

Written Questions answered between 13 and 20 May 2004

[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 First Minister

The 2011 Census Form

Owen John Thomas: What discussions has the First Minister held with the Office for National Statistics regarding the 2011 census form to ensure that provision is made in the form enabling those resident in Wales to record their identity in Welsh terms? (WAQ35065)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): The recently issued National Statistics guide for the collection and classification of ethnicity data recommended that an identity as well as an ethnicity question should be asked, wherever possible, enabling respondents to identify themselves as Welsh. This has already been implemented in the Labour Force Survey. For published results see:

<http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/eng/TableViewer/Wdsview/disview.asp?ReportId=926>

Consultations on the contents of a 2011 census form have yet to begin but the Assembly will have a formal role in agreeing the content and format of a future census in Wales. Options for that role are currently being prepared jointly with the Office for National Statistics.

Concordats with the National Assembly

Nick Bourne: Will the First Minister list the Westminster departments which have yet to agree concordats with the National Assembly, and when does he expect these to be agreed? (WAQ35311)

The First Minister: We have agreed concordats with all of the major UK Government departments. In some cases, these no longer reflect the structure of the UK Government, and it is for the department concerned to propose revisions.

There are many departments that have no regular dealings with us, such as the Department for International Development, the Northern Ireland Office and the Privy Council Office. I would not expect us to agree a concordat with them.

Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

The Hay Festival

Nick Bourne: Will the Assembly Government carry out a formal assessment of the impact of the Hay festival? (WAQ35314)

The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh): The Hay festival, like all Arts Council of Wales grant recipients, is subject to the council's grant monitoring and evaluation regime.

The Brecon Jazz Festival

Nick Bourne: What is the Assembly Government doing to promote the Brecon jazz festival? (WAQ35315)

Alun Pugh: The Welsh Assembly Government will provide, via the Arts Council of Wales, a grant of £90,000 in 2004-05 to the Brecon jazz festival. The Arts Council of Wales and Assembly Government are working closely with Theatr Brycheiniog to ensure the success of the festival.

EU Audio-visual Policy Documents

Leighton Andrews: On which EU audio-visual policy documents has the Minister, or his predecessor, been consulted by the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport? (WAQ35319)

Leighton Andrews: Has the Minister been consulted on the European Commission's document 'The Future of European Regulatory Audiovisual Policy' by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport? (WAQ35320)

Alun Pugh: Neither I, nor my predecessor, have been consulted by the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport on EU audio-visual policy. I am, however, aware of the document 'The Future of European Regulatory Audiovisual Policy'.

Questions to the Minister for Economic Development and Transport

Airport Link Road

Owen John Thomas: What support are you giving to the proposal to provide an airport link road that would serve also as a bypass for Dinas Powys? (WAQ35066)

The Minister for Economic Development and Transport (Andrew Davies): The Welsh Assembly Government has identified a package of short, medium and longer-term measures to improve surface access to Cardiff international airport. There are separate proposals for a bypass for Dinas Powys, which is included in the Vale of Glamorgan's unitary development plan.

Homeworkers' Wages (International Greetings, Hirwaun)

Jenny Randerson: Has the Minister investigated the wages paid to homeworkers by International Greetings of Hirwaun, which is funded, in part, by the Welsh Development Agency, to ensure that it is trading lawfully? (WAQ35111)

Andrew Davies: No. I am advised that the company receives no financial support from the WDA.

Delta Microelectronics UK Ltd

David Davies: Have any Assembly sponsored public bodies given money to Delta Microelectronics UK Ltd and, if so, how much and for what purpose? (WAQ35265)

Andrew Davies: Delta Microelectronics Limited was offered £162,000 regional selective assistance on 15 August 2002 to help implement a project to establish a microelectronics service business at Tredomen business park, Tredomen, Ystrad Mynach. This new UK company was to be set up by Delta Dansk, a Danish business, limited by guarantee and approved by the Danish Government as a technological institute. The new company would operate in the microelectronics field, providing services to start-ups and existing businesses helping them to innovate and expand via the information technology media.

Estimated capital expenditure for the project was £156,000. As this is an aid-for-job creation RSA offer, the conditions also include an element of capitalised salary costs for the 10 new jobs scheduled to be created. These salary costs are expected to total approximately £712,800. No payments have been made to date.

Cockle Gatherers at the Burry Inlet

Helen Mary Jones: Why have the cockle gatherers at the Burry inlet not had replies from the Minister to correspondence since November 2003, and when will the Minister visit cockle gatherers at the Burry inlet? (WAQ35266)

Helen Mary Jones: Why was 1999 used as the reference year for the allocation of the hardship payments to cockle gatherers at the Burry inlet? (WAQ35267)

Helen Mary Jones: Why were the hardship payments to cockle gatherers at the Burry inlet based on a seven-day working week and not a six-day working week? (WAQ35276) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside.*

The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones): The methodology for calculating payments under the financial support package has had to meet Assembly Government and European Commission audit requirements. This has been a complicated process to ensure due to propriety for the use of public money. Throughout, officials have aimed to keep the gatherers fully informed on progress.

I regret that there have been delays in dealing with correspondence. On 28 April, I wrote to all key interests, addressing their concerns and offering an overview of progress to date. I have no plans to meet the gatherers. The financial support allows for payments up to a maximum six-month period to reflect loss of verified net earnings from gathering, based on an individual's best year in the two years immediately prior to the cockle bed closures, for example, 1 April 1999 to 31 March 2001. In a minority of cases, this period did not reflect an individual's normal work activity and those payments were calculated on a pro rata basis. To date, £192,830 has been paid to 34 of the 49 gatherers who have applied to the scheme. The gatherers covered by the outstanding applications are aware that further supporting documentation has to be submitted by 30 June in order for payment to be made.

Victorian Technology on Railways

Lisa Francis: What steps is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to ensure that Victorian technology, including oil lamps, is eliminated in respect of signals in railways in Wales? (WAQ35268)

Andrew Davies: Network Rail owns the railway infrastructure and is responsible for its upkeep and safe and efficient operation. This is not a devolved matter.

The Penmaenbach Tunnel

Lisa Francis: Are there any more plans to reduce the Penmaenbach tunnel to single lane traffic over the forthcoming summer season? (WAQ35269)

Andrew Davies: There are no plans for further restrictions at Penmaenbach over the summer season other than two overnight routine maintenance closures.

Improving Funding to Small Businesses

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on the action being taken to improve funding to small businesses in north Wales? (WAQ35277)

Andrew Davies: 'A Winning Wales', the Welsh Assembly Government's national economic development strategy, sets out our policies and programmes for Wales. I will be publishing, in the summer, the second annual report on the positive progress that the Assembly Government and our partners are making.

Support for small businesses in north Wales, as in the rest of Wales, is available via the Welsh Assembly Government, its ASPBs and local authorities in a number of different forms, ranging from grants and loans through to the funding of general and specialist support services designed to help businesses with common problems and development needs.

As an example, since the Assembly investment grant was introduced in April 2002, the Assembly Government has offered 214 Assembly investment grants to small and medium-sized businesses with a combined value of almost £7 million in north Wales alone (unitary authority areas of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham). These projects are expected to lead to over £23 million-worth of investment and the creation of more than 300 jobs.

Objective 1 Projects in North Wales

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on the progression of Objective 1 projects in north Wales? (WAQ35278)

Andrew Davies: By the end of April, around £100 million of Objective 1 funds had been committed to over 160 local projects in north Wales, with a total project investment of over £240 million. These projects have reported the creation of around 4,450 gross new jobs and the safeguarding of over 5,400 jobs. In addition, there are numerous regional projects that have created or safeguarded a further 10,000 jobs in the area.

Note: the area of north Wales includes the local partnership areas of Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire and Gwynedd.

Employment Opportunities in Cardiff South and Penarth

Lorraine Barrett: What action is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to bring employment opportunities to Cardiff South and Penarth? (WAQ35279)

Andrew Davies: 'A Winning Wales' points to the need to help more people into jobs to raise levels of economic activity. Team Wales is implementing the strategy's action plan to help fulfil the Welsh Assembly Government's vision of a prosperous Welsh economy that is dynamic, inclusive and sustainable, based on successful, innovative businesses with highly skilled, well-motivated people.

During the past year a number of finance and business services companies have expanded their operations in Cardiff, providing a total of some 1,250 jobs, and new companies have been attracted to the area by the growing reputation of the city's financial and business services sectors. Cardiff's retail sector was also given a boost in November 2003 with the arrival of IKEA, creating 400 new jobs. In addition, supported by Objective 2 funding, work has commenced on the refurbishment of Beynon House in Mount Stuart Square, a grade II listed building, to create the Cardiff DigitalMedia centre, providing 14,000 sq ft of business incubation space for small and start-up businesses in the new media business sector.

The Pensions Bill

Lorraine Barrett: What discussions has the Minister had with his Westminster colleagues about the Pensions Bill? (WAQ35280)

Andrew Davies: Both I and the First Minister have regular communications with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

The Potential of Heritage Tourism

Owen John Thomas: What talks has the Minister had with his colleague, the Minister for Culture, with a view to developing the potential of heritage tourism? (WAQ35282)

Andrew Davies: The cultural and heritage product in Wales is extremely diverse. The Wales Tourist Board has developed a cultural tourism strategy and action plan to deliver the strategy with partner bodies. The board is also supporting the Herian heritage initiative to develop tourism in the south Wales Valleys. I meet with the Minister for Culture as necessary to discuss issues of common interest.

Economic Regeneration of Rhyl

Ann Jones: What recent discussions has the Minister had regarding the economic regeneration of Rhyl? (WAQ35283)

Ann Jones: What discussions has the Minister had regarding the contents of the report 'Rhyl Going Forward' into the economic regeneration of Rhyl? (WAQ35284)

Andrew Davies: Following discussions with stakeholders in Rhyl, I have received a strategy and key investment programme for the area, produced by the public sector PACT for Rhyl. My officials are currently considering the strategy, not least in the context of the Wales spatial plan, and will be making arrangements to meet the stakeholders, including yourself and Chris Ruane MP.

Job Figures for 2003

Irene James: Would the Minister make a statement on the latest job figures for 2003? (WAQ35286)

Andrew Davies: Information from the Labour Force Survey shows that, on average, there were 1,316,000 people in employment in Wales in 2003 from March 2003 to Feb 2004. This represented an increase of over 50,000 on 2002 and nearly 90,000 on 2001. The working-age employment rate was 72.6 per cent, up from 68.5 per cent in 2001 and 70.2 per cent in 2002. The very latest information from the Labour Force Survey for January to March 2004, shows that these historically high levels of employment are being maintained, with total employment in Wales at 1,321,000 and the working-age employment rate still at 72.6 per cent.

Broadband Service Provision

Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey: Would the Minister give an update on broadband service provision in Wales? (WAQ35289)

Andrew Davies: The status of broadband service provision in Wales has dramatically improved in the lifetime of the Broadband Wales programme.

- At the start of the programme in July 2002, approximately 30 exchanges were ADSL-enabled out of a total number of 439. This meant that only 35 per cent of the Welsh population had access to broadband via ADSL.
- The status of broadband availability across Wales has now dramatically improved, with in excess of 132 exchanges enabled, resulting in over 76 per cent of the population being able to access high-speed internet services.
- This situation is set to further improve with BT's recent commitment to enable all of the remaining viable exchanges in Wales by summer 2005. The Welsh Assembly Government is examining a number of options to ensure that the 35 exchanges considered to be commercially non-viable are also able to receive broadband.
- The Broadband Wales programme has continued apace with delivering broadband connectivity to various establishments across the public sector.

- The lifelong learning network has provided 67 per cent of secondary schools with high-speed internet access and the DAWN 2 health service network has delivered broadband services to 96 per cent of main surgeries in Wales.

Monmouthshire's Rural Road Network

Laura Anne Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on Monmouthshire's rural road network? (WAQ35291)

Andrew Davies: Rural roads in Monmouthshire are maintained by the county council, as the local highway authority, from its own resources and support provided by the Welsh Assembly Government through the local government settlement.

Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on funding arrangements for Assembly sponsored public bodies for which he is responsible? (WAQ35292)

Andrew Davies: The funding for the Assembly sponsored public bodies for which I am responsible is determined through the normal Assembly budgeting procedures. The budgets for 2004-05 and indicative planned budgets for 2005-06 and 2006-07 were agreed in Plenary as part of the supplementary budget on March 24, 2004.

The Brynglas Tunnels

William Graham: Has the Minister considered the use of the M4 hard shoulder areas approaching the Brynglas tunnels to assist in alleviating traffic congestion? (WAQ35293)

Andrew Davies: This issue has been considered as part of the 'Making Better Use' study for the M4 between the Severn crossing and Miskin. The hard shoulders on the east and west bound approaches to the Brynglas tunnels are intermittent due to constraints imposed by the geography through which the M4 passes at this location and could not be safely or easily adapted to operate as an extra running lane during peak periods. The lane drop arrangements at west-bound J25 Caerleon and east-bound J26 Malpas already provide dedicated slip roads for traffic leaving the motorway. There are similar lane gain arrangements at these junctions.

The Provision of Furniture for Homeworking

Nick Bourne: What guidance does the Government of Wales give to private employers on the provision of furniture for homeworking? (WAQ35316)

Andrew Davies: None.

Job Cuts at ITV1, Culverhouse Cross

David Lloyd: Will the Minister make a statement regarding the future of ITV1 Wales and staff worries concerning job cuts at Culverhouse Cross in Cardiff? (WAQ35318)

Andrew Davies: I have no specific information on how ITV's rationalisation exercise will directly impact upon Culverhouse Cross.

The Newbridge on Wye Bypass in Powys

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister provide an update on the position with regard to the Newbridge-on-Wye bypass in Powys? (WAQ35354)

Andrew Davies: I plan to announce the preferred option for the A470 Cwmbach to Newbridge-on-Wye improvement later this summer, following last year's public consultation. A decision on a possible bypass for Newbridge-on-Wye will be included in the preferred option announcement.

Protecting Cyclists on Welsh Roads

Nick Bourne: What measures are being taken to protect cyclists on Welsh roads? (WAQ35355)

Andrew Davies: We ensure that our work on trunk roads improves conditions for cyclists and takes full account of the needs of all types of cyclists. In addition, we are providing transport grant funding to local authorities for schemes in their own areas which will provide and improve facilities for cyclists.

Protecting Pedestrians on Welsh Roads

Nick Bourne: What measures are being taken to protect pedestrians on Welsh roads? (WAQ35356)

Andrew Davies: We ensure that our work on trunk roads improves conditions for pedestrians and takes full account of the needs of all types of pedestrians. In addition, we are providing transport grant funding to local authorities for schemes in their local areas which will provide and improve facilities for pedestrians.

Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

The Proposed School Transport Bill

Nick Bourne: Has the Minister made an assessment of how the proposed School Transport Bill will affect safety for children heading to and from school? (WAQ34711)

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson): The draft School Transport Bill would enable a small number of authorities to pilot innovative school transport arrangements. The purpose of running pilot schemes is to evaluate their impact, therefore, it is too early to assess how the Bill might improve safety for children on their journeys to and from school—much will depend on the nature of schemes.

The aim of the Bill is to enable local education authorities to consider the travel needs of all pupils in their area and to make arrangements that encourage more pupils to walk, cycle or take the bus to school rather than travel by car. By allowing local education authorities to charge modest fares, except for pupils from low income families, the Bill should enable authorities to make more comprehensive school bus provision than at present and may allow them to invest in higher specification vehicles, for instance, buses with CCTV, seatbelts or other enhanced safety features. However, local education authorities will have to set bus fares at a level that does not detract from reducing the number of cars on the school run.

Before presenting their schemes for Assembly approval, local education authorities will need to consult locally and work in partnership with schools, parents and bus operators. We would expect any proposed pilot schemes to explain how the authority will ensure that good-quality, well-maintained vehicles are used for school transport and to include a strategy for securing good behaviour on school buses.

The Sale of School Playing Fields

John Marek: What is the Minister's policy on the sale of school playing fields? (WAQ35270)

Jane Davidson: This is a matter for local authorities and governing bodies of schools in the first instance. Arrangements put in place in 1998 require full consultation on proposals through the usual planning processes and consultation with the Sports Council for Wales to assess the impact of proposed disposals. The responsible bodies for foundation and voluntary aided schools require Assembly consent to dispose of land. The sale of school playing fields is not a significant issue in Wales at the present time.

Reconfiguration of the Higher Education Sector (Money and Timescales)

Janet Ryder: Would the Minister tell me how much money was originally set aside for reconfiguration of the higher education sector and what timescales were imposed on it? (WAQ35321)

Jane Davidson: Funding made available for reconfiguration of the higher education sector was £3 million, £6 million and £8 million for 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05 respectively. These were the revised budgets following adjustment pending the full spending review and net of the funding set aside for widening access activities under the 'Reaching Higher' budget.

I was disappointed that in 2003-04, £4 million of the 'Reaching Higher' budget was lost to the sector because of slow progress in firming up collaboration proposals and look to the sector to ensure that it maximises the funding opportunities offered by the Assembly Government this financial year.

Reconfiguration of the Higher Education Sector (Money Used to Date)

Janet Ryder: Can the Minister tell me what money has, to date, been used to fund reconfiguration of the higher education sector and publish a table showing how that money has been used? (WAQ35322)

Jane Davidson: To date, just over £16 million has been allocated to fund the reconfiguration of the higher education sector in Wales.

Partners		Proposal	Commitment (up to £k)
Cardiff University	University of Wales College of Medicine	Development of 'Alliance Project', leading to merger	15,000
North East Wales Institute of Higher Education	University of Wales, Bangor	Appraisal of creation of a new university for north Wales	250
University of Glamorgan	University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	Appraisal of merger and other options	250
University of Wales College, Newport	University of Glamorgan	Appraisal to identify options for strategic collaboration	100
University of Wales, Swansea	Swansea Institute of Higher Education	(a) rationalisation of provision in law, nursing and initial teacher training (b) Assessment of scope for further collaboration in the provision of support services	150

University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	University of Wales College, Newport	Feasibility study: collaboration in ITET	30
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	University of Wales, Bangor	Strategic analysis: collaboration in research and teaching	100
Trinity College, Carmarthen	University of Wales, Lampeter University of Wales, Aberystwyth	Collaboration in archaeology (TCC/UWL); ITET (TCC/UWA); support services (TCC/UWA/UWL)	250
University of Wales, Bangor	Coleg Menai	Collaboration in administrative services	38
Total			16,168

The Provision of Pre-school Education

Janet Ryder: What estimates have been made of the cost of ensuring that in every day-care centre there is one person who has worked, or is working towards developing expertise in the provision of pre-school education? (WAQ35323)

Jane Davidson: I refer you to my answer to your question WAQ35325. As those qualification requirements are already in place they do not represent an additional cost.

NVQ in Childcare

Janet Ryder: What steps has the Minister taken to track the career progress of those who obtain NVQ at any level in childcare? (WAQ35324)

Jane Davidson: I have not taken such steps.

The Provision of Pre-school Education

Janet Ryder: Would the Minister tell me what steps have been taken to ensure that in every day-care centre there is one person who is working towards developing expertise in the provision of pre-school education? (WAQ35325)

Jane Davidson: The national minimum standards for full day care state that the person in charge of a full day-care setting should have at least a level 3 qualification from the Qualifications Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales's national qualifications framework for early years education, childcare and playwork appropriate to the post.

The standards also require 80 per cent of the non-supervisory childcare staff to be appropriately qualified to at least level 2, with at least half of these having a qualification at level 3. Where this cannot be achieved immediately, the registered person should set out an action plan detailing how they intend to meet the criterion and in what timescale. The Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales will consider the plan and offer its approval or indicate aspects that need improvement.

Level 2, 3 and 4 NVQ in Childcare (Time Spent with Student)

Janet Ryder: When a student is being assessed for NVQ level 2, 3 and 4 in childcare what percentage of time does an assessor spend with the student in the work place and what percentage is spent completing paper work? (WAQ35327)

Jane Davidson: This information is not available centrally.

NVQ Qualification in Childcare (Cost to Employers)

Janet Ryder: What assessment has been made of the cost to employers of providing an NVQ qualification in childcare to level 2, 3 and 4 and will the Minister publish those costs? (WAQ35328)

Jane Davidson: This information is not available centrally. The cost of obtaining such qualifications varies between training providers.

Reconfiguration of the Higher Education Sector (Money and Timescales)

Janet Ryder: Would the Minister tell me how much of the money set aside to fund reconfiguration in the higher education sector is still available and what kind of timescale, if any, would be applied to its use? (WAQ35330)

Jane Davidson: The allocation for reconfiguration under 'Reaching Higher' for 2004-05 is £8 million, of which £832,000 is the balance of funds to be spent by the end of the financial year.

In terms of the reconfiguration agenda, I set out the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for the sector in 'Reaching Higher', which charts a clear course for the sector to 2010. This is a long-term strategy and the Welsh Assembly Government is fully committed to ensuring that we fully support the sector in its drive towards reconfiguration and a position of competitive strength.

Maintenance Allowances

Kirsty Williams: Will the Minister outline her approach to providing maintenance allowances of up to £30 a week for pupils who stay on at school post-16? (WAQ35334)

Jane Davidson: The same approach as that being taken in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be adopted. Thus, the same eligibility criteria and level of awards will apply throughout the UK.

Eligible courses cover those up to and including level 3. A £30 weekly entitlement will be available to students in households with an income of up to £19,630, £20 to those in the £19,631 to £24,030 income band and £10 where household income is between £24,031 and £30,000. There will be bonus payments of £100 in January and July of each academic year, with an additional bonus payment in September or October for those who have returned to learning for a second or subsequent year. The education maintenance allowance will be available to 16-year-olds in the first year and extended to include 17-year-old and 18-year-old students over the following two years.

The education maintenance allowance scheme in Wales will be delivered by a single service provider. We are collaborating with the Northern Ireland education department and the Student Loans Company to develop the scheme. Publicity material will be available to schools and colleges so that they can inform and advise their students, and the Student Loan Company will be arranging familiarisation and training sessions for relevant staff at schools and colleges. We recognise that there will be some additional administrative work for colleges and schools, but there will be financial provision to help with this.

University Top-Up Fees

Nick Bourne: Further to WAQ34667, will the Minister give details of her discussions with the National Union of Students regarding university top-up fees? (WAQ35376)

Jane Davidson: I have met representatives of the National Union of Students on several occasions to discuss university top-up fees and related matters, most recently on 8 March 2004, and jointly with the Secretary of State for Wales, to discuss the Higher Education Bill.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside

The New St Julian's Sports Hall

Michael German: Has the Welsh Assembly Government attached any conditions on the location within the St Julian's High School site, of the new St Julian's sports hall, to the Assembly's contribution to the cost of the development? (WAQ35110)

The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones): The funding for the construction of the sports hall at St Julian's High School is being provided by the New Opportunities Fund as part of its physical education and sport in schools programme. The terms and conditions attached to that funding are a matter for the New Opportunities Fund.

Cefn Croes Windfarm

Lisa Francis: How long does the Welsh Assembly Government anticipate the construction of Cefn Croes windfarm near Aberystwyth to take? (WAQ35271) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Economic Development and Transport.*

The Minister for Economic Development and Transport (Andrew Davies): The timing for the construction of the windfarm is a matter for the developer, as long as it complies with conditions set out in the consent under Sections 36 and 37 of the Electricity Act 1989. The Section 36 consent and planning permission contain conditions that the start of construction must be no later than five years from the date of consent. Construction has started on the access road and site tracks and I understand that the developer predicts that the station will start generating electricity before the end of 2004.

Cefn Croes Windfarm Project (Penalty Clause)

Lisa Francis: Does the Cefn Croes windfarm project have any penalty clause written into it? (WAQ35272) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Economic Development and Transport.*

Andrew Davies: I am not aware of any penalty clauses.

Unadopted Sewers

Nick Bourne: What plans does the Minister have to address the problem of unadopted sewers in Wales? (WAQ35310)

Carwyn Jones: The Assembly Government and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published a consultation paper in July 2003, summarising the findings of research on existing private sewers and drains in England and Wales and seeking views on possible improvements and solutions. I intend to publish proposals on the way forward in early summer.

Puppy Farms

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise whether standards and conditions will be laid down for puppy farms to safeguard the welfare of the animals concerned, and who will be responsible for the drafting of these standards and conditions? (WAQ35312)

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise whether puppy farms will be inspected on a regular basis to ensure the highest standards of animal welfare are maintained, and who will be responsible for these inspections? (WAQ35313)

Carwyn Jones: Dog breeding is a non-devolved function. It is the responsibility of the Home Office and is implemented and enforced by local authorities through their powers under the system of licensing of dog breeding establishments established by the Breeding of Dogs Act 1973 and the Breeding of Dogs Act 1991. The Home Office also produces the code of practice for the housing of animals in designated breeding and supplying establishments—part 2, section 7 relates to dogs.

The inspection of premises for dog breeding is a matter for the local authority. Local authorities, and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, inspect all breeders. If there are two or more bitches, registration with the council is compulsory, and if puppies are to be exported then registration with DEFRA's animal health department is compulsory. When dog breeders register with the local authority there is a veterinary inspection before a licence is given. This inspection is to a nationally agreed minimum standard, but the local authority can enhance this, for example, one local authority in Wales insists on no wood being used in the kennel structure. A local authority inspector then visits, unannounced and, at regular intervals, after a licence is given.

Extensification Payments

Kirsty Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on whether Welsh farmers receive extensification payments under the integrated administration and control system rules set out in council regulations 3508/92 and 2419/01? (WAQ35331)

Carwyn Jones: The European legislation supporting extensification payments to farmers in Wales is council regulation 3508/92, council regulation 1254/99, commission regulation 2342/99 and commission regulation 2419-01.

The domestic legislation laying down the detailed rules to be applied to the extensification payment scheme in Wales is Welsh statutory instrument 2001 no. 864.

The A470 Road Improvements (Compulsorily Purchased Houses)

Nick Bourne: How many houses are to be compulsorily purchased for the A470 road improvements between Erwood and Builth Wells, and by when must they be vacated? (WAQ35332) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Economic Development and Transport.*

Andrew Davies: The improvement scheme that is presently being developed does not require the compulsory purchase of any residential properties.

Horse Passports

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on horse passports and will he detail the timetable when new obligations regarding horse passports will be enforced in Wales in comparison with the rest of the UK? (WAQ35341)

Carwyn Jones: European Commission decision 2000/68 requires all horses to have a passport. However, the enforcement date is currently the subject of further consideration by the UK Government, Wales and the other devolved administrations.

Questions to the Finance Minister

Allowances and Benefits Available to Council Tax Payers

Glyn Davies: How many council tax payers in Wales do not take advantage of all allowances and benefits available to them to ease the burden of council tax? (WAQ35040)

The Finance Minister (Sue Essex): Council tax benefit take-up figures are not produced on a Wales or regional basis. Across the UK, it is estimated that 2.3 million people are missing out on council tax benefits, which makes an important contribution to the financial security of over a quarter of a million people on low income in Wales.

Furniture for Homeworking (ASPBs)

Nick Bourne: If any ASPBs in Wales provide furniture for homeworking, could the Minister set out the cost of this in the last financial year, and in each financial year since 1999? (WAQ35056)

Sue Essex: Information of this nature is not held centrally.

Provision of Furniture for Employees (ASPBs)

Nick Bourne: Which ASPBs in Wales, if any, provide furniture for employees? (WAQ35057)

Sue Essex: Accommodation issues are a matter for individual ASPBs. Information is not held centrally.

Furniture for the New Assembly Building

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister indicate what amount of the £6 million in the tender letter to the official journal, in relation to Assembly furniture, is intended for the new Assembly building? (WAQ35059)

Sue Essex: I refer the member to the answer that I gave to WAQ33144.

Policy Agreements

Michael German: What is the Minister's assessment of when policy agreements will be concluded and signed off by both the local authority and the Welsh Assembly Government in the cases of Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, Newport and Torfaen local authorities? (WAQ35307)

Sue Essex: Agreements with all these authorities are in the process of being negotiated with my officials, and baseline data, milestones and targets have already been agreed at this level for some measures. I will let you know when the agreements are all concluded.

Draft Policy Agreements

Michael German: Can the Minister indicate when draft policy agreements were received from Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, Newport and Torfaen local authorities? (WAQ35308)

Sue Essex: Authorities have adopted different approaches to submission of their proposals for their policy agreements. My officials have received proposals from all of these authorities and negotiations on concluding the agreements are proceeding.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Bureaucracy in the Health Service

Nick Bourne: How does the Minister plan to reduce bureaucracy in the health service? (WAQ35019)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): The review of health and social care in Wales highlighted the need to reduce bureaucracy in the health service. As part of the implementation of the review's recommendations, the performance framework is being strengthened and will address areas where unnecessary bureaucracy can be eradicated.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales

Sandy Mewies: What discussions has the Minister had with Westminster colleagues regarding the future of the Children's Commissioner for Wales? (WAQ35044)

Jane Hutt: I have exchanged correspondence with UK Government Ministers on a number of occasions over the role of the Children's Commissioner for Wales in the light of proposals in the Children Bill.

Childcare Places Available for Pre-school Children

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister make a statement on the total number of childcare places available for pre-school children in Wales by local authority areas? (WAQ35064)

Jane Hutt: The following table shows the number of childminders, full day care, creche and sessional care settings and places registered with the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales to provide care for children under the age of eight. The inspectorate does not hold information on the breakdown of places by age category. These figures will, therefore, include places available to both pre-school and school age children. These figures are the maximum number of registered places. Information on vacancies at an individual setting can be obtained from local children's information services.

Registered childcare places by local authority at 5 May 2004.	Number	Places
Ynys Môn	117	1,305
Childminder	57	291
Creche	7	78
Full day care	4	80
Sessional day care	49	856
Blaenau Gwent	44	346
Childminder	29	105
Creche	3	40
Full day care	4	69
Sessional day care	8	132
Bridgend	167	2,225
Childminder	108	600
Creche	1	16
Full day care	23	818
Sessional day care	35	791
Caerphilly	202	2,076
Childminder	148	652

Creche	3	87
Full day care	14	405
Sessional day care	37	932
Carmarthenshire	169	2,427
Childminder	79	425
Creche	4	121
Full day care	21	672
Sessional day care	65	1,209
Cardiff	427	5,782
Childminder	292	1,698
Creche	21	470
Full day care	56	2,174
Sessional day care	58	1,440
Ceredigion	117	1,217
Childminder	65	298
Full day care	9	268
Sessional day care	43	651
Conwy	152	2,418
Childminder	73	431
Creche	2	28
Full day care	26	915
Sessional day care	51	1,044
Denbighshire	129	2,520
Childminder	57	317
Full day care	29	1,244
Sessional day care	43	959
Flintshire	217	3,278
Childminder	126	669
Creche	5	123
Full day care	28	1,154
Sessional day care	58	1,332
Vale of Glamorgan	237	2,590
Childminder	175	1,001
Creche	11	151
Full day care	14	492
Sessional day care	37	946
Gwynedd	204	2,320
Childminder	111	545
Creche	6	66
Full day care	18	612
Sessional day care	69	1,097
Merthyr Tydfil	32	497
Childminder	14	59
Full day care	7	246
Sessional day care	11	192
Monmouthshire	128	1,370
Childminder	87	315
Creche	1	8
Full day care	10	390
Sessional day care	30	657
Neath Port Talbot	85	901
Childminder	57	337
Full day care	12	332

Sessional day care	16	232
Newport	162	2,150
Childminder	104	377
Creche	3	72
Full day care	22	950
Sessional day care	33	751
Pembrokeshire	134	1,865
Childminder	71	420
Creche	2	33
Full day care	12	407
Sessional day care	49	1,005
Powys	161	1,744
Childminder	87	328
Full day care	26	560
Sessional day care	48	856
Rhondda Cynon Taf	219	2,370
Childminder	149	771
Creche	6	65
Full day care	22	655
Sessional day care	42	879
Swansea	210	2,917
Childminder	137	722
Creche	2	16
Full day care	34	1,379
Sessional day care	37	800
Torfaen	113	1,343
Childminder	69	263
Creche	10	143
Full day care	14	484
Sessional day care	20	453
Wrexham	168	3,048
Childminder	70	349
Creche	5	68
Full day care	32	1,181
Sessional day care	61	1,450
Totals	3,594	46,709

The National Minimum Standards for Care Homes for Younger Adults

Lisa Francis: Will the Minister make a statement on the national minimum standards for care homes for younger adults in Wales? (WAQ35109)

Jane Hutt: The national minimum standards for care homes for younger adults in Wales were introduced in April 2002 following extensive consultation with stakeholders. In response to feedback from the sector and its representatives the national minimum standards include supplementary standards for care homes accommodating young people aged 16 and 17. The national minimum standards are used by the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales, which has operational responsibility for regulating the care sector in Wales, in terms of determining whether care homes are meeting regulatory requirements.

Earlier this year I relaxed the national minimum standards for care homes for older people as they apply to small care homes—three residents or fewer—and I intend to consult on relaxations to the equivalent standards for younger adults shortly.

Allied Health Professional Graduates (Student Loan Repayment Scheme)

Lorraine Barrett: Does the Welsh Assembly Government have any plans to introduce a student loan repayment scheme for allied health professional graduates who work in the NHS? (WAQ35112)

Jane Hutt: The Welsh Assembly Government is aware of the recent campaign by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy to introduce a student loan repayment scheme to write off the student loans of allied health professional graduates who work in the NHS, and of the wider issues facing healthcare students regarding finances.

I am meeting a delegation of students on 11 June to discuss these issues. In the meantime, I am aware that some employers are considering local schemes to aid recruitment and will be keeping this particular issue under review.

Health-related Infrastructure Projects

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: How many health-related infrastructure projects in Wales part-financed by the European investment bank have been approved in the last five years? (WAQ35275)

Jane Hutt: The European investment bank is a private corporation, therefore, information relating to it is not held centrally within the Welsh Assembly Government. You can contact the bank directly at 68 Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5ES, or by telephone on 020 7343 1200.

The Current Townsend Formula

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister detail the criteria and indicators used to determine the current Townsend formula allocation for local health boards? (WAQ35335)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister detail the criteria and indicators agreed to be used to determine the Townsend formula? (WAQ35339)

Jane Hutt: The formula is based on the health needs of the population. The primary drivers in the formula are the resident population of each local health board multiplied by the costs of meeting the health needs of that population.

- The basis for the resident population data is the 2001 census. The population health needs have been captured predominately through responses to the Welsh health survey, which allows the identification of need for a range of healthcare conditions at local health board area level. The costs of this are derived from data provided by NHS trusts based on the annual accounts.
- The formula still recognises other factors that need to affect the allocation of resources in addition to health need, including:
 - differential costs of treating older patients—an age adjustment is made to the formula,
 - differential costs of treating patients in the community in rural areas—a rural cost adjustment is made to reflect increased community service provision in rural areas.

The Cost Surgical Procedures

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister detail the cost of each surgical procedure for each NHS trust? (WAQ35336)

Jane Hutt: Information detailing the cost of every surgical procedure undertaken by each NHS trust in Wales can only be provided at disproportionate cost. Information about the most common surgical procedures is available in the official publication activity and costs in Welsh hospitals.

Swansea Clinical School (Available Training Places)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister detail the number of training places available at Swansea clinical school? (WAQ35337)

Jane Hutt: The medical graduate entry scheme at Swansea will commence in September 2004 with a cohort of 35 students. This will be a unique medical educational development for Wales, compressing the traditional five-year programme of study into four years and producing qualified doctors for the NHS more quickly than has been possible in the past. It is envisaged that this scheme will build up to an annual cohort of 70 students by 2005. This will contribute to increasing the cohort at University of Wales College of Medicine by a further 70 students, bringing the total number of students in medical training in Wales to 360 per annum.

Waiting Times at Morriston and Singleton Hospitals

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on waiting times at Morriston and Singleton hospitals? (WAQ35338)

Jane Hutt: Waiting times information for individual hospitals is not held centrally. Within Swansea NHS Trust, as at 31 March 2004:

- no-one was waiting over 10 months for cardiac surgery,
- no-one was waiting over 18 months for orthopaedics,
- no-one was waiting over four months for cataract surgery and
- no-one was waiting over 18 months for a tonsillectomy.

There were 625 patients waiting over 18 months for in-patient or day-case surgery and 2,676 waiting over 18 months for a first out-patient appointment.

Clinical Schools at Gwent and North Wales (Available Training Places)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the clinical schools at Gwent and north Wales, and will she detail the number of training places available? (WAQ35340)

Jane Hutt: In Wales, to date, we have increased the number of medical students admitted to each cohort by 100, to 290 per year, with a further increase of 35 students on a new graduate entry scheme in Swansea from September 2004. Following that increase, business cases for clinical schools in Gwent and north Wales have been developed to improve the capacity and quality of medical education and to ensure the availability of suitable clinical accommodation to cater for the larger cohort. This is in addition to the clinical school opened in Swansea last year.

I am pleased to state that the north Wales clinical school business case has recently completed the rigorous capital investment manual process and the full business case stage and has been approved. The business case for the Gwent clinical school is currently proceeding through the outline business case, which is part of the capital investment manual process. As part of this, the capital investment board has requested that the business case proposals be subjected to an external validation. The report from the validation is expected to be presented to the capital investment board at the end of May.

Immunisation Programmes

Lorraine Barrett: Under what circumstances does the Welsh Assembly Government consider immunisation programmes as the best forms of disease prevention? (WAQ35342)

Jane Hutt: Immunisation has been proven worldwide to be an effective and cost-effective population-based method of protecting people against a range of serious diseases. Immunisation programmes across the four UK countries are based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, which utilises information from the World Health Organisation and the European Union. Following

recommendations, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency applies rigorous licensing procedures.

The JCVI and MHRA continuously review scientific and medical data from an extensive national and international network of experts who have decades of experience in monitoring disease incidence and immunisation benefits and risks. Many factors are taken into account, such as the severity of the disease and the availability of a safe, effective vaccine.

Immunisation Programmes (Children Under Two)

Lorraine Barrett: What immunisation programmes are in place for children under two in Wales. (WAQ35349)

Jane Hutt: Children under the age of two are protected early on through the routine childhood immunisation programme against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hib, meningitis C and polio, with three doses each given at two, three and four months of age. I am pleased that children reaching their second birthday will, with their parents' consent, have been fully immunised against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, haemophilus influenza type b (hib) and meningitis C. They will also have received their first dose of the combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine—the final dose being offered before they attend school.

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

Drug Trafficking Problems

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement concerning the success of Gwent police force in tackling the drug trafficking problems in their area? (WAQ35295)

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart): The Wales-wide Operation Tarian taskforce and individual police operations, such as Gwent Police's successful Operation Besort, are having a significant impact on drug trafficking. The 'Rat on a Rat' campaign, which I launched in Gwent this week, will provide a further means of bringing drug dealers to justice.

Welsh Housing Quality Standard

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress towards achieving the Welsh housing quality standard? (WAQ35296)

Edwina Hart: The Assembly Government will expect social housing landlords to have a detailed knowledge of the condition of their housing stock by 2006, and to achieve the Welsh housing quality standard for all their dwellings by 2012. Local authorities are in the process of developing their council housing stock business plans to consider investment levels and the best means of funding and programming the works necessary to meet the Welsh housing quality standard.

Anti-social Behaviour and Crime

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on progress in reducing anti-social behaviour and crime? (WAQ35297)

Edwina Hart: Community safety partnerships are making considerable progress in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour across Wales. Since the partnership approach was first introduced in Wales, crime has fallen by 25 per cent.

Alcohol Abuse Among the Young

Laura Anne Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on alcohol abuse among the young in Wales? (WAQ35298)

Edwina Hart: Reducing the proportion of young people under 18 reporting drunkenness is a key objective in the Welsh Assembly Government's substance misuse strategy.

Education is key to the delivery of this aim and I have invested over £3 million over a three-year period into the all-Wales schools programme to teach children and young people about the harm that alcohol and other substances can cause.

Reducing Poverty in Wales

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister provide an update on progress in reducing poverty in Wales? (WAQ35299)

Edwina Hart: My social justice report for 2004 sets out the range of policies and programmes within my portfolio that impact on poverty in Wales.

Sub-Post Offices

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on Assembly Government policy to support sub-post offices in Wales? (WAQ35300)

Edwina Hart: The post office development fund is the Assembly Government's response to the circumstances faced by post offices in isolated and deprived areas. Launched in November 2002, the fund helps sustain the postal network in Wales and encourages the diversification of services offered by post offices to the benefit of local residents. Of the four rounds held in 2003, the assessment of applications submitted under rounds 1, 2 and 3 has been completed and I have awarded over £2.3 million to 58 individual post offices. I intend to make an announcement on round 4 at the end of May.

Affordable Housing for Younger People in North Wales

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on the availability of affordable housing for younger people in north Wales? (WAQ35301)

Edwina Hart: Over £10 million of the social housing grant has been allocated to the six north Wales local authorities in this financial year for the provision of affordable housing in the form of houses for rent or assisted home ownership. This money, along with the private finance raised by the registered social landlords, will make nearly £15 million available to north Wales authorities.

In line with our principle of local delivery, it is for local authorities to decide the priorities for spending this money. There is no limit to the proportion of their social housing grant allocation that authorities can spend on affordable housing for younger people.

Anti-Social Behaviour in North Wales

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on the action being taken to combat anti-social behaviour in north Wales? (WAQ35302)

Edwina Hart: North Wales community safety partnerships and individual agencies are tackling anti-social behaviour in a number of ways. They are increasingly making use of the new legislative framework to assist them in their efforts. In addition, the police have launched their 'Dyna Ddigon' campaign, new community support officers have been appointed to help the police tackle nuisance behaviour and on-the-

spot fines are used where appropriate. The Home Office is providing funding for an anti-social behaviour co-ordinator for each community safety partnership, which will permit an even more concerted approach.

Adequate Social Housing

Lorraine Barrett: What action is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to ensure adequate social housing in Wales? (WAQ35303)

Edwina Hart: I refer you to the answer given by the First Minister to your OAQ34825 on 11 May.

Attitudes Towards Alcohol

Irene James: Will the Minister make a statement on the Welsh Assembly Government's approach to encouraging responsible attitudes towards alcohol? (WAQ35304)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government considers tackling alcohol misuse to be just as important as tackling drug misuse. That is why we included alcohol in our national strategy and the 22 community safety partnerships in Wales have taken it into account in the development of their local action plans.

I fully endorse the view that there is a need to change attitudes towards alcohol and I am in discussion with the Welsh police authorities about the new licensing laws and measures that can be taken to encourage sensible drinking and combat disorderly behaviour. Education is also key to this and I have invested £3 million over a three-year period into the all-Wales schools programme to teach children and young people about the harm that alcohol and other substances can cause.

The Implementation of Equality of Opportunity

Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on how she monitors the implementation of equality of opportunity across the range of the Assembly's responsibilities? (WAQ35305)

Edwina Hart: The formal process for monitoring the Assembly's implementation of equality of opportunity is the annual report to the Committee on Equality of Opportunity.

Local Labour and the Use of Local Materials

Owen John Thomas: What guidelines has the Minister issued on the employment of local labour and the use of local materials when implementing regeneration projects that fall within her portfolio? (WAQ35306)

Edwina Hart: Rethinking Construction recommends a commitment to continuous improvement and to achieving better quality, value for money and sustainability in construction. I support the Rethinking Construction Centre for Wales—now known as Constructing Excellence Wales—as a resource for the industry in Wales.

The Housing Directorate has issued draft best practice construction procurement guidance for registered social landlords, which specifically recommends that new approaches to procurement should not exclude small and medium-sized construction companies, which are more likely to be local companies.

The Assembly Government is working with its registered social landlord and local authority partners in Bridgend on a pilot project to provide training in construction skills trades for local people, based on the Bridgend stock transfer programme.

I have not issued any specific guidelines on the use of local materials, but I have established a multi-agency working group to explore further ways in which housing investment can be used as a catalyst for

boosting the local economy, including the development of the local supply chain and the training and employment of local people. This will build on the work being pioneered by Valleys to Coast Housing in Bridgend, following the transfer of the council housing stock.