

## **Written Questions answered from 27 January to 3 February 2000**

[R] signifies the Member has declared an interest.

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## Questions to the Secretary for the Environment and Local Government

### Adolygu Gwerth Trethiannol Busnesau (Ymgynhoriad ynghylch Newidiadau)

**Dafydd Wigley:** Ar ba ddyddiad y penderfynwyd y byddai ymgynhoriad ynghylch newidiadau yn y gyfundrefn adolygu gwerth trethiannol busnesau yng Nghymru yn cael eu trin gan y Cynulliad yn hytrach nag Adran yr Amgylchedd, Trafnidiaeth a'r Rhanbarthau yn Llundain; ac ar ba ddyddiad yr hysbyswyd busnesau yng Nghymru o hyn? (WAQ3150)

**Ysgrifennydd yr Amgylchedd a Llywodraeth Leol (Peter Law):** Trosglwyddwyd swyddogaethau Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru mewn perthynas â threthi busnes Deddf Cyllid Llywodraeth Leol 1988 i Gynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru ar 1 Gorffennaf 1999, yn sgîl Gorchymyn Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru (Trosglwyddo Swyddogaethau) 1999 Rhif 672, a gymeradwywyd gan Dŷ'r Cyffredin ar 24 Chwefror 1999.

Cychwynnodd y broses o ymgynghori ar wahanol agweddau ar ail brisio trethi busnes cyn 1 Gorffennaf 1999, dan arweiniad swyddogion Adran yr Amgylchedd, Trafnidiaeth a'r Rhanbarthau gyda'r Swyddfa Gymreig. Ar 1 Gorffennaf, ac wedi hynny, parhaodd Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru i gymryd rhan yn y broses ymgynghori yn lle'r Swyddfa Gymreig, gan ddibynnu ar ei bwerau dan adran 23(2) Deddf Llywodraeth Cymru 1998 i wneud gwaith Gweinidog y Goron gyda swyddogaethau wedi'u trosglwyddo.

Nid oedd angen gwneud unrhyw benderfyniad na chyhoeddiad ffurfiol ynglŷn â hyn, gan ei fod yn un o ganlyniadau cymeradwyaeth Tŷ'r Cyffredin i'r Gorchymyn Trosglwyddo Swyddogaethau. Mae'n un o blith nifer o enghreifftiau o waith yn parhau wedi iddo gael ei drosglwyddo o gyfrifoldebau Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru i gyfrifoldebau'r Cynulliad.

### Reviewing Rateable Values of Businesses (Consultation on Changes)

**Dafydd Wigley:** On what date was it decided that the Assembly would deal with the consultation on the changes to the system for reviewing rateable values of businesses in Wales rather than the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions in London; and on what date were businesses in Wales notified of this? (WAQ3150)

**The Secretary for the Environment and Local Government (Peter Law):** The functions of the Secretary of State for Wales in respect of business rates in the Local Government Finance Act 1988 were transferred to the National Assembly for Wales on 1 July 1999, by virtue of the National Assembly for Wales (Transfer of Functions) Order 1999 No. 672, which was approved by the House of Commons on 24 February 1999.

The process of consultation on various aspects of the business rating revaluation began before 1 July 1999 and was led by officials of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions with Welsh Office involvement. On and after 1 July, the National Assembly for Wales continued to take part in the consultation process in place of the Welsh Office, relying on its powers in section 23(2) of the Government of Wales Act 1998 to continue anything being done by a Minister of the Crown in respect of a transferred function.

It was not necessary to make any formal decision or announcement about this, which was among the consequences of the approval by the House of Commons of the Transfer of Functions Order. It is one of many examples of work that continued in the transition from the Secretary of State for Wales to the Assembly.

### Arian a Godwyd drwy Dreth Busnes

**Dafydd Wigley:** Faint o arian a godwyd drwy'r dreth busnes oddi wrth fusnesau wedi'u lleoli ym mhob un o'r 22 ardal cyngor unedol yng Nghymru ym mhob un o'r tair blynedd diwethaf; a faint y mae Peter Law yn disgwyl y bydd yn cael ei godi ym mhob ardal ym 1999-2000? (WAQ3151)

**Peter Law:** Mae'r tabl isod yn dangos y trethi gwirioneddol a gasglwyd ar gyfer 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99 ac amcangyfrifon 1999-2000.

£ mil

Awdurdod	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	Amcan-gyfrif 1999-2000
Ynys Môn	6,305	6,224	8,044	7,517
Gwynedd	25,729	25,844	26,198	29,616
Conwy	13,594	13,468	14,294	17,027
Sir Ddinbych	11,877	11,043	12,589	14,135
Sir y Fflint	24,169	22,525	26,688	29,315
Wrecsam	19,941	18,903	22,947	23,850
Powys	13,747	12,306	14,736	16,504
Ceredigion	6,555	6,752	7,041	8,144
Sir Benfro	18,833	18,943	18,169	20,032
Sir Gaerfyrddin	19,889	19,845	17,236	22,331
Abertawe	33,119	35,471	36,394	40,712
Castell-nedd Port Talbot	23,011	23,764	24,522	26,524
Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr	16,635	21,428	23,165	25,450
Bro Morgannwg	17,901	15,636	15,731	16,934
Rhondda Cynon Taf	26,140	28,106	29,406	31,849
Merthyr Tudful	6,646	7,423	7,497	8,505
Caerffili	16,478	17,138	17,617	20,099
Blaenau Gwent	7,007	6,675	7,741	9,055
Tor-faen	11,991	12,003	12,288	13,864
Sir Fynwy	11,222	12,635	11,675	12,587
Casnewydd	31,623	32,462	36,284	38,186
Caerdydd	73,200	71,859	82,123	90,481
Cymru	435,612	440,453	472,385	522,717

Ffynhonnell: ffurflenni  
CTC ac NNDR  
awdurdodau lleol

1. Mae'r ffigurau ar gyfer 1996-97 i 1998-99 yn drethi annomestig a ddaeth i law ar gyfer y flwyddyn dan sylw yn unig, gan gynnwys effaith gostyngiadau treth.
2. Ffigurau 1999-2000 yw'r arian y disgwylir ei dderbyn o drethi annomestig, gan gynnwys effaith gostyngiadau treth.

### Money Raised Through Rates from Businesses

**Dafydd Wigley:** How much money was raised through rates from businesses based in each of the 22 unitary council areas in Wales in each of the last three years; and how much does Peter Law expect to be raised in each area in 1999-2000? (WAQ3151)

**Peter Law:** The table below shows the actual rates collected for 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99 and the estimated figures for 1999-2000.

£ thousand

<b>Authority</b>	<b>1996-97</b>	<b>1997-98</b>	<b>1998-99</b>	<b>Estimated 1999-2000</b>
Isle of Anglesey	6,305	6,224	8,044	7,517
Gwynedd	25,729	25,844	26,198	29,616
Conwy	13,594	13,468	14,294	17,027
Denbighshire	11,877	11,043	12,589	14,135
Flintshire	24,169	22,525	26,688	29,315
Wrexham	19,941	18,903	22,947	23,850
Powys	13,747	12,306	14,736	16,504
Ceredigion	6,555	6,752	7,041	8,144
Pembrokeshire	18,833	18,943	18,169	20,032
Carmarthenshire	19,889	19,845	17,236	22,331
Swansea	33,119	35,471	36,394	40,712
Neath Port Talbot	23,011	23,764	24,522	26,524
Bridgend	16,635	21,428	23,165	25,450
The Vale of Glamorgan	17,901	15,636	15,731	16,934
Rhondda Cynon Taff	26,140	28,106	29,406	31,849
Merthyr Tydfil	6,646	7,423	7,497	8,505
Caerphilly	16,478	17,138	17,617	20,099
Blaenau Gwent	7,007	6,675	7,741	9,055
Torfaen	11,991	12,003	12,288	13,864
Monmouthshire	11,222	12,635	11,675	12,587
Newport	31,623	32,462	36,284	38,186
Cardiff	73,200	71,859	82,123	90,481
Wales	435,612	440,453	472,385	522,717

Source: local authority CTC and NNDR returns

1. The figures for 1996-97 to 1998-99 are receipts of non-domestic rates in respect of the year in question only, including the effect of rate relief.
2. The figures for 1999-2000 are the estimated receipts of non-domestic rates, including the effect of rate relief.

#### **A541 Improvement**

**David Davies:** When will the A541 be improved or upgraded? (WAQ3357)

**Peter Law:** The road is the responsibility of Flintshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire councils as local highway authorities. Flintshire County Council has bid for transport grant support in 2000-01 for a corridor study of the A541/A550, with a view to developing proposals for an integrated transport strategy consisting of improvements to public transport infrastructure, traffic management and environmental measures, cycling and pedestrian provision, and highway safety measures. I hope to make an announcement on the 2000-01 settlement shortly.

## **Style of Governance of Local Authorities**

**Christine Chapman:** Which local authorities in Wales have changed or are in the process of changing their structure to a cabinet style of government, and how many jobs have been or are likely to be affected by a) compulsory redundancy, b) voluntary redundancy, or c) redeployment to lower graded posts? (WAQ3435)

**Peter Law:** Under the provisions of the Local Government Bill, which is currently being considered by Parliament, all local authorities will be required to draw up proposals for the operation of executive arrangements and send a copy of the proposals to the National Assembly. In advance of the new legislation, local authorities are not required to provide the National Assembly with details of any changes that they make to their political management structures. However, I understand that the majority of local authorities in Wales have adopted or are in the process of adopting a cabinet style of government.

It will be for local authorities to decide on the internal operational arrangements to be put in place to support the new executive structures. We do not consider that the new executive arrangements will necessarily require any changes in the level of officer support but, as at present, it will be for authorities to determine whether there will be a need for any redundancies or redeployment for their staff.

## **Questions to the Secretary for Economic Development**

### **Objective 1 Funding Application**

**Nick Bourne:** What arrangements has the Secretary for Economic Development made for enquiries from businesses, voluntary organisations and others who wish to discover how to apply for Objective 1 funding? (WAQ3167)

**The Secretary for Economic Development (Rhodri Morgan):** Organisations of all kinds with an interest in the structural funds can and do make enquiries of Assembly staff and those at the Welsh European Programme Executive. Information is also available from organisations involved in the wider partnership, which constituted the former European taskforce. Assembly officials and partners are working closely together to produce information and guidance tailored to the needs of particular sectors and to issue it through media most easily used by those sectors. A website and telephone hotline are being established and 100,000 copies of a newsletter have been published.

### **Business Connect**

**Nick Bourne:** Is Rhodri Morgan aware of the findings of the Federation of Small Businesses that most small businesses are not aware of the existence of Business Connect, and those that are aware of it make little use of it? Will he bring forward proposals to try to remedy these problems? (WAQ3342)

**Nick Bourne:** Will Rhodri Morgan bring forward proposals to ensure that small businesses are aware of the services offered by Business Connect? (WAQ3343)

**Rhodri Morgan:** I am fully aware of the Federation of Small Businesses survey. Its findings are interesting, though they are based on a relatively small sample. The survey findings are also at variance with other larger surveys, which have reported significantly higher levels of awareness of, and customer satisfaction with, Business Connect. In 1999, over 23,000

enquiries were received via the all-Wales Business Connect helpline, which indicates that many businesses in Wales know of and use the service. In April 1999, Business Connect Wales Ltd was formed to provide enhanced strategic direction and better co-ordination of business support in Wales. Its business-led management board, which includes representation from the Federation of Small Businesses, is taking action to raise the profile of Business Connect and the services provided through the local network. This includes a Business Connect awareness week in March, and a new website that will provide round-the-clock access to business information for small firms in Wales.

#### **Economic Development Bank/Fund**

**Alun Cairns:** What are the perceived funding gaps that the proposed economic development bank or economic development fund seek to fill? (WAQ3354)

**Rhodri Morgan:** The proposed economic development fund will seek to provide debt, equity and management support for growth-orientated and potentially viable small and medium sized businesses which are unable to raise the appropriate finance from commercial sources. The aim is to provide those critical additional funds which help to expand or create a viable business, which cannot immediately attract the necessary financial support from other sources, and turn it into one that can become an attractive proposition for private sector financiers. This complex area is being addressed by a small public/private sector task group on which the Federation of Small Business and the Chambers of Commerce are represented. Its terms of reference and membership were set out in my answer to Mike German AM on 19 January 2000 (OAQ3101).

#### **Economic Development Bank/Fund**

**Alun Cairns:** What are the perceived funding gaps that the proposed economic development bank or economic development fund seek to fill? (WAQ3443)

**Rhodri Morgan:** I refer to the answer I gave to your identical question: WAQ3354.

#### **Regional Selective Assistance Map (Ceredigion County Council)**

**Glyn Davies:** When was the Welsh Development Agency informed by Ceredigion County Council about possible difficulties with the acceptance of the regional selective assistance map for Wales? (WAQ3483)

**Rhodri Morgan:** The WDA has not been approached by Ceredigion County Council on this matter.

### **Questions to the Secretary for Education and Children**

#### **State Primary and Secondary Schools in Monmouthshire**

**David Davies:** In each of the last five years, how many pupils have attended state primary and secondary schools in Monmouthshire; what proportion of them have been out-of-borough; and what was the number of full-time equivalent teachers? (WAQ3413)

**The Secretary for Education and Children Rosemary Butler:** The number of pupils and full-time equivalent qualified teachers in maintained primary and secondary schools in Monmouthshire for each of the last five years is shown in the table below. Information on pupils who live outside Monmouthshire and attend schools in the authority is not collected centrally.

Table: Number of pupils and full-time equivalent qualified teachers in maintained primary and secondary schools in Monmouthshire

	Jan 1995	Jan 1996	Jan 1997	Jan 1998	Jan 1999
Pupils					
Primary (a)	7,078	7,360	7,479	7,656	7,685
Secondary	5,224	5,260	5,326	5,326	5,416
Full-time Equivalent qualified Teachers (b)					
Primary	297	296	299	306	311
Secondary	313	319	320	325	320

Source: Schools' Census

(a) Includes full-time and part-time. Full-time equivalent numbers calculated using 32.5 hours as the normal weekly hours worked.

### Local Education Authorities (Education Budgets)

**David Davies:** How much was spent in cash terms, by local education authorities in Wales on administration within their education budgets in the most recent year for which information is available? (WAQ3414)

**Rosemary Butler:** Section 52 of the Welsh local education authorities' budget statements indicate an estimated expenditure of £81 million on central administration and other strategic management in 1999-2000, representing approximately 6.2 per cent of their total education budget.

### Welsh Language Primary Education (Swansea)

**Alun Cairns:** What representation has Rosemary Butler received on the provision of Welsh language primary education in Swansea, and what plans does she have to expand the number of places available? (WAQ3446)

**Rosemary Butler:** I have not received any representations. The planning and supply of school places is the local education authority's responsibility. The City and County of Swansea has stated in its adopted school organisation plan, January 2000, that in the light of increasing demand for Welsh medium primary education, the authority will consider the provision of up to two new Welsh medium primary schools over the next five years together with the expansion of existing Welsh medium primary schools, where possible.

### Ysgol Gymraeg Bryn y Môr

**Alun Cairns:** What proposals is Rosemary Butler planning to take forward on alleviating the overcrowding at Ysgol Gymraeg Bryn y Môr? (WAQ3447)

**Alun Cairns:** Will Rosemary Butler make a statement on overcrowding at Ysgol Gymraeg Bryn y Môr, Swansea? (WAQ3448)

**Rosemary Butler:** The planning and supply of school places is the local education authority's responsibility. The City and County of Swansea has told my officials that Ysgol Gymraeg Bryn y Môr is not overcrowded.

## Questions to the Secretary for Health and Social Services

### New Community Hospital at Porthmadog

**Dafydd Wigley:** Will the Secretary for Health and Social Services confirm that a new community hospital is still being afforded the highest priority by the North Wales Health Authority, in respect of capital expenditure on new build; and will she confirm that this scheme will commence during the 2000-01 financial year? (WAQ2874)

**The Secretary for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt):** I understand that North Wales Health Authority affords the proposed new community hospital at Porthmadog a high priority among its other proposed schemes. Officials are meeting with representatives of Wales's trusts and health authorities' chief executives to discuss the relative merits of proposals brought forward for funding from the capital modernisation fund. The proposed Porthmadog scheme will be considered in terms of relative priority against all other bids.

### Recommendations on Consultant Nurses

**David Melding:** When does Jane Hutt expect the working group on consultant nurses to report its recommendations to her? (WAQ2891)

**Jane Hutt:** The Chief Nursing Officer's group has met on two occasions, 23 November and 8 December 1999. A further meeting is planned for 6 January 2000. The Chief Nursing Officer expects to have completed her report by the end of February 2000.

### Meningitis A and C Vaccine

**Nick Bourne:** Is there a sufficient quantity of meningitis A and C vaccine available to meet current and projected needs, considering the needs of students in Welsh universities and institutions of higher education? (WAQ3344)

**Jane Hutt:** I am pleased that we have successfully completed the vaccination programme for freshers using the meningococcal A & C vaccine. This campaign was for students entering university for the first time in September/October 1999. Throughout the UK, 480,000 doses were made available to enable health authorities to undertake this campaign. Students in institutes of higher/further education have been immunised using the new MenC vaccine. This was undertaken between November and December, with an uptake rate of between 80 to 90 per cent.

Planning is now underway to immunise with MenC, those who, for whatever reason, were not in attendance when immunisation was completed at either school or institute of higher/further education. This catch-up programme will not need to be run in future years as all children will have received their MenC vaccines before leaving school.

Meningococcal A & C vaccine will continue to be used for travel protection and outbreak situations.

### Clydach War Memorial Hospital

**Alun Cairns:** How much money is to be made available for the re-opening and ongoing running of Clydach War Memorial Hospital? (WAQ3353)



**Jane Hutt:** It is the responsibility of Iechyd Morgannwg Health Authority to assess local health needs and, working with providers of health care services and others, to plan and prioritise services to meet that need within the resources available. Any substantial change to services, such as a permanent change in the use of Clydach War Memorial Hospital, would have to be subject to formal public consultation by the health authority.

As a result of wide ranging discussions with the local community, the health authority is considering a number of uses for Clydach Hospital. The health authority is currently undertaking an exercise to determine the cost and feasibility of the options, of which one or more could be formally consulted upon.

I am meeting representatives from Iechyd Morgannwg Health Authority on 9 February, who will be briefing me on proposals for the future of Clydach Hospital.

### **Infertility Treatment (Inequality of Access)**

**Kirsty Williams:** Will Jane Hutt comment on the inequality of access to in-vitro fertilisation (IVF)/intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) treatment in Wales in light of North Wales Health Authority closing its list for such treatment? (WAQ3363)

**Jane Hutt:** I am aware that North Wales Health Authority closed its waiting list for specialised infertility services in August 1997 and are only purchasing services for those outstanding on the list prior to closure. However, it is for health authorities to assess the health needs of their resident population and to purchase health services to meet those needs, within the resources available to them.

The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists published its guidelines, commissioned by the Department of Health, on tertiary services (including IVF) on 20 January 2000. The Department of Health is evaluating the results of a recent survey of current NHS fertility provision. I shall be looking at the options for moving towards fairer access to NHS fertility services in the light of this work and the resources available.

### **Cancer Diagnostic Services**

**Kirsty Williams:** Will Jane Hutt comment on the £100 million that has been made available in England to support cancer diagnostic services and whether an equivalent allocation has been made in Wales? (WAQ3364)

**Jane Hutt:** Since May 1997, new money has been made available to improve cancer services in Wales. From this financial year, this becomes recurrent funding amounting to a total of £3.5 million. In the last two years, £1.8 million of this new money has been allocated to purchasing essential diagnostic equipment.

The £100 million for cancer diagnostic services in England, announced on 3 January, has been made available by re-prioritising the capital modernisation fund. There is no equivalent allocation being made available in Wales.

### **Health Care (Post Meningitis Illnesses)**

**Nick Bourne:** What measures are in place to ensure that those who suffer from post meningitis illnesses receive adequate health care? (WAQ3370)

**Jane Hutt:** Health authorities are obliged to arrange for the provision of appropriate services for the populations they serve, including services required in respect of any post-meningitis illnesses.

### **Labour Costs in the Health Budget**

**Nick Bourne:** What proportion of the overall health budget is accounted for by labour costs, broken down by staff type and grade for the current financial year? (WAQ3371)

**Jane Hutt:** The information requested will take a little while to extract, but will be forwarded as soon as it becomes available.

### **Hearing Aid Technology**

**Peter Black:** What pilot schemes are envisaged in Wales for up-to-date hearing aid technology and digital hearing aids? (WAQ3377)

**Jane Hutt:** None. You will be aware that John Hutton, Minister for Health, announced the launch of pilot projects in England on 18 January to consider the different options for delivering hearing aid services and improving the range of technology of hearing aids available. These pilots form part of the exercise to which I referred in my reply to you on the 4 October 1999 (WAQ1341VB). My officials will work closely with colleagues in England throughout the project and I will consider the conclusions with a view to introducing the recommendations into the NHS in Wales.

On 24 January, I met with the Director of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People Cymru to discuss audiology services in Wales, including the introduction of the latest developments in hearing aid technology. We will consider the options available for improving the existing audiology service alongside the projects taking place in England.