

Answers issued to Members on 18 February 2008

[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 Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport

Nick Ramsay (Monmouth): What discussions has the Minister had with either the UK Department for Transport or Severn Crossings, plc, regarding the economic impact on Wales of Severn Crossing tolls? (WAQ51257)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport (Ieuan Wyn Jones): I have had no discussions with either the UK Government or Severn River Crossings plc regarding the economic impact on Wales of Severn Crossing tolls. However, when I next meet the UK Secretary of State for Transport I hope to discuss the matters relating to the Severn Crossing.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister outline what plans the Welsh Assembly Government has to improve East West transport links. (WAQ51271)

The Deputy First Minister: Plans for East-West road links are set out in the Trunk Road Forward Programme 2002 and updated in 2004. These can be seen colour coded as: Yellow, East-West (South); Pink, East-West (Mid); Green, East-West (North) in the attached plan.

On rail I am providing a contribution of up to £8 million to the capital funding for the imminent improvement of the infrastructure of the Cambrian Railway between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury. The investment will provide for a major improvement in punctuality of train services and make possible potential future enhancement of train frequencies.

I will shortly be announcing a revised Wales Transport Strategy, which will draw on contributions received during the previous consultation. This will lead to a more detailed Wales National Transport Plan and an updated Trunk Road Forward Programme.

Questions to the Minister for Heritage

Huw Lewis (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): Will the Minister provide an update on the discussions he has been having with Ministerial colleagues relating to the use of unclaimed assets in Wales? (WAQ51233)

The Minister for Heritage (Rhodri Glyn Thomas): The Welsh Assembly Government considered the use of money available under a Dormant Accounts Scheme in December 2007. A public consultation will be launched in due course.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North): How many consultants work in A and E departments compared to 1999? (WAQ51292)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart): Latest available information regarding the number of consultants working in A and E departments compared to 1999 can be found on the StatsWales website.

Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North): Will the Minister list all capital projects in the NHS to the last eight financial years where PFI was used, and all costs associated with them? (WAQ51293)

Edwina Hart: All capital projects in the NHS where PFI was used in the last eight financial years and the annual unitary charges made to the PFI contractor are listed below.

Project	Unitary Charges (£ million)							
	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Neath Port Talbot Hospital	-	-	-	5.232	11.549	11.496	11.390	11.796
St Davids Community Hospital	-	-	2.549	2.630	2.730	2.770	3.110	3.330
Energy Management	0.097	0.109	0.109	0.121	0.123	0.124	0.127	0.129
Renal Dialysis Unit	-	-	-	-	0.130	0.130	0.231	0.278
Chepstow Community Hospital		1.675	1.664	1.739	1.713	1.751	1.786	1.877
Energy Management Royal Gwent/St Woolos Hospitals	0.127	0.519	0.525	0.527	0.551	0.567	0.578	0.601
Day Surgery Unit Nevill Hall Hospital	0.372	0.549	0.583	0.595	0.631	0.654	0.687	0.710
Energy Management Nevill Hall Hospital	-	-	0.103	0.423	0.419	0.445	0.444	0.469
Monnow Court	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.512
Energy Management Prince Charles Hospital	-	-	-	-	-	0.135	0.140	0.143
Staff Residences Royal Glamorgan Hospital	0.208	0.211	0.215	0.217	0.210	0.213	0.215	0.219
Total	0.804	3.063	5.748	11.484	18.056	18.285	18.708	20.064

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What discussions has the Minister had with Westminster regarding the use of PFI and other Public Private Partnerships in the delivery of public services by local authorities in Wales? (WAQ51222)

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on what review the Welsh Assembly Government has given to the use of Private Finance Initiatives and other Public Private Partnerships by local authorities? (WAQ51224)

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on the cost of any Private Finance Initiatives and other Public Private Partnership contracts which have been entered into by local authorities in Wales since 1999? (WAQ51225)

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister list any Private Finance Initiatives and other Public Private Partnership contracts which local authorities in Wales have entered into since 1999? (WAQ51226)

The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government (Brian Gibbons): I am replying to the listed questions together as they address similar issues relating to the use in local authorities of the Private Finance Initiative and of wider Public Private Partnerships models.

I have had not discussed with Westminster the use of PFI and other Public Private Partnerships, nor has the Welsh Assembly Government reviewed their use in local authorities.

In Wales, local authorities operate to a shared responsibility in the delivery of public services. They have freedom and flexibilities to provide an autonomous service and have access to private sector funding through prudential borrowing powers or other arrangements. .

I attach below as requested, a list of local authority schemes which are supported by the Assembly through PFI Credits. Additional schemes funded either publicly or through Public Private Partnerships will, however, be a matter for each individual authority and are therefore not listed here.

Local Authority Projects:	Project Approval Date	Final WO/WAG Approval Date	Estimated Start/Completion Date
Wrexham: Waste Management	1997	Mar-07	May 07/April 09
Ceredigion: New School	1997	Sep-99	Operational Dec 2000
Pembrokeshire: New School and Offices	1997	Jun-00	Operational Sep 2002
Denbighshire: CC Office Accommodation	1997	Oct-02	Oct-02/May-04
Newport: Southern Distributor Road (SDR)	1997	Mar-02	April-02/April-05
Caerphilly: Schools	1997/1999	Mar-01	Operational Sep 2002
Bridgend: Schools	1999	Oct-06	Nov06/June08
Caerphilly: Sirhowy Enterprise Way	1999	Nov-03	Jan 04/Apr 06
Conway: Schools	1999	Mar-03	Apr 03/Aug 04
Newport: School	1999	Aug-07	Apr08/Dec 09
Rhondda Cynon Taff: Schools	1999	Mar-04	Mar 04/Sep 05