

# **Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 23 February 2011**

[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***

**Mick Bates (Montgomeryshire):** Will the Minister give figures for the number of Welsh Assembly Government employees in (a) Newtown and (b) Montgomeryshire by department, per year for the past ten years. (WAQ57182) *Transferred for answer by the Permanent Secretary*

*Answer issued on 28 February 2011*

**The Permanent Secretary (Dame Gill Morgan):** The Welsh Assembly Government introduced the current HR Information System in 2006 to collect data on a wider range of staffing issues, including occupancy levels at each office within the Assembly Government estate. Prior to this time, a variety of systems, both electronic and manual, were utilised to record, independently, details of staffing levels and details of office accommodation on a monthly basis. As a result, the historical data from these discrete systems can often be contradictory and, with the previous electronic systems having been disposed of, we have only paper records from which to collate this information prior to 2006.

We have estimated that to locate the necessary files, extract the relevant information from each attempt to resolve data contradictions and collate the information as you have requested, would take a considerable amount of time, in the region of 3-5 days. There is a possibility that even after undertaking this work the data provided might be incomplete or inaccurate. We have previously published data relating to overall staffing numbers for each year but it is the correlation between these numbers and the individual locations which would prove problematic. I have, therefore, taken the decision to provide data from 2006 onwards only, which I hope will prove to be of assistance to you.

*For table, see further information to WAQ57182.*

***To ask the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning***

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the Minister make a statement on the feasibility of the Powys School Modernisation Programme given that figures reveal it would require £254 million between 2012/2023. (WAQ57180)

*Answer issued on 23 February 2011*

21st Century Schools is a long-term programme of investment aimed at the creation of high quality school environments of the right size and in the right places and of the right type for young people in their locality.

The process has begun with all 22 local authorities submitting their Strategic Outline Programmes (SOPs) detailing their long-term investment aspirations for the delivery of education over the next 10-15 years.

There is a two stage assessment process, with the first stage concentrating on the strategic case and will be assessed by DCELLS policy leads. Those SOPs that move through the first stage appraisal will then move to the project options phase which will concentrate on the capital investment requirements outlined by local authorities. Following which will be a process of challenge and negotiation with individual authorities, the results of which will lead to a long-term national investment programme.

All local authorities will have indicated within their SOPs their estimated capital funding requirements over a 10-15 year period. In doing so they will have identified avenues of capital funding to deliver their investment programmes, to include for example, capital grant from the Assembly, the use of prudential borrowing and other revenue funded capital and capital receipts. As a result, the Assembly Government and Local Authorities will determine how the investment programme for Wales should be configured

within the constraints of the available capital funding for the Assembly Government and Local Authorities.

*To ask the Minister for the Economy and Transport*

**Brian Gibbons (Aberavon):** Will the Minister detail how access to fast broadband services can be supported through building regulations. (WAQ57176)

*Answer issued on 28 February 2011*

Options for connectivity beyond basic telephone lines are a matter for the house builder in conjunction with a communications provider. The increasing importance being placed by households on broadband access provides house builders with opportunities to differentiate their product with the potential for added property value. We do not believe at this time that this is an area in which regulation is necessary although there are clear benefits in raising awareness and promoting a constituency of approach.

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the Minister provide a list of the number of days A roads in Wales were closed due to flooding in 2010. (WAQ57177)

*Answer issued on 06 April 2011*

There were the following closures due to flooding on the Trunk Road and Motorway Network in Wales:

Area	Days	Road	Reason
South Wales	0	N/A	N/A
Mid Wales	1 4	A487 A483	Flooding Burst Water Main
North Wales	0	N/A	N/A

Totals do not include Local Authority A Roads.

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the Minister provide an update on the effect of flooding on the Dyfi Bridge. (WAQ57178)

*Answer issued on 06 April 2011*

Whilst river levels rarely reach the road at Dyfi Bridge, the river does flood at two locations just north of the Machynlleth on average between three and four days per year. We are looking at options for reducing the incidence of trunk road closure due to flooding.

**Darren Millar (Clwyd West):** Will the Minister publish the Welsh Assembly Government's business case for the electrification of the Great Western Railway into Wales. (WAQ57181)

*Answer issued on 28 February 2011*

This is a non devolved issue, and we are working with the Department for Transport as it develops the business case for electrification of the Great Western Main Line to Swansea. We do not have a separate business case for publication.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** Will the Minister make a statement on the termination of the Flexible Support for Business scheme. (WAQ57183)

*Answer issued on 06 April 2011*

Economic Renewal: a new direction clearly sets out the rationale for ceasing to use the Flexible Support for Business brand.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** Will the Minister disclose the number of applications for the Flexible Support for Business scheme that reached full application status since its introduction. (WAQ57184)

*Answer issued on 06 April 2011*

The Single Investment Fund through which grant support was provided to businesses was a part of Flexible Support for Business. Single Investment Fund applications of less than £10,000 were administered at a regional level as part of an EU funded programme. In terms of Single Investment Fund applications of over £10,000 then from its introduction until its closure a total of 960 Single Investment Fund applications were received with 801 being approved.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** Will the Minister disclose the total number of 'initial applications' for the Flexible Support for Business scheme that did not proceed to full application status before its termination. (WAQ57185)

*Answer issued on 06 April 2011*

Given the varied ways in which businesses might have explored the possibility of applying for the Single Investment Fund it is impossible to quantify the number of initial enquiries.

### *To ask the Minister for Heritage*

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** What consideration has the Minister given to developing Golden Grove House and Gelli Aur Park as a centre for contemporary visual arts. (WAQ57179)

*Answer issued on 23 February 2011*

In March 2010, the Assembly Government and Carmarthenshire County Council co-funded a study commissioned by the Carmarthenshire Heritage Regeneration Trust (CHRT) to develop a business plan and marketing strategy for CHRT's proposals to create a centre for contemporary visual arts at Golden Grove House and Gelli Aur Park.

The Minister for the Economy and Transport and I considered advice from our officials on CHRT's request for financial assistance towards this project and we subsequently met William Wilkins, CHRT's project director on 1 February 2011 to discuss the Trust's proposals. In the light of our meeting with Mr Wilkins and the advice we received from officials, we decided that, whilst supportive of this project in principle, it did not exhibit a sufficiently strong fit with our strategic priorities for Assembly Government funding.

**Eleanor Burnham (North Wales):** Will the Minister detail the amount of Ministerial visits he has made to productions by the Theatre in Education companies including Hijinx and Gwent Theatre giving a figure for each theatre. (WAQ57186)

*Answer issued on 28 February 2011*

I have made a visit to a performance at each of the following Theatre in Education companies:

- Cwmni'r Fran Wen
- Theatre Gwent

You mentioned Hijinx Theatre. Hijinx has not been funded by the Arts Council for Wales to provide theatre in education; rather, its funding, until 2010-11, has been to support (a) community touring productions and (b) work with the learning disabled. With effect from 2011-12, ACW will be funding Hijinx for its much-praised work with the learning disabled.