

Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 11 November 2009

[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 Minister for the Economy and Transport

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): In the last two financial years, how many grants have been awarded through the Single Investment Fund and what was the average value of those grants. (WAQ55105)

Answer issued on 13 November 2009

Between 17 April 2008 (when SIF was launched) and 30 September 2009, 1,132 offers have been made with a total value of £124.9 million (average of £110, 336 per offer).

To ask the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Further to the Minister answer to WAQ54887, will he provide a detailed breakdown of these figures including to which land sales the figures relate. (WAQ55098)

Answer issued on 16 November 2009

A detailed breakdown of the figures contained in WAQ 54887 is shown in the table below.

The table contains information on all land and property sales undertaken by the Assembly Government in the past five years.

Your earlier question (WAQ54887) referred to the answer I gave to WAQ 54585, from Darren Millar which asked for information on properties (not specifically land) sold by the Assembly Government during the past 5 years. In order to provide consistency with my earlier responses, the table below provides a comprehensive, detailed breakdown of all property transactions, from which land sales can be identified.

You will note that the figures do not correlate exactly with the figures provided in answer to WAQ 54887. The primary reasons for this are that:

- fees for property transactions can span a period of time. They are not always or entirely incurred in the same financial year as the sale transaction itself. The fees below are expressed in terms of the property to which they relate and therefore vary from those previously quoted, which were expressed in terms of individual financial years.
- The summary figures to your WAQ 54887 included surveyors and legal fees linked to DE&T properties in the SAP Financial system. The information below has been refined following an individual review of the hard copy supporting documentation linked to each transaction

A 'Nil' on the schedule represents transactions dealt with by internal (Assembly Government) surveying and legal professionals.

WAQ 55098 2004-05					
Date	Address	Price	Vendor	Legal fees	Surveyors fees
03/12/04	Penley Hospital, nr Wrexham	2,500,000	NHS Residual	7,500	8,420
03/12/04	Bryntirion Hospital, Llanelli *	2,259,000	NHS Residual	15,400	14,300
28/04/04	Land at Llanfairfechan		TPG	1,138	

		1,750			59
28/04/04	Land at Esso Garage Site Pensarn	150,000	TPG	834	3,525
25/06/04	Land at Travellers Rest	1,500	TPG	672	353
13/10/04	Land at Vets Surgery, Dolgellau	1,500	TPG	672	118
10/12/04	Land at Bodorgan Anglesey	Nil	TPG	664	Nil
24/01/05	Land at Pen yr Heol Skewen	15,000	TPG	685	1,441
27/01/05	Land at Wells Kelo Site, Holyhead	610,305	TPG	5,496	4,100
17/03/05	Land at Bush Farm Port Dinorwic	1,395	TPG	2,001	450
Total	2004-05	5,540,450	10 sales	35,060	32,764

* Includes an element of fees for formalising third party occupations

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): What proportion of the money spent by the Welsh Assembly Government on the procurement of goods and services is spent on Welsh-based businesses. (WAQ55099)

Answer issued on 13 November 2009

Welsh Assembly Government policy is to advertise all tender opportunities over £25k on the Sell2Wales web-site.:

- During 2007/8 approximately 350 such tenders were advertised through the portal.
- The most recent analysis of 2007/8 data indicates that an estimated 42% of Welsh Assembly Governments core trade spend is spent with businesses with Welsh postcode invoice addresses. This represents an estimated value of £138m per annum. An estimated further £50m relates to expenditure covering on-site ICT maintenance and support services and is invoiced from suppliers such as Siemens, Royal Mail and BT.
- 'Meet The Buyer' events for the two Welsh Assembly Government new build construction contracts were advertised on Sell2Wales to introduce Welsh based businesses to the main contractors. As a direct result of this, in Llandudno Junction, around £250,000 worth of work has been awarded to local companies and of the £13.2 million spent on construction so far, over £8.5 million (64%) has been spent locally.

Nick Bourne (Mid & West Wales): Will the Minister set out the value of assets owned by the Welsh Assembly Government giving the value of the asset in each case. (WAQ55100)

Answer issued on 11 November 2009

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) owns many thousands of assets. While information is held on an individual asset basis it would be inappropriate to set out the information for each asset in relation to this response.

This information is summarised each year within its published Annual Accounts. The net value of assets by main asset type (as at 31 March 2009) are shown in the table below.

Asset Type	Value £000

Intangible Assets e.g. software	3,846
Roads Network	11,548,313
Freehold Land & Buildings	92,123
Dwellings	1,455
Vehicles	114
Information Technology	20,216
Plant & Equipment	7,225
Fixtures & Fittings	7,713
Assets under Construction e.g. Roads and new builds at Aberystwyth and Llandudno	346,917
TOTAL	12,027,922

To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): What plans does the Minister have to invest in new technology to further the benefits of minimal access surgery to reduce hospital-acquired infections and improve patient survival outcomes. (WAQ55097)

Answer issued on 13 November 2009

£56 million is allocated to NHS bodies each year to invest in minor capital schemes and new equipment / technology. It is for each LHB to consider its capital investment priorities within the context of meeting its strategic objectives, and LHBs are making significant investment in this technology. The minimisation of infection and improving outcomes continue to be high priorities for NHS organisations, which should be reflected in their locally agreed Healthcare Associated Infection (HCAI) reduction targets.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): How much money has been allocated to the Strategy for Older People in Wales from this year and next year's budget and in which budget expenditure line is this money contained. (WAQ55103)

Answer issued on 13 November 2009

The Budget for the Strategy for Older People in 2009/10 is £4m. This included £1.7m for the Older People's Commissioner and £80k for the National Service Framework for Older People. The balance, £2.22m is being used for grants to Local Authorities and voluntary sector organisations in Wales as well as the central support the Welsh Assembly Government provides for the implementation of the Strategy for Older People.

The Draft Budget for 2010/11 is £3.441m. This includes £1.8m for the Older People's Commissioner and £80k for the National Service Framework for Older People. The balance of £1.56m will be used for grants to Local Authorities, the voluntary sector organisations and the Welsh Assembly Government in the same approach as 2009-10. This figure includes £1m to reflect our decision not to transfer the local authority grant into the revenue support grant as had been planned. The Budget for the Strategy for Older People is contained within Budget Expenditure Line 0661.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Does the Minister intend to investigate the claim made in evidence given to the Finance Committee that up to a fifth of the NHS's budget may not be being spent efficiently. (WAQ55104)

Answer issued on 13 November 2009

No.

To ask the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Does the Minister have any plans to alter the multiplier used to calculate Business Rates in Wales. (WAQ55101)

Answer issued on 10 November 2009

I intend to reduce the multiplier for 2010-2011 from 0.489 to 0.409. This is a reduction of over 16 per cent, and means that around 60 per cent of ratepayers in Wales will have their bills reduced next year.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Does the Minister have any plans to change the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme in light of the current revaluation being conducted by the Valuation Office Agency. (WAQ55102)

Answer issued on 10 November 2009

The funding available for the Small Business Rates Relief will not be reduced as a consequence of the revaluation, and I am considering the necessary changes to the relief thresholds.