

Written Questions answered between 10 and 17 March 2005

[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 Inter-departmental Archives Committee

Owen John Thomas: How often does the First Minister or a representative of his Government receive reports from the Inter-departmental Archives Committee? (WAQ41861)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): Welsh Assembly Government officials representing cultural archives and records management interests are members of the Inter-departmental Archives Committee. They attend the quarterly meetings as priorities allow and receive relevant papers and news of developments. They provide me or the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport with updates as appropriate.

Ken Livingstone's Comments to a Jewish Journalist

Nick Bourne: Will the First Minister make available the letter that he wrote to Ken Livingstone in relation to his comments to a Jewish journalist? (WAQ41866)

The First Minister: There was no letter. My comments were made in an interview.

The Bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar

David Davies: Does the Welsh Assembly Government have any plans to celebrate the bicentenary of the battle of Trafalgar? (WAQ41931)

David Davies: What plans does the Welsh Assembly Government have to support any events commemorating the bicentenary of the battle of Trafalgar? (WAQ41932)

The First Minister: I refer you to the answer I gave on 4 March 2005 to WAQ41821.

The Bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar

David Davies: Will the Minister be visiting the Nelson Museum, Monmouth to commemorate the bicentenary of the battle of Trafalgar? (WAQ41956)

The First Minister: I would be happy to consider an invitation should I receive one.

Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

The Second Phase of Ofcom's Review of Public Service Broadcasting

Leighton Andrews: Will the Minister publish his department's submissions to the second phase of the Office of Communication's review of public service broadcasting? (WAQ41855)

The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh): The Welsh Assembly Government's response to phase 2 of Ofcom's public service broadcasting review is available, in English and Welsh, on the National Assembly for Wales website.

The 2005 Hay Festival

Nick Bourne: What support is the Welsh Assembly Government giving to the Hay Festival in 2005? (WAQ41916)

Alun Pugh: The Welsh Assembly Government plans to provide around £39,000 of support to the 2005 Hay Festival via the Arts Council of Wales.

Questions to the Minister for Economic Development and Transport

The Two Passing Loops on the Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury Railway Line

Lisa Francis: Will the Minister make a statement on any discussions he has had regarding the available budget for the construction of two passing loops on the Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury railway line in the area of Dyfi Junction? (WAQ41829)

The Minister for Economic Development and Transport (Andrew Davies): I refer you to my answer to WAQ41830.

The Current Roadworks on the Ystalafera Bypass

Nick Bourne: Why are the current roadworks on the Ystalafera bypass, a stretch of road 1.5 miles long, likely to take 16 weeks? (WAQ41839)

Nick Bourne: When are the roadworks on the Ystalafera bypass likely to finish? (WAQ41840)

Andrew Davies: This is a matter for the local authority. However, I gather that the roadworks on the Ystalyfera bypass involve some detailed engineering procedures, including remedial works to highway drainage. Work is scheduled to complete in June 2005.

The A4067 from Junction 45 of the M4

Nick Bourne: Are there any plans to dual the A4067 from junction 45 of the M4 through the Swansea valley? (WAQ41841)

Andrew Davies: This is a matter for the local authority. However, I understand that the City and County of Swansea Council has no current plans to dual the A4067 between the M4 and the junction with the B4291 at Glais. The council will be carrying out the second stage of the M4 junction 45 Ynysforgan scheme. Construction is planned to start by summer 2005.

The Safe Routes to School Initiative

Kirsty Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on the Safe Routes to School initiative and the possibility of expanding this to revenue projects? (WAQ41842)

Andrew Davies: The initiative has been a major success with schools participating across Wales. The programme is funded through the transport grant and over £18 million has been invested since 1999-2000. The grant is for capital purposes only and there are no plans to provide revenue funding.

Consultation with Schools on the Safe Routes to School Proposals

Kirsty Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on what consultation has taken place with schools on the Safe Routes to School proposals? (WAQ41843)

Andrew Davies: I require local authorities to consult schools and involve fully pupils, parents and teachers when developing Safe Routes to School schemes. The latest advice is contained in the transport grant guidance for 2006-07, which can be found in the Members' Library.

The Average Salary for Men and Women

Nick Bourne: How does the average salary for men and women in Wales compare with other regions of the UK? (WAQ41870)

Andrew Davies: The information is given in the table:

Average full-time weekly earning 2004 (£ per week)

	Men	Women
North East	473.7	379.6
North West	519.5	390.8
Yorkshire and the Humber	497.0	384.9
East Midlands	489.0	374.2
West Midlands	505.2	384.9
East	558.9	409.8
London	765.4	548.2
South East	591.2	441.1
South West	509.1	384.6

Wales	480.4	377.4
Scotland	506.6	396.6
Northern Ireland	464.2	381.9
UK	556.8	420.2

Source: annual survey of hours and earnings.

The Technium Project

Nick Bourne: What is the current cost of the technium project, and how many people are directly employed in businesses based in technium centres? (WAQ41886)

Andrew Davies: Seven operational techniums have been developed to date, representing gross capital WDA expenditure of some £31.50 million; 246 people are currently directly employed in businesses engaged in the operational techniums.

Renewable Energy Policy

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on his Government's renewable energy policy? (WAQ41958)

Andrew Davies: Our aim is to develop renewable energy production in Wales to meet targets of 4 TWh and 7 TWh to 2010 and 2020 respectively. Technical Advice Note 8, which sets out our strategic approach, will be instrumental in delivering the 2010 target. We are also aiming to secure projects in future marine technologies which may have the potential to contribute to longer-term renewable energy targets. Our aim is to ensure a mix of clean energy technologies, which will provide security and diversity in supply as well as a range of measures, embracing energy generation, conservation and efficiency, which complements our sustainable development duties.

Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Welsh-medium Teaching in Higher Education

Leighton Andrews: When will the Andrew Green report on Welsh-medium teaching in higher education be published? (WAQ41852)

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson): The strategy for Welsh-medium provision in higher education developed by the steering group under the chairmanship of Andrew Green, can be found on the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales's website. It was published on the website in draft form as part of the consultation process during summer 2004. The draft was accepted formally as the strategy following the consultation period and submitted to the Assembly Government in late October 2004.

The Free School Breakfast Scheme

Nick Bourne: Can the Minister tell us whether her decision to make the free school breakfast scheme optional rather than compulsory for schools was made following receipt of legal advice in this respect? (WAQ41863)

Jane Davidson: At no stage has it been the Assembly Government's intention to make the free breakfast initiative compulsory. The voluntary nature of the scheme was made clear in the Plenary debate on the free school breakfast initiative in November 2003 and more recently on 8 February 2005. We will provide the necessary funding for all schools that wish to participate. We are doing so under the powers available in section 14 of the Education Act 2002.

The Free School Breakfast Scheme

Nick Bourne: What legal advice has the Minister received in relation to the free school breakfast scheme? (WAQ41872)

Jane Davidson: Advice on the most appropriate legal power was given to me in May 2004. Based on this advice, my conclusion was that the initiative should go forward under the provisions of section 14 of the Education Act 2002.

The Average Length of Journey to School for Primary and Secondary School Pupils

Nick Bourne: What is the average length of journey for primary school pupils in Wales from home to school for each of the 22 local authorities in Wales? (WAQ41875)

Nick Bourne: What is the average length of journey for secondary school pupils in Wales from home to school for each of the 22 local authorities in Wales? (WAQ41876)

Jane Davidson: The Assembly does not hold data on the average length of journey to school for each of the 22 LEAs. Survey data from the Department for Transport for the period 1998 to 2003 suggests that the average length of a journey to school in Wales is about three miles. That includes journeys for children of primary and secondary age.

The Free School Breakfast Scheme

Nick Bourne: Was the legal advice offered in relation to the free school breakfast scheme during 2004 at odds with the Government's manifesto commitment in 2003? (WAQ41883)

Jane Davidson: No. The legal basis for the delivery of this particular manifesto commitment is section 14 of the Education Act 2002.

The Interim Report of the Rees Review

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the options contained in the interim report of the Rees review of student support and higher education tuition fees policy in Wales? (WAQ41947)

Jane Davidson: I warmly welcome the interim report of the Rees review. The report's preliminary analysis highlights the practical, financial and legal issues which the Assembly will need to weigh in the balance in reaching a view on the options for funding higher education in Wales from 2007 onwards. As such, it makes an invaluable contribution to the wider public debate on this issue. The Assembly Government will respond formally when we receive the final report.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside

The Introduction of Horse Passports

Mick Bates: What plans does the Minister have to assist horse charities if horse dumping increases, with the introduction of horse passports? (WAQ41838)

The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones): There is currently no evidence that dumping of horses will increase as a direct result of the horse passports legislation. It will be for local authorities to enforce the legislation and, where necessary, take action to prosecute those who abandon unwanted animals.

The Hunting Ban

Nick Bourne: What discussions has the Welsh Assembly Government had with the police concerning the hunting ban and its effect in Wales and will he give details of those discussions? (WAQ41865)

Carwyn Jones: None. Hunting is not a devolved matter and the enforcement of the Hunting Act 2004 is a matter for the civil authorities and the Home Office.

The Consultation on 'Technical Advice Note (Wales) 8: Renewable Energy'

Nick Bourne: When does the Minister intend to present the official responses to the consultation on ‘TAN (Wales) 8: Renewable Energy’? (WAQ41895)

Carwyn Jones: Responses to the consultation exercise are currently being analysed. A report of consultation will be produced on the matters raised and will be issued by the summer, at the same time as the final version of the TAN. Copies of the responses will be made available at the same time.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Paediatric Neuro-Oncology Nurse Specialists

Jonathan Morgan: Will the Minister make a statement on the number and distribution of paediatric neuro-oncology nurse specialists in Wales? (WAQ41837)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Brian Gibbons): Statistics that identify nursing staff at such a specific level are not held centrally.

Number of Deaths Six Months after a Heart Attack

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on how many patients die six months after a heart attack? (WAQ41844)

Brian Gibbons: Information on the number of patients who die six months after a heart attack is not held centrally.

The Underspend of GP Prescribing Budgets

Jonathan Morgan: What guidance has the Minister’s department issued in the past two years aimed at incentivising the underspend of GP prescribing budgets? (WAQ41846)

Brian Gibbons: The management of GP prescribing budgets is a local issue. However, a template for good practice is soon to be issued by the all-Wales medicines strategy group. This template was drawn up by the all-Wales prescribing advisory group and has the support of the General Practitioner Committee Wales.

The Responsibilities of the Prescribing Advisers in Local Health Boards

Jonathan Morgan: What guidance has the Minister’s department issued to local health boards in the past two years on the responsibilities of their prescribing advisers? (WAQ41847)

Brian Gibbons: The responsibilities of prescribing advisers, be they from the medical or pharmaceutical profession, are a matter for their employers.

The Private-sector Earnings of Consultants

Leighton Andrews: What information does the Minister have on the private-sector earnings of consultants working in the NHS in Wales? (WAQ41853)

Brian Gibbons: Information on the private-sector earnings of consultants working in NHS Wales is not held centrally.

The Average Salary Earned by GPs

Leighton Andrews: What is the average salary (or self-employed equivalent) earned by GPs in Wales on graduating, after five years, 10 years and 20 years in practice? (WAQ41854)

Brian Gibbons: Under changes introduced by the new general medical services contract, GP principal pay is no longer set centrally through the Review Body of Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration mechanisms. For the final year of the old system, intended average net income was set at £61,218 for 2003-04. The pay range for salaried GPs is set at £47,710 to £72,478 for 2004-05.

Reports Made to the Health and Social Services Committee

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Further to his answer to WAQ41629, will the Minister detail whether his reports to the Health and Social Services Committee were in full or in summary form, and did they form part of the Minister's report or were they separate papers? (WAQ41920)

Bryan Gibbons: The information to which I referred in my answer to WAQ41629 was included as part of the monthly reports of the then Minister for Health and Social Services.

Funding for Capital Projects

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the carrying over of funding for capital projects for which he is responsible from one financial year to the next? (WAQ41922)

Brian Gibbons: At both Assembly and NHS trust level, capital expenditure is managed by having a capital investment programme in which expenditure is monitored carefully over each financial year. Slippage is anticipated by an element of over-programming or holding schemes in reserve to fully utilise resources in any one year. That enables the resources to be used effectively.

‘Agenda for Change’

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: How many separate jobs have to be matched or evaluated within each trust in NHS Wales as part of ‘Agenda for Change’? (WAQ41930)

Brian Gibbons: The number of separate jobs to be matched or evaluated in total is around 29,800. By trust, the figures are:

Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust	2,021
Business Services Centre	1,027
Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust	4,000
Carmarthen NHS Trust	3,500
Ceredigion NHS Trust	390
Conwy and Denbighshire NHS Trust	1,600
Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust	3,500
North East Wales NHS Trust	1,500
North Glamorgan NHS Trust	2,947
North West Wales	1,158
Pembrokeshire and Derwen NHS Trust	1,000
Pontypridd and Rhondda NHS Trust	652
Powys Local Health Board	2,378
Swansea NHS Trust	2,500
Velindre NHS Trust	1,500
Welsh Ambulance NHS Trust	160

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

The Proposed Downgrading of Fire Cover in Haverfordwest

Nick Bourne: What representations has the Minister received in relation to the proposed downgrading of fire cover in Haverfordwest? (WAQ41887)

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart): I have received six formal written representations relating specifically to Haverfordwest Fire Station.

Manning Patterns at the Aberystwyth Fire Station

Nick Bourne: What representations has the Minister received in relation to the proposed change in manning patterns at the Aberystwyth fire station? (WAQ41888)

Edwina Hart: I have received one formal written representation as Minister relating specifically to Aberystwyth fire station.

The Regeneration of Town Centres

Christine Chapman: What is the Welsh Assembly Government doing to regenerate town centres in Wales? (WAQ41957)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government appreciates the importance of regenerating town centres and is pursuing a number of initiatives.

The physical regeneration fund was launched in March 2004 with town centre regeneration as a key priority. Its other priorities may also benefit town centres and include physical regeneration that has a positive impact on Communities First areas, the enhancement of industrial areas and tackling prominent dereliction or decay. The scheme is open to the 22 unitary authorities and the three national park authorities. The introduction of development funding under this scheme has been particularly welcomed as a means to help devise high-quality projects or strategic regeneration plans for town centres. Over £19 million has been committed since its inception.

The Welsh European Funding Office is currently appraising five town centre regeneration projects for Objective 1. These projects were selected following a bidding round last year. They will, if successfully appraised, fully commit the money allocated to the measure from the performance reserve for this activity. The WDA is working with local authorities through its urban regeneration programme. It encourages and supports sustainable economic development in urban areas by improving the urban environment, refurbishing existing buildings and supporting new development.

Questions to the Business Minister

The Government's Response to the TAN 8 Consultation

Nick Bourne: Is it the intention of the Minister to ensure that there is time available in Plenary to discuss the Government's response to the 'Technical Advice Note (Wales) 8: Renewable Energy' consultation? (WAQ41896)

The Business Minister (Jane Hutt): As I said in Plenary on 22 February, consultation on the draft TAN 8 finished on 5 November 2004. The final TAN will be published in the summer. The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside has been updating the Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee on this issue, which is the appropriate place for discussions on technical advice notes. However, time will be scheduled for a debate on the Welsh Assembly Government's energy policy.

The Opportunity to Discuss the Interim Report of the Rees Review in Plenary

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister ensure that time will be made available in Plenary for the opportunity to discuss the interim report of the Rees review of student support and higher education tuition fees policy in Wales? (WAQ41959)

Jane Hutt: I do not intend to schedule additional time in Plenary to discuss this report as Assembly Members were given an opportunity to attend a briefing on the report by Professor Rees on Tuesday, 8 March, after Plenary, and the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee considered the interim report at its meeting on Wednesday, 9 March. However, time will be scheduled at the appropriate time for the Government's response to the final report.