# Written Questions answered from 16 to 22 November 2001

[R] signifies that the Member has declared an interest. [W] signifies that the question was tabled in Welsh.

Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

19

# **Contents**

2	Questions to the First Minister
3	Questions on Economic Development to the First Minister
4	Questions to the Minister for Assembly Business
5	Questions to the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language
6	Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning
11	Questions to the Minister for Environment
13	Questions to the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities
16	Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

### **Questions to the First Minister**

### Gwella Cysylltiadau Rhwng y Gogledd a'r De

**Dafydd Wigley:** A wnaiff Prif Weinidog Cymru ddatganiad ar yr hyn y mae ei Lywodraeth wedi'i gyflawni o ran gwella cysylltiadau rhwng y Gogledd a'r De? (WAQ14049) [W]

**Prif Weinidog Cymru (Rhodri Morgan):** Gwnaed gwelliannau i'r prif ffyrdd sy'n cysylltu'r Gogledd a'r De, sef ffordd yr A470 a ffordd yr A483 yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf. Cwblhawyd gwelliant ffordd yr A483 Llanwnda i'r de o Lanllyfni yn ystod mis Medi eleni, ar gost o £12 miliwn. Gwahoddwyd tendrau ar gyfer cynllun ffordd yr A470 dyffryn Lledr rhwng Dolwyddelan a Phont-yr-Afanc a fydd yn costio tua £15 miliwn; disgwylir i'r gwaith ddechrau yn 2002. Cyhoeddwyd cynlluniau rhaglen ffordd yr A483 Pant i Lanymynech, ar gost amcangyfrifedig o tua £17 miliwn ar y cyd â'r Adran dros Drafnidiaeth, Llywodraeth Leol a'r Rhanbarthau ar 16 Awst.

Mae'r rhaglen gefnffyrdd yn cael ei hystyried ar hyn o bryd. Bydd yn ystyried argymhellion adroddiad Babtie a gwneir cyhoeddiad cyn hir.

Ers mis Mai 2000, mae'r Cynulliad wedi darparu cyllid ar gyfer gwasanaeth trên uniongyrchol ychwanegol rhwng Caerdydd a Chaergybi yn teithio trwy Wrecsam. Mae'r gwasanaeth hwn wedi ei ymestyn hyd at fis Mai 2002. Caiff gwasanaethau pellach i'r Gogledd eu hystyried fel rhan o broses masnachfraint Cymru a'r Gororau.

### **Improving Links Between North and South Wales**

**Dafydd Wigley:** Will the First Minister make a statement on what his Government has achieved in improving links between north and south Wales? (WAQ14049) [W]

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): The main road routes linking north and south Wales, the A470 and the A483 have undergone improvement in recent years. The A487 Llanwnda south of Llanllyfni improvement was completed this September at a cost of £12 million. Tenders have been invited for the A470 Lledr valley scheme between Dolwyddelan and Pont-yr-Afanc, which will cost an estimated £15 million and is due to start in 2002. The design of the A483 Pant to Llanymynech scheme, with an estimated cost of £17 million, was announced in a joint statement with the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions on 16 August.

The trunk road programme is now under consideration. It will take into account the recommendations of the Babtie report and an announcement will be made in due course.

Since May 2000, the Assembly has provided funding for an additional direct daily return train service between Cardiff and Holyhead via Wrexham. This service has been extended until May 2002. Future services to north Wales will be considered as part of the Wales and Borders franchising process.

#### **Review of Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies**

**Peter Black:** Further to the First Minister's answer to my supplementary question to OAQ13645 on 6 November, when will he complete his consideration of whether the Government will carry out a more fundamental review of Assembly sponsored public bodies? (WAQ14216)

**The First Minister:** The Cabinet has commissioned from its strategic policy unit a wide-ranging review of the relationships between the Assembly Government and service delivery organisations, including Assembly sponsored public bodies.

Consideration of the need for further structural change of ASPBs will follow from this consideration of our service delivery relationships and from the cycle of quinquennial reviews.

# **Clearance of Ministerial Correspondence**

**Peter Rogers:** With regard to his commitment to open government, will the First Minister publish the quarterly statistics for clearance rates of ministerial correspondence? (WAQ14219)

**The First Minister:** I will write to you shortly and place a copy of my reply in the Library.

# **Co-ordinating Government Policy (European Institutions)**

**Peter Black:** How is the First Minister co-ordinating Government policy in respect of European institutions? (WAQ14286)

**The First Minister:** The Government engages with European institutions in a number of ways at both ministerial and official level. Each Minister is responsible for the European aspects of his or her policy area while I have an overview of European horizontal issues. The Committee on European Affairs takes a co-ordinating view of the Assembly's activity in respect of Europe. I attend the UK Government Ministerial Committee on Europe when business permits and am a member of the Joint Ministerial Committee on the European Union.

# **Liberal Democrat Special Advisers**

**Nick Bourne:** What is the cost of employing special advisers to support Liberal Democrat Members of the Cabinet and how do they interact with the special advisers employed to support Labour Cabinet Members? (WAQ14287)

The First Minister: From November 2000 to March 2001 the cost (gross salary plus pension contributions) of employing special advisers to support Liberal Democrat Members of the Cabinet was £20,907, and from April 2001 to date the cost is £50,285.

All six special advisers undertake a range of services for Cabinet members. These include reviewing policy papers as they go to Cabinet members, including drawing attention to political implications and ensuring that the more political points are dealt with appropriately. All six special advisers are a part of the Assembly's strategic policy unit, which brings together the roles of the policy unit and special advisers to support the First Minister and other Ministers in developing and delivering policy priorities.

# **Questions on Economic Development to the First Minister**

# Joint Venture Partnerships (WDA)

**Peter Black:** How many joint venture partnerships has the Welsh Development Agency entered into with local councils? (WAQ14167)

**The First Minister:** At 31 March 2001, the Welsh Development Agency was involved in 57 joint venture agreements with local authorities. A number of these have also involved other parties.

The agency has also entered into strategic agreements with three local authorities.

### **Employment in Monmouth (Effect of Redundancies)**

**David Davies:** Will the First Minister make a statement on the effects on the Monmouth job market of the redundancies at Rank Xerox Ltd, Nimbus and Triwall? (WAQ14168)

**The First Minister:** I very much regret these redundancies arising from commercial decisions taken by the companies concerned. While Nimbus and Triwall are located at Monmouth, Rank Xerox is in Gloucestershire, although a part of its workforce lives in Monmouthshire. The agencies in Wales are in contact with developments and, having regard to the skills needs of the local labour market, Education and Learning Wales and its partners will consider appropriate support for people living in Wales.

# Impact of 11 September (Discussions with Airbus and Trade Unions)

**Nick Bourne:** What discussions has the First Minister had with Airbus and trade unions, regarding the need to maximise flexibility and avoid job losses at Broughton, following the impact upon the airline industry after 11 September? (WAQ14169)

**The First Minister:** I have discussed the situation with the main companies in the aerospace sector in Wales. Assembly Government officials and the Welsh Development Agency are monitoring the situation closely with this company, and others in this sector, as well as supply chain companies. I will be visiting north Wales later this month to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Broughton facility.

With regard to Airbus, the company and the trade unions are making every effort to maximise the flexibility to respond to the situation in terms of overtime and shift arrangements, and minimise the impact of the events of 11 September on its workforce. The company is committed to its apprenticeship programme. It is continuing construction of the A380 wing construction facility. The A380 programme has been boosted by the recent order from Emirates airlines for 22 A380 aircraft.

# **Equality of Allocation of Resources for Economic Development**

**William Graham:** Will the First Minister make a statement concerning the equality of the allocation of resources for economic development throughout Wales? (WAQ14170)

**The First Minister:** The allocation of resources for economic development is made annually following the Assembly's budget and strategic planning round. Resources are allocated on a strategic basis, targeting the key areas highlighted in 'A Plan for Wales 2001' and 'A Winning Wales', for example by making available Objective 1 funding over the next six years to west Wales and the Valleys with smaller amounts available via Objective 3 to the non-Objective 1 areas of Wales. Economic development can also benefit from Assembly expenditure in areas such as education, transport, training, tourism and rural recovery.

#### **Extension of the Rail Network**

**William Graham:** Will the First Minister outline any discussions he has held concerning the future economic development of Wales through the extension of the rail network? (WAQ14171)

**The First Minister:** Sue Essex and I have regular discussions with UK Transport Ministers, the Strategic Rail Authority and other stakeholders in the industry, on the extension of the rail network and the enhancement of existing facilities. They are fully aware of our desire to see rail play a full part in enhanced transport links within Wales, recognising that poor access can be a deterrent to inward investment.

While the Assembly does not have specific powers in relation to rail regulation or revenue issues, it can fund railway development schemes, such as the £60 million allocated to improving Valley Lines services over the next five years, including the re-opening to passengers of the Vale of Glamorgan line in 2003. The re-opening to passengers of the Ebbw Vale to Newport line is under consideration, as are improvements to the Cambrian line. The Government of the Assembly is continuing to support a daily return service from Cardiff to Holyhead via Wrexham.

We look forward to the resumption of the rail refranchising process for Wales and the Borders, as soon as practicable.

# InPACT Technologies, CQR and Bangor University Informatics Department

**Peter Rogers:** With regard to the use of public moneys, what is the relationship between inPACT Technologies of St Asaph, CQR of Menai Business Park and Bangor University informatics department? (WAQ14174)

**The First Minister:** I welcome links between universities and businesses, especially as this can assist with our objective of expanding knowledge-based developments in Wales. I understand that Bangor University informatics department has had no financial dealings with inPACT Technologies of St Asaph. The main financial connection between CQR and the department is the supply of training and research services on a commercial basis.

# Amcan 1 (Rhondda Cynon Taf)

**Owen John Thomas:** A wnaiff Prif Weinidog Cymru ddatganiad ar y modd y mae cynlluniau Amcan 1 yn cael eu gweithredu yn ardal Rhondda Cynon Taf? (WAQ14209) [W]

**Prif Weinidog Cymru:** Mae'r rhaglen Amcan 1 yn cael ei gweithredu yn ardal Rhondda Cynon Taf yn yr un modd ag y caiff ei gweithredu yng ngweddill ardal Amcan 1. Mae'r partneriaeth lleol yn ymdrin â'r rhan fwyaf o'r ymgeiswyr ac â datblygu prosiectau hyd at y pwynt lle y gellir gwneud cais llawn, pan fo'r cais yn cael ei gyflwyno i Swyddfa Cyllid Ewropeaidd Cymru i'w arfarnu. Gall partneriaethau sector hefyd gael prosiectau a fydd er lles busnesau a chyflogaeth yn Rhondda Cynon Taf.

### **Objective 1 (Rhondda Cynon Taff)**

**Owen John Thomas:** Will the First Minister make a statement on how Objective 1 programmes are implemented in the Rhondda Cynon Taf area? (WAQ14209) [W]

**The First Minister:** The Objective 1 programme is implemented in the Rhondda Cynon Taff area in the same way as in the rest of the Objective 1 area. The local partnership deals with most applicants and with developing projects to the point where a full application can be made, when it is submitted to the Welsh European Funding Office for appraisal. Sector partnerships may also have projects where business and employment within RCT will benefit.

#### **Questions to the Minister for Assembly Business**

#### **Video Conferencing Facilities**

**Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister please list all occasions on which he has used the video conferencing facilities since 1 March 2001? (WAQ14073)

The Minister for Assembly Business (Andrew Davies): Since 1 March 2001, I have used the video conferencing facilities on 21 June and 4 July.

### Questions to the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language

#### **Art Galleries in Wales**

**Nick Bourne:** When is the Minister expecting the arts review to report in relation to art galleries in Wales? (WAQ14386)

The Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language (Jenny Randerson): The Arts Council of Wales's review of gallery provision in Wales is one of a number of reviews which it is conducting in order to build up evidence which will inform the council's five-year arts strategy. I have not seen the report as yet, but I will be expecting to see the council's proposals as part of its five-year strategy in due course.

In addition, the National Museums and Galleries of Wales is in the process of reviewing the display of its fine and applied art collections. The National Museums and Galleries of Wales will be issuing a public consultation document and this will be sent to Assembly Members for their views. This follows from a preliminary consultation with those working in this field earlier in the year when a presentation was made to Assembly Members.

I understand from the Arts Council of Wales that it has been in close contact with the national museum about the reviews, ensuring that the work of the two organisations dovetails.

### Cardiff's Bid for European Capital of Culture 2008

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister publish any details of progress made in the promotion of Cardiff's bid for City of Culture 2008? (WAQ14387)

**Jenny Randerson:** While I am pleased that the National Assembly has set aside up to £500,000 as match funding to support Cardiff in its bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2008, it is for Cardiff to publish details of progress. I am pleased, therefore, that Cardiff has begun to publish promotional material, which can be accessed along with progress reports on its website: www.cardiff2008.co.uk. Cardiff also welcomes contact and ideas that can be transmitted via the website.

# Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

# **College Lecturers' Pay**

**Rod Richards:** What are the Minister's plans to ensure colleges pay lecturing staff the pay increase of 5.7 per cent as is awarded in England? (WAQ14062)

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson): The pay and conditions of staff within each further education institution in Wales is for the governing body, as the employer, to determine. The Assembly has no locus in such matters. However, in my 2001 remit letter to the National Council for Education and Training for Wales, I made it clear that the Assembly expects the governing bodies of FE institutions to follow public sector pay policy by taking account of fairness, the need to recruit, motivate and retain staff, and affordability, within the limits set by the council's annual budget settlement.

# **Further Education Lecturers' Pay**

**Rod Richards:** Will the Minister make a statement on Fforwm's recommendation to increase further education lecturers' pay by only 4.25 per cent instead of the full award of 5.7 per cent given in England? (WAQ14070)

**Jane Davidson:** Fforwm, the Association of Further Education Colleges in Wales, is not a negotiating body. The Association of Colleges for England and Wales, the only body with negotiation rights on behalf of further education employers, has recommended a national pay increase of 3.7 per cent for teaching staff from 1 August 2001. While emphasising the responsibility of each college's governing body to determine the pay and conditions of its staff and taking into account individual local

circumstances, Fforwm has advised its members that all colleges in Wales should be able to afford a 4.25 per cent pay award this year, plus whatever individual colleges can add to that percentage.

I understand that 96 per cent of colleges in Wales have met or bettered the national recommendation. I am advised that, to date, around 20 per cent of colleges in England have not met the national recommendation.

# **Video Conferencing Facilities**

**Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister please list all occasions on which she has used the video conferencing facilities since 1 March 2001? (WAQ14076)

**Jane Davidson:** Since 1 March 2001, I have used the video conferencing facilities once on 5 April.

#### **Improving Standards in Education**

**Alun Cairns:** How will the Minister use information provided by schools to improve standards in education? (WAQ14084)

**Jane Davidson:** The information available to the Assembly is used at local education authority and national level to monitor standards of performance and progress towards our targets for improvement. The information forms part of the evidence on which policy is formulated and initiatives, such as our literacy and numeracy strategies, are built.

### **Performance League Table Information**

**Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister receive performance league table information, as previously, from individual schools following her changes to the league table structure? (WAQ14085)

**Jane Davidson:** When announcing the discontinuation of the school performance information booklets—which were not presented in league table format—I made it clear that the Assembly would continue to monitor standards of performance throughout Wales. As part of the Assembly's results service, each school is provided with its own results for use with its school improvement programmes and for inclusion in prospectuses and governors' annual reports.

#### Cludiant rhwng yr Ysgol a'r Cartref

**Owen John Thomas:** A fydd y Gweinidog yn rhoi i mi fanylion trefniadau cludiant ysgol i'r cartref, statudol ac fel arall, ar gyfer pob un awdurdod lleol am grwpiau plant, tri i bump, pump i wyth, wyth i 11, 11 i 16 ac 16 i 19 oed, gan gynnwys yn benodol y terfyniadau pellter amrywiol a ddefnyddir ac unrhyw gymhwysiad a roddir, yn rhad neu fel arall, i'r rhai nad oes ganddynt hawl i'r budd statudol perthnasol, naill ai yn ôl pellter teithio neu grŵp oedran? (WAQ14176) [W]

Jane Davidson: Nid yw'r wybodaeth y gofynnwyd amdani ar gael yn ganolog. Yn statudol, mae'n ofynnol i awdurdodau addysg lleol ddarparu trafnidiaeth am ddim i ddisgyblion o oedran ysgol gorfodol sy'n byw mwy na dwy filltir oddi wrth eu hysgol addas agosaf, yn achos plant o dan wyth mlwydd oed, a mwy na thair milltir oddi wrth eu hysgol addas agosaf, yn achos plant wyth mlwydd oed a throsodd. Gall awdurdodau addysg lleol drefnu darpariaeth fwy hael na hynny os ydynt yn dymuno, a gallant hefyd ddarparu trafnidiaeth y mae'n rhaid i rieni dalu amdani. Mae llawer yn gwneud hynny.

#### **Transport between School and Home**

**Owen John Thomas:** Will the Minister supply me with details of the school to home transport arrangements, statutory and otherwise, of each local authority as applied to children aged three to five, five to eight, eight to 11, 11 to 16 and 16 to 19, including specifically the various distance limits applied

and any accommodation granted free or otherwise to those not due the relevant statutory benefits, either according to travel distance or age group? (WAQ14176) [W]

**Jane Davidson:** The information requested is not available centrally. Local education authorities are statutorily required to provide free transport for pupils of compulsory school age who live more than two miles from their nearest suitable school, in the case of pupils aged under eight years, and who live more than three miles from their nearest suitable school, in the case of pupils aged eight years and over. An LEA can make more generous free provision if it wishes and can also provide transport for which parents make payment. Many do so.

# **Survey of Parents of Pre-school Age Children**

**Owen John Thomas:** Can the Minister report on the main findings of the survey carried out among parents of children of pre-school age? (WAQ14210)

**Jane Davidson:** The data from the parental questionnaires is currently being collated on our behalf by the individual local education authorities. I anticipate receiving this information shortly and until I do I am unable to draw any firm conclusions.

# Provision of School Places for Three-year-olds

**Owen John Thomas:** Can the Minister report on how far advanced are the preparations of local authorities for the provision of school places for three-year-olds? (WAQ14211)

**Jane Davidson:** We are making good progress on a number of fronts. The data from the parental questionnaires is currently being collated by the individual local education authorities and I hope to receive this information shortly. Clearly, until I do, it is too early to draw any firm conclusions.

We have also invited local education authorities and their respective early years development and childcare partnerships to commission work on outline proposals for the development of integrated centres which incorporate early years education and wrap-around childcare. These centres may also include a range of family support and extended learning opportunities.

Such centres may, potentially, be eligible for support from a number of funding sources, both from within the Assembly as well as from outside agencies such as the new opportunities fund. There are clearly issues related to the co-ordination of these funding opportunities and we are seeking to develop clear and timely advice to partnerships for them to formulate their proposals in order to meet the Assembly's target of extending early years provision to all three-year-olds by September 2004.

# Reducing the Time that Teachers Spend on Administration

**Nick Bourne:** How does the Minister intend to reduce the amount of time teachers spend on administration? (WAQ14276)

**Jane Davidson:** Our aim is to put in place action to secure a sustainable policy of minimising burdens in schools which is supported by all the key players.

The report on the project to reduce bureaucratic burdens on schools was unanimously approved in Plenary on 10 July 2001. Work has started on implementing the action set out in the report. For example, we have given every school in Wales a grant of £1,000 aimed at securing additional administrative support, thereby freeing up the time of teachers.

I have recently announced the ending of the statutory testing of seven-year-olds. This reduces the administrative burden on primary school teachers and releases time for other classroom activities.

The draft final report of the study of teacher workloads in Wales and England carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the Department for Education and Skills, was produced on 12 November. This looks at practical ways of addressing workload issues. The draft report will be considered by the steering group for the study and, in due course, will be referred to the School Teachers' Review Body.

Clearly, it will take time for the actions indicated to have an impact.

#### **Student Debt**

**Nick Bourne:** What discussions has the Minister had with student representatives regarding student debt? (WAQ14278)

**Jane Davidson:** Following publication in June of the report which I had commissioned from the independent investigation group into student hardship and funding in Wales (the Rees report), I met representatives of the National Union of Students in Wales to discuss their response to the recommendations contained in the report.

As a result of that meeting, NUS Wales was invited to submit its recommendations on identifying those groups of students which should be viewed as priority cases when awarding discretionary access and hardship funds. Its recommendations were fully incorporated in the revised guidance which was issued to student support officers in advance of the current academic year.

### **Funding for Career Development and Retraining**

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement concerning the equality of funding for career development and retraining? (WAQ14279)

**Jane Davidson:** As outlined in 'The Learning Country', equality lies at the heart of the Assembly's learning policies. The Assembly funds support for all adults in Wales to develop work-related skills, with additional help for those currently without a job.

Under our post-16 agenda, the Assembly funds the National Council for Education and Training in Wales, Education and Learning Wales, to deliver work-based training provision, reflecting local labour market needs, to help people disadvantaged through long-term unemployment or economic inactivity to develop the skills and other aptitudes needed to secure and progress in employment. This support can also be used to help retrain those about to lose their jobs as part of a significant redundancy. The Assembly's training provision complements the wide range of help also available for disadvantaged groups in Wales via the New Deal and other welfare to work programmes, which are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and have not been devolved to the Assembly.

Other support is available to help all people—both employed and unemployed—to develop skills to progress, or change, career. The Assembly's individual learning accounts, delivered by the national council, ELWa, provide discounts of either 20 per cent or 80 per cent on the cost of learning (there are some limitations on courses and costs). These have proved very successful in Wales, with over 60,000 individual learning accounts having been opened so far. In addition, career development loans, which are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, and have not been devolved the Assembly, can provide between £300 and £8,000 to support up to two years of education or training.

The Assembly will continue to work with the national council, ELWa, and the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education and Skills to ensure that people, throughout their working lives, are encouraged and helped, as appropriate, to develop the skills that they need to maximise their contribution to the economy and that industry needs to thrive in Wales.

# Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn

**Ann Jones:** Will the Minister give an update on the progress of negotiations between her officials, Denbighshire County Council and the Shirley Foundation, in respect of her announcement on 23 November 2000 of funding for Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn? (WAQ14283)

**Jane Davidson:** I have made up to £2 million available to Denbighshire County Council for it to develop Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn as a regional centre for autism.

My officials have been in regular discussion with Denbighshire County Council and last met its representatives on 9 November. Following that meeting, my officials are now considering the county council's plans for accommodating the different elements of the project and intend to visit the proposed sites early next month.

Officials were reassured that discussions were positive and ongoing between Denbighshire and the Shirley Foundation in respect of the Brondyffryn Trust, which it is envisaged will support the residential element of the project.

I look forward to considering Denbighshire County Council's final proposals on Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn, which I understand will be forthcoming very early in 2002. Its present intention, subject to further discussions and agreement with the other main participating local education authorities, the satisfactory completion of all statutory requirements and formal approval from ourselves, is that work should commence on site early in 2002-03 with the key school elements completed within the year.

# **Specialist Information Technology Qualifications**

**David Davies:** Will the Minister give consideration to introducing grants to enable those in employment to undertake courses leading to specialist information technology qualifications? (WAQ14285)

**Jane Davidson:** Assembly-funded training programmes concentrate on providing vocational skills for young people entering the labour market and the unemployed. Employers must take responsibility for ensuring that their employees are suitably trained, and the Assembly can provide some assistance in some circumstances. In particular, our new modern skills diploma for adults, unique to Wales, provides structured skills training at level 3 and above for those aged over 25, and this may include information technology skills. Seven hundred places are available in the current year and demand is high. Also, individual learning accounts, available to residents in Wales aged 18 and over, can be used to help pay for a wide range of training, with some IT courses qualifying for an 80 per cent discount on the cost.

# **IT Training for Farmers**

**David Davies:** Will the Minister make a statement on discussions between ELWa, the University for Industry Cymru and Lantra regarding provision of IT training for farmers in Wales? (WAQ14338)

**Jane Davidson:** Discussions are currently in train between the UfI and Lantra regarding the possible introduction of a distance learning IT package for farmers in Wales. The package is currently available in England, where it has been developed, and Lantra is keen for the package to be made available in Wales.

Lantra has also approached the national council, ELWa, regarding this initiative, and ELWa officials are at present awaiting further details so that its potential application in Wales can be fully assessed.

# **School Science Packs**

**Jonathan Morgan:** Are school science packs available through the national grid for learning in England available in Wales? (WAQ14375)

Jane Davidson: The school science packs are not available in Wales. We are working closely with science year in England and will consider any initiatives that it puts forward, but our aim is for Wales to have its own distinctive initiatives during science year. Against this background, the Assembly has funded the provision of free Intel microscopes for all maintained secondary schools in Wales and we are looking to provide interactive whiteboards for science departments as part of the recently announced broadband initiative. In addition, we are making funding available to support school science projects and visits.

### **Computers for Teachers**

**Jonathan Morgan:** What schemes are available in Wales to provide computers for teachers and how do these schemes compare to those on offer in England? (WAQ14376)

Jane Davidson: The 'computers for teachers' scheme does not run in Wales and we have no current proposals to introduce an equivalent. Our priority is to make the best possible use of available ICT resources to raise standards and promote social inclusion. This can be better achieved by a school based approach, or by widening access to computers, than by equipping individual teachers. This approach underpins schemes such as the £16 million 'ICT for Learning' initiative launched early this year, and the recent announcement of £9.9 million to provide interactive whiteboards for all schools. However, I am also currently considering plans to provide laptops for newly appointed headteachers as part of piloting the development of an online community along the lines of the 'talking heads' scheme in England.

### **Questions to the Minister for Environment**

# Britannia Bridge

**Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Will the Minister, following the letter of 7 November 2001 she sent me, say how much opening the third lane on Britannia bridge will cost? (WAQ14177)

The Minister for Environment (Sue Essex): It is not possible to give any accurate estimate of the cost of creating a third lane on Britannia bridge without significant investigation and research. However, costs would be likely to run into millions.

#### Ail-gylchu Gwastraff Domestig

**Owen John Thomas:** A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar gynlluniau a pherfformiad awdurdodau lleol Canol De Cymru wrth ail-gylchu gwastraff domestig? (WAQ14215) [W]

**Sue Essex:** Y gyfradd bresennol ar gyfer compostio/ail-gylchu gwastraff *tai* ar gyfer yr awdurdodau hyn yw tua 5 y cant. Mae Bro Morgannwg a Rhondda Cynon Taf wedi ymrwymo drwy gytundebau polisi â'r Cynulliad i gyrraedd 15 y cant erbyn 2003-04. Mae Caerdydd wedi ymrywmo i gyrraedd 13 y cant.

#### **Recycling Domestic Waste**

**Owen John Thomas:** Will the Minister make a statement on the performance of local authorities in South Wales Central, and their plans, in respect of recycling domestic waste? (WAQ14215) [W]

**Sue Essex:** The current composting/recycling rate for *household* waste for these authorities is some 5 per cent. Vale of Glamorgan and Rhondda Cynon Taff are committed through policy agreements with the Assembly to achieve 15 per cent by 2003-04. Cardiff is committed to 13 per cent.

# Ansawdd y Dŵr ym Mae Caerdydd

**Owen John Thomas:** A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar ansawdd y dŵr ym Mae Caerdydd? (WAQ14217) [W]

**Sue Essex:** Mae Awdurdod Harbwr Caerdydd yn monitro ansawdd y dŵr yn y bae yn rheolaidd drwy gyfrwng offer ansawdd dŵr parhaus ac mae'r wybodaeth a geir yn cael ei harchwilio gan Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd.

Rhaid cynnal a chadw safon o 5mg/l o ocsigen toddedig drwy'r bae i gyd o dan Ddeddf Morglawdd Bae Caerdydd 1993. Mae'r lefelau halltedd a chloroffyl hefyd yn cael eu monitro.

Dros y chwe mis diwethaf dywed yr asiantaeth bod y gwaith monitro'n dangos bod ansawdd y dŵr yn y bae wedi bod yn dderbyniol fel arfer a bod y safon o ocsigen toddedig wedi ei gyflawni. Serch hynny, yn ystod yr haf gwelwyd achosion o wawr algaidd glaswyrdd, lefelau annerbyniol o ocsigen toddedig ac, yn dilyn storm a glaw trwm, gwelwyd dirywiad yn ansawdd y dŵr yn Afon Elai.

Dengys adroddiadau archwilio misol yr asiantaeth o wybodaeth Awdurdod Harbwr Caerdydd bod methiannau aml iawn yn safon yr ocsigen toddedig, er gan amlaf yr oeddent yn y golofn ddŵr isaf yn y meysydd dyfnaf, ac yr oeddent yn gysylltiedig i raddau â phresenoldeb dŵr hallt. Mae llif gynyddol yr afon a thymheredd is a ddaw yn sgil y gaeaf wedi arwain at leihad yn y nifer o fethiannau mewn perthynas â lefelau ocsigen toddedig.

Erbyn hyn mae'r gwaith o ychwanegu system awyru er mwyn cynnal y safon o ocsigen toddedig wedi ei gwblhau ac mae cynlluniau i reoli dŵr hallt yn cael eu llunio gan Awdurdod Harbwr Caerdydd, a gobeithir y bydd Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd yn cytuno arnynt cyn gynted â phosibl.

## **Quality of Water in Cardiff Bay**

**Owen John Thomas:** Will the Minister make a statement on the quality of the water in Cardiff Bay? (WAQ14217) [W]

**Sue Essex:** Cardiff Harbour Authority routinely monitors water quality in the bay by means of continuous water quality equipment and the resulting data are audited by the Environment Agency.

A 5mg/l standard for dissolved oxygen has to be maintained throughout the bay under the Cardiff Bay Barrage Act 1993. Salinity and chlorophyll levels are also monitored.

The agency advises that, over the last six months, monitoring has shown that water quality in the bay has normally been acceptable and the dissolved oxygen standard has generally been achieved. However, during the summer there have been instances of a blue-green algal bloom, decreasing dissolved oxygen levels and, following a storm and heavy rainfall, a decline of water quality in the River Ely.

The agency's monthly audit reports of the Cardiff Harbour Authority data indicated apparent frequent failures of the dissolved oxygen standard, though these were mostly in the lower water column of the deeper sites, and were related to some extent to the presence of saline water. The increased river flows and lower temperature associated with the advent of winter have led to a decrease in failures of the dissolved oxygen levels.

The installation of an aeration system designed to maintain the dissolved oxygen standard in the bay is now complete and plans for controlling saline intrusion are being drawn up by the Cardiff Harbour Authority for agreement by the Environment Agency as soon as possible.

# **Video Conferencing Facilities**

**Alun Cairns:** Further to WAQ14077, could the Minister provide details of each occasion on which she has used the video conferencing facilities since 1 March 2001? (WAQ14374)

**Sue Essex:** Since 1 March 2001, I have used the video conferencing facilities on 1 May in a joint meeting with Carwyn Jones and on 24 October for the purpose of a bilateral meeting with Martin Evans, Director of the Transport, Planning and Environment Group.

# **Talgarth Relief Road**

**Nick Bourne:** What representations has the Minister received regarding the need for a Talgarth relief road and will she publish them? (WAQ14377)

**Sue Essex:** Numerous representations were received from members of the public, local authorities, the Brecon Beacons National Park and other interested parties as part of the public consultation carried out into routes for a relief road. A summary of the representations will be included in the public consultation report to be published concurrently with the preferred route, which I hope to announce shortly.

#### Traffic Accidents on the A479

**Nick Bourne:** Has there been any survey of traffic accidents, reported spillages etc on the corner of A479 in Talgarth? (WAQ14378)

**Sue Essex:** A survey of traffic accidents covering the length of trunk road under consideration for the relief road and associated side roads has been carried out. The results are included in a technical appraisal report to be published concurrently with the preferred route, which I hope to announce shortly.

#### **European Standards for Bathing Beaches**

**Nick Bourne:** What measures is the Minister taking to redress the situation in Towyn because of its failure to come up to proper European standards for the bathing beach? (WAQ14388)

**Sue Essex:** The bathing water at Towyn failed to reach the European Commission mandatory standard for faecal coliforms on two occasions during the summer this year. Both failures were unexpected as previous statistical analysis had indicated a very low risk of non-compliance. Initial investigations by the Environment Agency could not identify any significant reason for either failure although the salinity test did suggest a freshwater influence. The Towyn main drain discharges some 1.5 km to the north and there are ongoing investigations by the agency into any possible link with the failures.

The agency's proposed additional grant in aid provision for next year, as allowed for in the Assembly's draft budget, includes an allocation for more activity by the agency in Wales to prioritise and tackle diffuse pollution affecting bathing waters. The agency is also liaising with Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water to establish whether there are any links with its operations.

### Questions to the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities

# **Businesses Affected by Foot and Mouth Disease**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister reconsider allocating funds to help businesses adversely affected by foot and mouth disease? (WAQ14173)

The Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities (Edwina Hart): We have indicated in the rural recovery plan the major measures we intend to take, and outlined £60 million worth of new

expenditure and £5 million of reprioritised expenditure to assist the rural economy over the next three years.

The recovery plan includes £21 million to local authorities for the purpose of providing financial assistance this financial year to businesses adversely affected by foot and mouth disease, £1.1 million of which I recently announced was being reallocated to the rural authorities most affected by the disease. The plan also includes measures to help businesses in many sectors of the rural economy—including tourism and agriculture.

#### **Private Finance Initiative**

**Owen John Thomas:** Will the Minister make a statement on the future use of PFI in relation to the provision of public services in Wales? (WAQ14208)

**Edwina Hart:** I will be making a statement on the outcome of my consultation on public-private partnership/PFI in Wales in the next few weeks.

# Mesur Cydradd-ddaliad a Diwygio Prydles

**Owen John Thomas:** Pa drafodaethau sydd wedi bod rhwng y Gweinidog ac aelodau Llywodraeth San Steffan ynghylch y mesur arfaethedig ar brydles? (WAQ14213) [W]

**Edwina Hart:** Mae'r Mesur Cydradd-ddaliad a Diwygio Prydles yn mynd drwy'r Senedd ar hyn o bryd, ac nid oes unrhyw faterion unigryw i Gymru. Mae Gweinidogion yr Adran dros Drafnidiaeth, Llywodraeth Leol a'r Rhanbarthau wedi ymgynghori â mi ar gynnwys y Mesur ac ar amryw gymalau diwygio.

#### The Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill

**Owen John Thomas:** What discussions has the Minister had with members of the Westminster Government regarding the proposed Bill on leaseholds? (WAQ14213) [W]

**Edwina Hart:** The Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill is currently progressing through Parliament and there are no separate issues for Wales. I have been consulted by Ministers of the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions on the content and various amendment clauses.

#### **Coalfields Regeneration Trust Funding**

**Jocelyn Davies:** Will the Minister provide a breakdown on how coalfields regeneration funding has been used in Wales over the last 12 months? (WAQ14339)

**Edwina Hart:** The Coalfields Regeneration Trust has allocated the following funding to projects in Wales from Oct 2000 to Oct 2001:

Organisation	Α	В	C
	Resourced and Empowered Communities	Enterprising Communities	Lifelong Learning Communities
Clydach Vale Community Centre	£82,939		
Torfaen County Borough Council	£39,500		
Fairbridge De Cymru	£56,210		
Cwmaman Public Hall and Institute Trust	£74,807		

Cwm Ogwr Project for Youth (COPY)	£81,606		
Amman Valley Enterprise	£147,750		
Bedwas and Trethomas Parochial Church Council	£17,542		
Broli Cymraeg Trust Ltd	£8,850		
Garndiffaith Youth Development	£17,188		
Cefn Coed Community Centre	£19,240		
Groundwork Wrexham	£36,115		
Cwmni Hwyl a Chan (the Society)	£1,939		
Llanelli and District Credit Union	£47,500		
Wales Co-operative Development and Training	£11,200		
Centre			
Abercrave and District Miners' Welfare Association	£76,410		
Flintshire County Council		£23,776	
Workers Educational Association South Wales			£156,329
View (Dove) Ltd—Dove Workshop, South Wales			£6,280
Menter Cwm Gwendraeth			£17,500
A = Resourced and Empowered Communities		£718,796	
B = Enterprising Communities		£23,776	
C = Lifelong Learning Communities		£180,109	
	Total	£922,681	

### **Beneficiaries of the Coalfield Regeneration Trust**

**Jocelyn Davies:** How does the Minister ensure that only coalfield communities benefit from funding intended for the coalfield regeneration fund? (WAQ14340)

**Edwina Hart**: The Coalfields Regeneration Trust is a legally constituted body that has a specific remit to administer a grant programme targeted at the regeneration of former coalfield communities. It targets the most deprived coalfield wards as identified by Hallam Sheffield University using an analysis specifically prepared for the trust. This specific definition of beneficiaries was a requirement of the Charities Commission when CRT was originally set up.

# **Complementing Communities First Funding**

**Jocelyn Davies:** Which funding schemes have been used to complement Communities First funding? (WAQ14341)

**Edwina Hart:** Under Communities First I want to ensure that all relevant funding schemes target our most deprived communities.

Guidance on the types and levels of funding and support available to Communities First partnerships is currently being developed. It covers National Assembly funding programmes together with funding and support available from a wide range of agencies.

# **CRT Funding (Amalgamation with Communities First Funding)**

**Jocelyn Davies:** When was the decision made to amalgamate money intended for the coalfields regeneration fund into Communities First funding? (WAQ 14342)

**Edwina Hart**: There has been no decision made to amalgamate money that may be allocated to the Coalfields Regeneration Trust into the Communities First budget.

# **CRT Funding (Benefits for Communities outside the Coalfields)**

**Jocelyn Davies:** Does the fact that coalfields regeneration fund money is being used to complement Communities First money mean that communities from outside the coalfields could benefit from money intended to regenerate the coalfields? (WAQ14343)

**Edwina Hart:** No, the National Assembly provides core funding to the Coalfields Regeneration Trust for administration of a grant scheme targeted at former coalfield communities. The funding is due to finish at the end of this financial year. I have been in discussion with the trust about funding for future years and have asked it to provide a business plan showing how it can use the money available within coalfield communities to complement the activities that will be taking place within Communities First areas. I expect this money to be targeted at those former coalfield areas not included in the Communities First programme.

# **Coalfield Communities Campaign (Wales)**

**JocelynDavies:** Has the Minister held discussions with representatives from the Coalfield Communities Campaign (Wales)? (WAQ14344)

Edwina Hart: No.

#### South Wales Argus

**David Davies:** Will the Assembly start placing recruitment advertisements in the *South Wales Argus*? (WAQ 14345)

**Edwina Hart:** The National Assembly has a policy of placing advertisements in newspapers that have the greatest coverage depending on the location and the nature of the post(s) being advertised. In the past, this has not included the *South Wales Argus*. However, officials are currently undertaking a review of the advertising policy to determine the most effective means of reaching potential candidates.

#### **Ouestions to the Minister for Health and Social Services**

# **Artificial Limbs Centre at Wrexham Maelor Hospital**

**Alun Pugh:** Is the Minister aware of any problems at the artificial limbs (ALAC) centre at Wrexham Maelor Hospital? (WAQ14166)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): The commissioning of services from the Artificial Limbs and Appliance Service became the responsibility of the Specialised Health Services Commission for Wales on 1 April 2000. Prior to this SHSCW produced an initial report which highlighted a number of concerns about ALAS and a subsequent district audit confirmed these concerns and identified actions to be taken. These have been followed up with the NHS trusts concerned. A joint management action plan introduced in March 2001 by North East Wales NHS Trust and has already resulted in key issues being addressed. However, it is acknowledged that the process of putting these issues right will take time.

I am aware that there have been problems in filling some senior occupational therapy posts in north Wales. I understand that North East Wales NHS Trust is actively pursuing the recruitment of the

necessary staff, but in the interim they are prioritising visits and making alternative arrangements where appropriate.

The Assembly is ensuring that more Welsh occupational therapy students are in training and the number of commissioned places has been increased in recent years from 47 in 1999 to more than 70 in 2001.

# **Remicade and Enbrel Drugs**

**Rod Richards:** Will the Minister list the health authorities in Wales that allow the use of remicade and enbrel drugs to treat arthritis? (WAQ14198)

Jane Hutt: I have been advised that anti-tumour necrosis factor drugs (enbrel and remicade) are being supplied by the following hospitals in Wales: West Wales General Hospital, Prince Philip Hospital, Neath General Hospital, the University of Wales Hospital, Cardiff, North East Wales Hospital Trust and Swansea NHS Trust. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence is expected to provide clinical guidance on the effectiveness of anti-TNF drugs in March next year. In the meantime the supply of these drugs under the NHS remains a matter for local decision.

### **Funding of Hospices in Wales**

**Rod Richards:** Will the Minister make a statement on the policies of each health authority in Wales on the funding of hospices? (WAQ14199)

**Jane Hutt:** Funding for palliative care services in Wales, including funding for hospices, was transferred to the general allocation of health authorities in 1995. Consequently it is the responsibility of the health authorities to use their general allocation to purchase services on an assessment of local needs and priorities.

In the last year, the Assembly has increased the general allocation budgets awarded to the health authorities and spending on health in general will increase from £2.6 billion in 1999/2000 to £3.6 billion in 2003/04. This unprecedented level of investment should help to ensure that all patients receive a better service from the NHS in Wales. We encourage the health authorities to purchase appropriate high quality services from both the NHS and the voluntary sector. Ultimately however, it is for these authorities to determine the pattern of services bearing in mind that care may be provided at home or in a hospital as well as in a hospice.

Policy on the use of hospices is a matter for local determination and we would not normally collect this information. However, my officials have contacted the health authorities and a copy of their responses has been placed in the Assembly Library.

#### Funding of Hospices in England and Scotland

**Rod Richards:** What is the average funding of hospices by the NHS in England and Scotland? (WAQ14200)

**Jane Hutt:** The funding of hospices is a matter of local determination for the health authorities in England and Wales, and for the health boards in Scotland.

Since 1995-96, the earliest year for which figures are available, the total percentage of revenue funding provided to adult hospices in Scotland by health boards and through charitable donations is as follows.

	Total % NHS revenue funding	Total % charitable donations
1995-96	43	57
1996-97	42	58
1997-98	43	57

1998-99	40	60
1999-00	40	60
2000-01	39	61

The Department of Health does not centrally collect these figures. The policy of local determination is the same in England as it is in Wales

### **NHS Funding of Hospices**

Rod Richards: What is the Minister's policy on NHS funding of hospices? (WAQ14201)

**Jane Hutt:** It is the responsibility of the health authorities to use their general allocation to purchase services on an assessment of local needs and priorities. It is for these authorities to determine the pattern of services bearing in mind that care may be provided at home or in a hospital as well as in a hospice.

I have made it clear that I expect the health authorities to work with the voluntary sector, as well as its other partners, in the planning and delivery of services. Welsh Office guidance in WHC(94)65 'Funding of the Voluntary Hospice movement' stressed that everyone in Wales should have access to an equally high standard of palliative care and that the NHS and the voluntary hospice movement should work together to ensure this is achieved.

Work is in progress on developing a palliative care strategy for Wales with the involvement of key stakeholders in the field of palliative care including the Welsh Association for Hospice and Specialist Palliative Care. The strategy will draw on the recent review of palliative care services in Wales carried out by the Welsh Medical Committee.

#### **Independent Social and Health Care Providers**

**Owen John Thomas:** Will the Minister make a statement on her recent meeting with representatives of the independent social and health care providers in Wales? (WAQ14214)

**Jane Hutt:** On 15 October I held talks with representatives of statutory and independent social and health care providers in Wales, to examine the current state of the care sector, and the best ways to manage pressures building up in the winter months in particular.

We discussed current financial and other pressures on independent sector providers, as well as the practical problems facing many people, particularly the elderly, who need assistance to maintain their independence at home, especially if they are ill and have been admitted to hospital.

On 18 October I announced £8 million to help health and social services authorities in Wales meet immediate pressures this winter. £5 million of that will be made available to local authorities to tackle delayed transfers of care. This money will be available for measures which help local authorities in commissioning additional capacity in residential and nursing homes, seek to avoid admissions and support people in their own homes after discharge.

Representatives of the independent sector, local government and the NHS are in continuing dialogue with the Assembly about finding solutions to the problems that the sector faces.

## **Dispensed Prescriptions Data**

**Rod Richards:** With reference to WAQ13378, are the data used to calculate dispensed prescriptions from English data or Welsh data? (WAQ14218)

**Jane Hutt:** The data show dispensed prescriptions written by general practioners in Wales, and were provided by Health Solutions Wales.

### **Imported Meat (Specified Risk Material Checks)**

**Peter Rogers:** How many quarters of imported meat were inspected for specified risk material by the Food Standards Agency in Wales during the past 12 months? (WAQ14288)

**Peter Rogers:** How many checks for specified risk material in imported meat were conducted in Wales by the Food Standards Agency during the past 12 months? (WAQ14289)

**Jane Hutt:** The Meat Hygiene Service (an executive agency of the Food Standards Agency) is responsible for the enforcement of specified risk material controls in licensed premises.

The Meat Hygiene Service does not keep a record of the number of quarters of imported meat inspected for specified risk material. However, since April 2001, all imported beef carcases (which includes quarters) have been checked to ensure that all specified risk material has been removed. Between April and July this year, the Meat Hygiene Service in Wales examined 96 consignments of imported beef and each carcase within these consignments was individually examined for specified risk material. There were no reports of specified risk material being found in any meat imports checked by the Meat Hygiene Service in Wales.

Since August 2001, as a result of a change in legislation which made bovine vertebral column specified risk material, imported carcases may only be processed at designated licensed premises. There is only one designated premises in Wales and to date no consignments of imported beef containing carcases have been received.

#### **Drug and Alcohol Treatment**

**Delyth Evans:** What is the role of the National Assembly in relation to support for drug and alcohol treatment in Wales? (WAQ14346)

Jane Hutt: I launched the National Assembly's long-term strategy 'Tackling Substance Misuse in Wales: A partnership approach' in May 2000. One of the strategy's four key aims is to enable people with substance misuse problems to overcome them and live healthy and fulfilling lives and, in the case of offenders, crime-free lives. The Assembly supports the provision of treatment and care for substance misusers in Wales in a number of ways, including the provision of substantial resources to improve access to treatment and care for substance misusers. By 2003, we plan to nearly double the value of our drug and alcohol treatment fund from its 1999-2000 level of £1.5 million. The Assembly also provides grant-aid support to voluntary organisations that provide residential facilities offering short-term treatment and rehabilitation to those misusing drugs and alcohol.

#### **Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs**

# **Infected Area Boundary**

**Peter Rogers:** With regard to the Minister's answer to WAQ13226 provided to me on 26 October 2001 concerning the designation of a boundary of an infected area, when will he write? (WAQ14022)

**Carwyn Jones:** A copy of my letter will be placed in the Library on Friday 16 November.

#### **Livestock Auctions**

**Peter Rogers:** Will the Minister be replying to the several thousand letters in support of the livestock auction system which I presented him with after my short debate 'Life in the Ring: Why Livestock Auctions Matter' on 8 November 2001? (WAQ14175)

**Carwyn Jones:** It is not the practice to reply to the individuals who have added their name to a campaign petition. I made clear in Plenary on 8 November that the Assembly Government sees a role for the livestock market system.

# Ehangu Cyfrifioldebau Adran y Gweinidog

**Owen John Thomas:** Pa drafodaethau sydd wedi bod rhwng y Gweinidog a Gweinidogion Adran yr Amgylchedd, Bwyd a Materion Gwledig ynghylch ehangu cyfrifoldebau ei adran ef? (WAQ14212) [W]

Carwyn Jones: Yr wyf yn cyfarfod yn rheolaidd â Gweinidogion DEFRA i drafod amrediad eang o faterion.

### **Extension of the Minister's Department Responsibilities**

**Owen John Thomas:** What discussions has the Minister had with Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Ministers with regards to extending his department's responsibilities? (WAQ14212) [W]

**Carwyn Jones**: I have regular meetings on a wide range of issues with DEFRA Ministers.

# **Promoting Rural Abattoirs**

**Nick Bourne:** What measures is the Minister taking to promote rural abattoirs? (WAQ14384)

**Carwyn Jones:** The Welsh Development Agency, acting as agent for the Assembly, will consider proposals from abattoirs (and others wishing to set up abattoirs) under the processing and marketing grant arrangements. All proposals are considered on their merits, against the established grants criteria and in the context of the Wales agri-food strategy.

We also pressed the UK Government to implement the recommendations of the Maclean report on the regulatory burden on small abattoirs. The UK Government announced on 28 November last year its acceptance of the need to help reduce the burden of meat hygiene charges on smaller abattoirs and that additional aid worth £8.7 million would be provided from 2001/02. This included £609,000 from the Assembly to help small abattoirs in Wales.

The implementation of these recommendations have been taken forward by the Food Standards Agency, and the relevant legislation came into force on 1 April 2001.

# **Small Abattoirs (Decrease in Support)**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister explain why the budget in support of small abattoirs has been decreased in the draft budget? (WAQ14385)

**Carwyn Jones**: I will write to you shortly and place a copy in the Library.