in both the private and public sectors.

There are currently around 400 staff based at the office (including Countryside Council for Wales and Forestry Commission staff) and whilst it was never our intention to fill the office to capacity from the outset, the recent voluntary severance and early retirement scheme has affected overall staff numbers at Aberystwyth, as it has throughout the Welsh Assembly Government. However, the office is a long term investment and we continually review the available space and also look for possible additional non WAG organisations as tenants in line with business requirements.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): With reference to the WAG office at Llandudno, what was the anticipated number of posts at the site prior to its building, and how many currently exist. (WAQ56748)

Answer issued on 13 April 2011

The Llandudno Junction has capacity to accommodate 650 staff on an 8:10 basis (that is 8 desks for every 10 members of staff). This is a highly efficient use of space and is widely adopted in modern office environments in both the private and public sectors.

There are currently around 400 staff based at the office. A further 55 staff are scheduled to relocate from Mold, Bangor and St Asaph in March 2011 and a further 18 staff from the Countryside Council for Wales and the North Wales Valuation Tribunal will be co-located in the new office. Whilst it was never our intention to fill the office to capacity from the outset, the recent voluntary severance and early retirement scheme has affected overall staff numbers at Llandudno Junction, as it has throughout the Welsh Assembly Government. However, the office is a long term investment and we continually review the available space in line with business requirements.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): With reference to the WAG office at Merthyr Tydfil, what was the anticipated number of posts at the site prior to its building, and how many currently exist. (WAQ56749)

Answer issued on 13 April 2011

The information requested on the anticipated number of posts can be found in the published Merthyr Tydfil Closure Report on the internet at: <http://wales.gov.uk/about/programmeforgovernment/strategy/locstrat/publications/merthyclosure/?lang=en>

There are currently around 400 staff based at the office and work is currently underway to roll out flexible working which will allow us to make better use of the current facilities and identify opportunities for further estate rationalisation.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister detail the overall development costs for the Merthyr Tydfil WAG offices, in terms of professional fees, loose furnishings and IT equipment, with a separate figure for each aspect. (WAQ56750)

Answer issued on 29 November 2010

These costs are published in the Merthyr Tydfil Closure Report on the internet and can be found at: <http://wales.gov.uk/about/programmeforgovernment/strategy/locstrat/publications/merthyrclosure/?lang=en>

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister provide a breakdown of costs for the Welsh Assembly Government ministerial car pool, giving figures for each month within the last four years. (WAQ56754)

Answer issued on 13 April 2011

The monthly expenditure for the last four full financial years is shown below:

Month	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
April	£1,180	£897	£2,142	£7,102
May	£3,902	£3,444	-£4,690**	£11,450
June	£4,996	£127	£4,180	£11,468
July	£3,128	£0	£17,003	£146,801*
August	£6,540	£7,885	£1,187	-£25,555**
September	£3,678	£7,139	£574	£6,822
October	£3,709	£5,611	£25,955 2	£5,842
November	£5,877	£3,761	£14,122	£3,198
December	£3,484	£9,781	£7,775	£4,894
January	£3,039	£15,862 1	£17,194 3	£12,463 4
February	£724	£7,542	£5,781	£8,249
March	£25,312*	£157,302***	£9,968	-£4,014

The figures comprise the costs of vehicle purchase/sales, servicing/maintenance, fuel, insurance, road tax, and breakdown cover. They also include the cost of private hire cars and taxis which are used when the pool cars are not available.

*includes vehicle purchase costs

**includes vehicle sales credits

1 Includes period 9&10 fuel costs at £5.3k and annual insurance costs at £5.8k

2 Includes periods 5, 6 & 7 fuel costs at £10k and £3k training costs

3 Includes annual insurance costs at £9.6k

4 Includes annual insurance costs at £10.7k

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister provide a monthly breakdown of the number of cars contained in the Welsh Assembly Government ministerial car pool, giving figures for the last four years. (WAQ56755)

Answer issued on 29 November 2010

The vehicle operating levels for the Official Car Fleet in the last 4 financial years are shown in the table below. Monthly fluctuations generally occur only when new car purchases precede, for a short period, the departure of cars being disposed of.

Year	Operating Level
2006/07	6*
2007/08	9
2008/09	9
2009/10	10

**includes one petrol/electric hybrid on a trial basis*

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister provide a breakdown of monthly expenditure incurred by the Welsh Assembly Government over the last four years for overnight stays abroad, including subsistence allowance and accommodation costs. (WAQ56758)

Answer issued on 29 November 2010

The breakdown of monthly expenditure incurred for overnight stays abroad is not captured currently through current systems. This information could only be provided by going through individual departmental records to identify specific instances and cannot thus be provided due, to the disproportionate cost that would be involved in its collection.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister provide a breakdown of the monthly expenditure incurred by the Welsh Assembly Government over the last four years for overnight stays in Wales, including subsistence allowance and accommodation costs. (WAQ56759)

Answer issued on 29 November 2010

The breakdown of monthly expenditure incurred for overnight stays is not captured currently through current systems. This information could only be provided by going through individual departmental records to identify specific instances and cannot thus be provided, due to the disproportionate cost that would be involved in its collection.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of overnight accommodation and subsistence claimed by civil servants in relation to overnight stays in Wales, giving the number of nights claimed per year over the last four years. (WAQ56760)

Answer issued on 29 November 2010

The breakdown of overnight accommodation and subsistence claimed is not captured currently through current systems. This information could only be provided by going through individual departmental records to identify specific instances and cannot thus be provided, due to the disproportionate cost that would be involved in its collection.

To ask the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister detail how many primary schools in Wales offer the teaching of languages, not including English and Welsh, within the school curriculum, with figures broken down via local authority and for the last four years. (WAQ56744)

Answer issued on 17 November 2010

The teaching of modern foreign languages in schools is only a statutory requirement in the first three years of secondary education. Primary schools may offer a modern foreign language, in addition to meeting the requirements of the school curriculum in Wales, on a voluntary and non statutory basis. The Welsh Assembly Government does not hold data on the number of primary schools that elect to make such provision.

To ask the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): What additional resources is the Welsh Assembly Government giving to Local Authorities to monitor and enforce the One Planet Development Policy. (WAQ56783)

Answer issued on 19 November 2010

No additional resources have been made available to monitor and enforce the policies contained within Technical Advice Note 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities. In general, the resources necessary to process applications should come from planning application fee income, with additional costs related to monitoring and performance, including statutory information requirements, met by local authorities from their block grant. However, I am aware that some local planning authorities charge additional fees to monitor S106 agreements. Any fees charged should be reasonable and proportionate to the costs incurred by the local planning authority in monitoring the S106 agreement.

Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): What specific guidelines has the Welsh Assembly Government issued to Local Authorities to integrate projects with the One Planet Development Policy specifically with lost communities. (WAQ56751)

Answer issued on 19 November 2010

Technical Advice Note 6 - Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities advises that planning applications for One Planet Developments located in the open countryside must be accompanied by a management plan. The plan must include a community impact assessment to assess any potential impacts (positive and negative) on the host community and provide a basis to identify and implement any mitigation measures that may be necessary. Practice guidance is currently being procured to provide further explanation of the content of management plans, including community impact assessment.

Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): Prior to the implementation of the One Planet Development Policy, what evidence did the Welsh Assembly Government receive to ensure that this policy is sustainable and achievable. (WAQ56752)

Answer issued on 19 November 2010

A substantial evidence base underpins the One Planet Development Policy. Relevant research includes Low Impact Development Planning Policy and Practice commissioned by the Countryside Council for Wales and Low Impact Development – Further Research commissioned by Pembrokeshire Coast

National Park Authority. Local practice, especially Policy 52 of the Joint Unitary Development Plan for Pembrokeshire and associated supplementary planning guidance, has also informed the policy.

The policy has also been subject to significant public consultation. Draft planning policy on low impact development was first publicised in the consultation Planning Policy Changes to Support Sustainable Development in Rural Areas: Meeting Housing Needs (July 2008). This was followed by consultation on Draft Technical Advice Note 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (July 2009).

Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): Will the minister explain the definition of 'Zero Carbon Footprint' within the One Planet Development Policy, given that in most cases there will be some carbon emissions in the construction of properties within this policy. (WAQ56753)

Answer issued on 19 November 2010

Technical Advice Note 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities explains that One Planet Developments should initially achieve an ecological footprint of 2.4 global hectares per person or less in terms of consumption and demonstrate clear potential to move towards 1.88 global hectare target over time. They should also be zero carbon in both construction and use.

Some construction practices and materials may result in carbon omissions which should be offset by careful design and material choice. Extensive use of wood and other plant products, for example, results in the storage of carbon, offsetting any release of carbon that may take place elsewhere in the construction process. All emissions and storage of carbon should be detailed by the zero carbon analysis element of the One Planet Development Management Plan. Further details on how to calculate the ecological footprint and zero carbon analysis will be provided by practice guidance which is currently being procured.

To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Are Community Health Councils across Wales currently meeting their obligations and do they have a full complement of members since the reorganisation of the health boards. (WAQ56741)

Answer issued on 15 November 2010

I refer you to my written answer to WAQ56713.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): How many Task and Finish groups have been set up by the Minister since 2007 within the department of Health and Social Services, providing an annual breakdown. (WAQ56742)

Answer issued on 19 November 2010

Since 2007, I have set up a total of twenty seven Task and Finish groups within the department of Health and Social Services:

2007: One
2008: Ten
2009: Fifteen
2010 (to date): One

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): How many Working Groups have been set up by the Minister since 2007 within the department of Health and Social Services, providing an annual breakdown. (WAQ56743)

Answer issued on 19 November 2010

This information on the number and remit Working Groups is not held centrally as they can be set up by either the Minister or officials. The scope of these Working Groups and the length of time they are in place can vary significantly depending on the terms of reference.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister outline what restrictions, if any, are placed on LHB's in the purchase of residential hospice care outside of their LHB boundaries. (WAQ56757)

Answer issued on 16 November 2010

I expect Local Health Boards to plan and secure health services as locally as possible but I have not placed any formal restrictions on where and how they secure palliative and end of life care for their resident populations.

To ask a Representative of the Assembly Commission

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Commissioner provide a breakdown explaining the increase in the budget for car parking for 2011/12, as laid out in the draft budget. (WAQ56737)

Answer issued on 16 November 2010

Assembly Commissioner for Assembly Resources, William Graham AM:

The 2010-11 budget for car parking was developed during the summer of 2009 on the basis of the estimated cost for that financial year. This estimate proved to be inadequate and the car park charges paid for the current year (2010-11) will be approximately £140,000. The budget for 2011-12 has been set at £140,000.

In view of the increasing costs of car parking and the budget pressures facing the Assembly, a review of car parking arrangements, costs and funding has been carried out this year. As a result of this, a car park charging scheme will be introduced from the beginning of January 2011, which aims to recover a significant proportion of the costs.

We have cautiously estimated income from car parking charges of £100,000 during 2011-12. This appears in the published draft budget as part of the revenue income. In net terms, we estimate that this will reduce the overall budgetary requirement (subject to usage) to £40,000.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): What was the purchase cost/ contract hire cost of the Presiding Officer's new car, and how much of the cost was recouped from the sale of the previous vehicle. (WAQ56738)

Answer issued on 16 November 2010

Assembly Commissioner for Assembly Resources, William Graham AM:

The current official vehicle is the subject of a contract hire agreement. The lease term is for three years, costing £7,889.64 per annum. This includes servicing, maintenance and breakdown cover.

The last official vehicle was purchased outright. If the purchase cost is spread over the four and a half years that the last vehicle was owned by the Assembly, the result is about £8,800 per annum. Servicing and maintenance was additional to this. The sale of the car realised £6,300.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): With reference to WAQ56708, will the Commission explain the considerable monthly variation in costs associated with the Assembly policing unit, giving a breakdown of how monthly costs are attributed. (WAQ56739)

Answer issued on 16 November 2010

Assembly Commissioner for Assembly Resources, William Graham AM:

The table below showing the annual cost of the Assembly Police unit over the last four full financial years was provided in response to WAQ56708.

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
April	£34,480	£44,242	£45,548	£53,803
May	£30,694	£38,157	£39,258	£45,241
June	£31,953	£37,964	£38,976	£46,396
July	£31,092	£38,637	£44,876	£43,178
August	£30,471	£38,640	£44,956	£44,413
September	£29,987	£44,985	£43,676	£44,678
October	£30,196	£45,844	£49,205	£50,098
November	£29,395	£44,066	£51,490	£49,850
December	£31,252	£38,375	£54,718	£55,127
January	£31,652	£37,855	£49,779	£48,411
February	£33,443	£38,936	£50,385	£50,237
March	£33,519	£45,981	£48,551	£51,000
Total	£378,136	£493,682	£561,419	£582,433

The variations reflect the purchase and supply of specialist equipment and travel and accommodation costs which vary on a month by month basis depending on the particular duties undertaken by officers. These costs also reflect incidental expenses and overtime payments including Bank Holiday rates. More significant variations reflect annual pay rises and incremental salary increases at appropriate times of the year.

The increase in cost between September and October 2008 reflects the secondment of two further police officers to provide weekend cover at the National Assembly.

The reduced cost between May and September 2009 reflects the retirement of a police sergeant at the top of his pay scale. This post was not filled until October 2010 when another sergeant, who had not yet reached the top of her incremental pay scale, took up post.

There were increased travel costs in 2009-10 to cover planning and preparing for anticipated protest in relation to the decision to cull badgers.

The highest proportion of monthly costs can be attributed to officers' salaries. To demonstrate this, the chart below provides a breakdown of officers' salaries and ancillary spend on a month by month basis for 2009-10.

2009-10	Salaries	Other	Total
April	£53,085	£718	£53,803
May	£43,292	£1,949	£45,241

Jun	£45,871	£525	£46,396
July	£43,089	£89	£43,178
Aug	£44,321	£92	£44,413
Sept	£44,670	£8	£44,678
Oct	£49,443	£655	£50,098
Nov	£49,729	£121	£49,850
Dec	£50,972	£4,155	£55,127
Jan	£48,380	£31	£48,411
Feb	£50,062	£175	£50,237
Mar	£50,865	£135	£51,000
Total	£573,779	£8,653	£582,433

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): With reference to WAQ56708, will the Commission explain the 54.2% rise in the budget for the Assembly's police unit between 2006-07 and 2009-10. (WAQ56740)

Answer issued on 16 November 2010

Assembly Commissioner for Assembly Resources, William Graham AM:

The increase in budget relates to a combination of factors that includes the secondment of two additional full time Police Officers to provide greater resilience during the business week and weekend working arrangements, and year on year incremental increases as part of Police pay and conditions agreements. This period also reflects pay increases which were negotiated as part of a National Police pay award agreement over a fixed period. Further detail is given in the answer to WAQ56739.