

Written Questions answered between 2 and 9 November 2006

[R] signifies that the Member has declared an interest.

[W] signifies that the question was tabled in Welsh.

Contents

2	Questions to the First Minister
2	Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport
3	Questions to the Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks
10	Questions to the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
12	Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside
13	Questions to the Finance Minister
14	Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services
19	Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

Questions to the First Minister

Alun Cairns: Would the First Minister list the dates that he has met with Sir David King, UK Chief Scientific Advisor, to discuss science in Wales? (WAQ48384)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): 9 January 2006.

Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Pa grantiau/cymorth ariannol sydd ar gael, fel arian cyfatebol angenrheidiol, er mwyn adnewyddu ac addurno eglwys sydd wedi derbyn cymorth ariannol gan Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri? (WAQ48375) [W]

Y Gweinidog dros Ddiwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chwaraeon (Alun Pugh): Nid yw Cronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri yn pennu oddi wrth ba sefydliadau y mae'n rhaid i'r arian cyfatebol ar gyfer eu grantiau ddod. Mae nifer o sefydliadau y gall ymgeiswyr drafod â nhw ynglŷn â chyllid ychwanegol ar gyfer adnewyddu eglwysi. Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys yr Ymddiriedolaeth Cadwraeth Eglwysi Hanesyddol a Chronfa Deddfau Eglwysi Cymru. Efallai y bydd modd i Gorff Cynrychiolwyr yr Eglwys yng Nghymru helpu o ran eiddo yr Eglwys yng Nghymru a gall Cyngor Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Cymru gynghori ar ffynonellau cyllid posibl eraill.

Yn ogystal â hyn mae Cadw, is-adran amgylchedd hanesyddol Llywodraeth y Cynulliad, yn gallu cynnig cymorth grant ar hyn o bryd o hyd at £30,000, ar gyfer gwaith atgyweirio ar eglwysi'r Eglwys yng Nghymru os asesir eu bod o ddiddordeb pensaernïol neu hanesyddol eithriadol, neu os bydd gwaith atgyweirio allanol ar eglwysi yn gwella ymddangosiad ardal gadwraeth. Mae'n rhaid i'r gwaith atgyweirio gael ei gyfrif fel gwaith brys yn adroddiad pum mlynedd yr eglwys ac ni fyddai gwaith addurno yn gymwys.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: What grants/financial assistance is available as required match funding for renovating and decorating a church that has received financial assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund? (WAQ48375) [W]

The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh): The Heritage Lottery Fund does not stipulate which organisations match funding for their grants must come from. There are a number of organisations applicants can speak to regarding additional funding for renovating churches and these include the Historic Churches Preservation Trust and the Welsh Churches Acts Fund. The Representative Body for the Church in Wales may be able to help in respect of Church in Wales properties and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action can advise on other possible sources of funding.

In addition to this, the Assembly Government's historic environment division, Cadw, is currently able to grant aid, to a maximum of £30,000, for repairs to Church in Wales churches that are assessed as being of outstanding architectural or historic interest, or external repairs to churches which will enhance the appearance of a conservation area. The repairs have to be classed as urgent in the church's quinquennial report and decoration would not be eligible.

Lisa Francis: How much of the recently announced £250,000 for the promotion of culture and theatre in Merthyr Tydfil has been match-funded by the local authority? (WAQ48429)

Alun Pugh: The Assembly Government's draft budget, published on 18 October, included provision of £250,000 to the Arts Council of Wales towards the costs of a feasibility study for a cultural enterprise centre in Merthyr Tydfil. The University of Glamorgan is the lead partner in the project, which includes the Heads of the Valleys Partnership and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The university is currently drawing up the brief for the feasibility study, and this initial phase of the project is scheduled to start in late spring 2007 and will cost an estimated £300,000. A package of funding from the partners will be put together for the subsequent stages of the development.

Questions to the Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks

Nick Bourne: How much electricity is lost in transmission from Cefn Croes wind farm? (WAQ48374)

The Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks (Andrew Davies): The total power loss on the national grid's high voltage electricity transmission network in England and Wales (which operates at 132kV, 275kV and 400kV) is currently less than 1.4 per cent of the electricity transported.

Power from Cefn Croes is initially transmitted over 14km of 132kV line where losses per km are greater than for higher voltage lines. The total power loss might be expected, therefore, to be slightly higher than the England and Wales average, giving a total transmission loss of about 2 per cent.

Alun Cairns: Further to WAQ30636, would the Minister provide the latest data on accident blackspots for the last 12 months? (WAQ48377)

Andrew Davies: The identification, analysis and treatment of collision cluster sites is the responsibility for the relevant highway authority. For non-trunk roads this would be the respective local authority, therefore this information is not held centrally. For trunk roads this would be the Welsh Assembly Government. The three trunk road agencies are commissioned to annually identify potential sites for collision remedial treatment. This is done for their individual areas, utilising data for at least three years. There is therefore no principality-wide list of collision hotspots based on the last 12 months.

The Welsh Assembly Government has provided technical assistance and data to the European Road Assessment Programme. This AA Motoring Trust initiative aims to provide an objective measure of safety by assessing roads against established criteria. It allocates safety ratings to roads, based on site features and speed-based risks. A map, which can be found at http://www.aatrust.com/files/reports18052006_Wales.pdf, shows the statistical risk of death or serious injury occurring on Britain's motorways and major roads for 2001-03.

As you will see from the map, the majority of the trunk road routes are in the low, low/medium and medium risk categories, reflecting the frequency of injury collisions relative to the traffic volume on that route. Some of the routes in mid Wales are in the medium/high risk category and we are working with our agent to implement safety schemes such as new chevrons, road markings and reduced speed limits to lower the frequency of collisions on these routes.

Alun Ffred Jones: Will the Minister state his intentions for the budget expenditure line entitled 'European match funding' under the Enterprise, Innovation and Networks main expenditure group in the draft budget? (WAQ48378)

Andrew Davies: The European Match Funding SPA (Revenue and Capital) will be used to support the delivery of projects in the 2000-06 structural funds round. For the 2007-13 programme, we expect to maximise the use of programme resources to lever in structural funding using a more strategic approach to supporting projects.

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister provide a breakdown of the amount of European structural funds per person in west Wales and the Valleys' local authorities? (WAQ48391)

Andrew Davies: The Welsh European Funding Office does not collect data on structural funds spend per capita by local authority area. Data are collected on grant-committed and paid-for projects brought forward by partnerships. The 15 local partnerships account for less than 50 per cent of the funding for the Objective 1 area. Over 50 per cent of funding is delivered through non-local partnerships that cover the whole of the Objective 1 area.

Forecast and actual output data are collected by all projects by local authority area. Table 1 shows a breakdown by local authority area of project forecast and actual for the key outputs 'number of jobs created' and 'number of beneficiaries'.

Table 1: forecast and actual output data¹ by local authority area

Local authority area	Outputs			
	Jobs created		Beneficiaries	
	Forecast ³	Actual ⁴	Forecast ³	Actual ⁴
Isle of Anglesey	6,000	3,400	22,000	12,900
Gwynedd	5,900	4,000	35,600	26,500
Conwy	6,500	2,400	29,000	18,600
Denbighshire	5,300	3,600	31,100	18,400
Ceredigion	3,900	2,600	17,400	16,600
Pembrokeshire	6,300	4,800	36,600	25,800
Carmarthenshire	6,700	4,500	40,200	27,700
Swansea	9,200	7,600	93,700	84,700
Neath Port Talbot	6,400	4,100	39,000	26,500
Bridgend	6,900	3,500	26,300	20,300
Rhondda Cynon Taff	9,000	4,300	87,700	86,600
Merthyr Tydfil	4,100	1,300	29,000	15,800
Caerphilly	11,200	6,100	43,000	32,600
Blaenau Gwent	4,900	3,000	22,600	14,400
Torfaen	4,100	3,300	49,400	19,900

Source: EFMS, WEFO, 30/09/06

¹ Figures rounded to nearest 100

² The output 'number of gross new indirect jobs' is not spatially reported. These jobs are therefore attributed to Local Authority areas according to the lead partnership for each project. However, these figures do not include indirect jobs reported from projects brought forward by non-local Partnerships. The Objective 1 Mid Term Evaluation Update suggests that aggregate data should be treated with caution as the figures contain an element of double counting.

³ The forecast figure is what projects estimate they will achieve.

⁴ The actual figure is what projects have achieved to date.

Nick Bourne: What plans does the Minister have to update the Conwy valley railway line? (WAQ48394)

Andrew Davies: The Assembly Government funds the passenger service between Blaenau Ffestiniog and Llandudno through the franchise agreement with Arriva Trains Wales. This funding indirectly contributes to Network Rail's costs in maintaining and operating the line at the current standard.

In terms of upgrading the line for freight traffic to convey slate aggregate, Network Rail has commissioned a technical study to evaluate the costs and options for upgrading the infrastructure to carry

heavier trains. The outcome of the study will be known in early 2007 and the Assembly Government will then engage in further discussion with Network Rail and McAlpine Slate Limited to identify a way forward.

In addition, I am discussing possible community rail designation with the Community Rail Partnerships, local authority consortia and others.

Eleanor Burnham: Will the Minister make a statement on the contribution to tourism of the Wales Screen Commission across Wales? (WAQ48415)

Andrew Davies: The work of the Wales Screen Commission, supported by Creative Business Wales, has a part to play, largely unquantifiable, in promoting tourism through the general promotion of Wales' image nationally and internationally: the movie map is an element in this. Its most direct impact is through the economic contribution that filming in Wales provides to us, a sum of £18 million recorded last year.

Karen Sinclair: Will the Minister make a statement on what is being done to improve the competitiveness of businesses in north-east Wales? (WAQ48416)

Andrew Davies: New and ongoing projects underpin a range of investments aimed at supporting business competitiveness in north-east Wales. We continue to work with partner organisations and the private sector to introduce best practice manufacturing techniques to businesses in the region. The recent completion of the £1.5 million road scheme at Manor Lane in Broughton opens up a further 20 hectares for development at Hawarden Business Park.

Other activities include:

- Dedicated account management for high growth potential companies or those sustaining local communities. In north-east Wales this year, this has created or supported hundreds of jobs with associated multi-million pound investments completed or identified.
- High quality business advice through the Business Eye and general support for business programmes, which to date have supported 600 jobs, significantly increasing combined company turnover.
- Support on procurement and supply development opportunities, providing help to businesses access tender opportunities in both public and private sectors through the local supplier development project.

The success of these and other initiatives is supported by the latest unemployment figures. In Clwyd South, the latest claimant count rate is 1.7 per cent of the working age population, lower than both the average for Wales and that of the UK. Similarly in north-east Wales, the average claimant count rate remains below the Welsh and UK average*.

[*Source: Nomis, September 2006, Clwyd South and other north-east Wales constituencies—Alyn and Deeside, Delyn, Clwyd West.]

Karen Sinclair: Will the Minister make a statement on promoting tourism in north-east Wales? (WAQ48417)

Andrew Davies: Through funding from Visit Wales in my department, Tourism Partnership North Wales receives £1.2 million per annum to market and develop tourism in its area. This funding has enabled the North Wales Borderlands Marketing Area to become an active partner in Visit Wales's co-ordinated marketing campaigns, targeting attractions, adventure activities and golf in the area. TPNW also continues to fund tourist information centres, which now include the one in Llangollen.

I was delighted to hear about the Pontcysyllte aquaduct bid for UNESCO world heritage status and know that TPNW is fully supportive of the bid, which, if successful, would be of great value to the local community and a real coup for the tourism profile of the area.

Owen John Thomas: What recent discussions has the Minister had regarding extending the deadline for the Penarth headland link? (WAQ48418)

Andrew Davies: At their request, I recently met with Alun Michael MP, Lorraine Barrett AM and Councillor Liz Burnett to discuss the Penarth headland link.

Carl Sargeant: Will the Minister make a statement on what the Welsh Assembly Government is doing to support community transport in Wales? (WAQ48419)

Andrew Davies: I continue to fund the work of the Community Transport Association in Wales. This year, I have provided £9.4 million to local authorities in Wales through local transport services grant to subsidise bus and community transport services. I have also made available £3 million to support 15 demonstration projects across Wales. The projects pilot a range of models for providing access to community transport services for severely disabled people.

Peter Black: Will the Minister make a statement on the distribution of the transport grant? (WAQ48420)

Andrew Davies: I announced £125 million of transport grant funding for local authorities across Wales in 2006-07 on 8 February 2006.

Peter Black: Will the Minister detail his plans to spend transport grant in South Wales West over the next three years? (WAQ48421)

Andrew Davies: My officials are currently considering 2007-08 transport grant bids received from local authorities across Wales. I plan to make an announcement on funding allocations in January 2007. From the 2008-09 financial year onward, local authorities will develop regional transport plans on a transport consortia basis. Future funding decisions will be considered in light of these emerging regional transport plans.

Ann Jones: Following the completion of the site infrastructure for the last remaining plot on St Asaph Business Park, will the Minister make a statement on the future provision of suitable sites for inward investors within the Vale of Clwyd constituency? (WAQ48422)

Andrew Davies: Within my department's north Wales division officials are working closely with officers from Denbighshire County Council on a sub-regional economic framework to guide future investment in strategic sites. This framework will confirm the viability of a further expansion of St Asaph Business Park, building on its success as a centre for the optoelectronics sector and fully exploiting the potential spin-out opportunities generated by the recent investment in the optoelectronics based on the business park.

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister outline his priorities for the mid Wales road infrastructure? (WAQ48423)

Andrew Davies: My current priorities for major improvements to the road infrastructure in Wales are given in the 2004 supplement to the trunk road forward programme.

In addition to this programme of major improvements, we are also pursuing a number of more modest improvement schemes: examples of these are an improvement planned at Glandyfi on the A487 and a junction improvement on the A40 at Llansantffraed.

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister outline his priorities for the railways in Wales? (WAQ48424)

Andrew Davies: I have a large number of priorities for the railways in Wales. The schemes that I am currently funding are:

- Re-opening of the Ebbw valley line for passenger services in the summer of 2007. The current cost of the scheme is estimated at £30 million. This is £7.5 million of European regional development fund Objective 1 funding and £7 million from the Corus steelworks regeneration fund. The Assembly Government is providing the remainder of the funding.
- Llanharan railway station in January 2008. I have provided capital funding of £2.950 million, from which will be netted-off some £1.1 million Objective 1 grant (subject to detailed ERDF approval), as transport grant funding in 2006-07.
- £5 million investment for platform extensions on the Rhymney valley line for six-car trains.
- £3.3 million investment for extensions to platforms on the Treherbert line for six-car trains.
- Funding for works to enable a doubling to half-hourly of the service on the Merthyr line from summer 2008. Improvements on this line will also include modernising Abercynon station with park and ride facilities, at a cost of £20 million.

William Graham: Will the Minister outline discussions he has held concerning the necessary repairs to the M48 Severn bridge? (WAQ48426)

Andrew Davies: My officials in Transport Wales are in close contact and have held discussions with Highway Agency officials regarding the cable inspections and investigations that are currently taking place and the precautionary traffic restrictions proposed after the initial findings of the investigations.

In order to preserve for Wales the facility of two motorway crossings of the river Severn for the future, Transport Wales officials agree with the Highways Agency precautionary measure that a 7.5 tonne weight restriction be applied to lane 2, the outside lane, of the bridge in both directions. A Highways Agency traffic regulation Order implementing this restriction will come into effect on 6 November. This will not restrict heavy goods vehicles up to 44 tonnes from using lane 1 of the bridge in either direction. Under normal operating conditions this will cause little, if any, disruption and minimal inconvenience.

A recent Highways Agency Press Notice, issued on 20 October 2006, is below for information, which has already been issued to the press and to the Welsh Assembly Government.

Highways Agency Press Notice

The Highways Agency is today publishing a public notice that it intends to implement a traffic regulation Order restricting the weight of vehicles using lane 2 of the M48 Severn bridge to 7.5 tonnes. The traffic regulation Order does not restrict heavy goods vehicles up to 44 tonnes from using the bridge in lane 1 in either direction. The restriction comes in to effect on the 6 November.

The weight restrictions follow the initial findings of an ongoing inspection of the main suspension cables. The inspections on the Severn bridge follow surveys at the Forth road bridge in 2004, which revealed a degree of corrosion inside the cables. Surveys on the Severn bridge started in April this year and will continue until early next year.

On an average weekday, about 3,000 heavy goods vehicles use the Severn bridge, but only around 100 use lane 2. These figures are much lower at weekends. The M4 second Severn crossing is the main route for heavy vehicles travelling to south Wales.

Highways Agency route performance manager, Chris Pope, said:

‘Cable investigations have shown that corrosion in the cables of the M48 Severn bridge is more advanced than at the Forth road bridge. Today, as a precautionary measure we are giving notice that we will implement a traffic regulation Order which will introduce a temporary 7.5 tonne weight restriction on lane 2 of the bridge in each direction. The weight restriction will reduce the potential overall weight of traffic on the bridge and will minimise the risk of further deterioration of the cables. We are continuing the investigation of the cables. When testing is complete and all of the investigation results are known we will take the necessary steps to maintain the structure. This will include repair work as appropriate. Any works will be planned so that disruption to road users is kept to a minimum. There is no risk to the public and no plans to close the bridge.’

Notes to Editors

1. The Highways Agency is an executive agency of the Department for Transport. It manages, maintains and improves England’s motorways and trunk roads on behalf of the Secretary of State.
2. The Highways Agency traffic information website is at www.highways.gov.uk/trafficinfo.
3. Cable inspections on the Forth road bridge near Edinburgh in 2004 revealed a degree of corrosion, and some broken wires, inside the cable. The Forth road bridge was opened in 1964 and the main cables are of a similar design to the Severn Bridge. A programme of inspection work on the main cable of the Severn bridge started in April.
4. The Severn bridge was opened by HM The Queen on 8 September 1966. The bridge replaced the ferry service between Aust Cliff and Beachley. The bridge cost £8 million to build.
5. The river Severn is 1 mile wide at high tide at this point. The main span is 3,240 feet. The towers are 445 feet high.
6. The bridge has carried over 300,000,000 vehicles since opening in 1966.

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on progress with the Welsh Assembly Government’s strategy to develop cycling in Wales? (WAQ48427)

Andrew Davies: We continue to make excellent progress on a number of fronts to deliver our cycling strategy for Wales.

Our main focus has been on taking forward Safe Routes to Schools transport grant schemes. This year, I have provided £3.8 million for 50 projects, which include improving cycling infrastructure. In addition, since 1999 we have provided about £7 million to support 50 projects on national and local cycle routes. These either make crossing the trunk road network safer for cyclists or improve access to it.

We also work with a range of partners including Sustrans and the Countryside Council for Wales to promote and improve access to cycle routes. This has helped cyclists get to over 1,000 km of public rights of way and a growing number of designated cycle tracks. We are also looking to encourage all train operating companies to provide facilities at stations that will help facilitate bike and rail journeys. We will also encourage train operating companies to carry bicycles on trains whenever possible.

European Objective 1 support has helped us develop and create a number of world-class mountain bike routes throughout Wales. These attract visitors from across the world and have helped put Wales on the cycling map. Wales is now recognised as one of the top places for mountain bike trails, equalling Colorado and California, the birthplace of mountain biking.

I refer you to my answers to previous questions from Ann Jones AM (Vale of Clwyd) that provided details of these and other cycling matters: WAQ47493, WAQ47494, WAQ47495, WAQ47496, WAQ47497, WAQ47498, WAQ47499, WAQ47500, WAQ47501, WAQ47502, WAQ47503, WAQ47504, WAQ46976, WAQ46977.

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on progress in developing the renewable energy sector of the Welsh economy? (WAQ48428)

Andrew Davies: In Wales, we have the capacity to generate over 520MW of electricity from renewable energy sources comprising onshore and offshore wind, biomass and hydro. We estimate that the capital expenditure investment associated with onshore wind development in Wales of 800MW is about £600 million. Potential investment in offshore wind and biomass projects could total £1.2 billion, including an estimated 350 Mw, £400 million in a biomass plant in Port Talbot. We have also invested in the feasibility of future marine technologies and are hopeful this will lead to pre-commercial development of devices in Welsh waters.

Other potential investment in renewable technologies has been highlighted in the £20 million investment in the manufacture of poly and mono silicon solar panels at Sharp UK in Wrexham as well as the recent G24 Innovations announcement of a £60 million plant for the manufacture of dye sensitised solar cells, which is likely to create up to 300 high-tech jobs in south Wales.

William Graham: What discussions has the Minister had with the Highways Agency regarding trials in Wales of the Highways Agency radio service? (WAQ48430)

Andrew Davies: My officials in Transport Wales are in discussion with the Highways Agency and the Scottish Executive on the implementation of a UK national traffic radio service.

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on the Assembly Government's view of the impact of wind turbines and windfarms on tourism? (WAQ48435)

Andrew Davies: The former Wales Tourist Board commissioned an extensive investigation into the potential impact of windfarms on tourism in Wales in 2003. The survey of visitors to Wales revealed that 78 per cent were positive or neutral towards wind farm development. When asked whether windfarms would have any impact on their decision to take further holidays in Wales, 68 per cent stated it would not make any difference and a further 9 per cent claimed any impact would be minimal.

Lisa Francis: Will the Minister outline the review which has recently been carried out to determine the future of the Wales Screen Commission? (WAQ48438)

Lisa Francis: What research and consultation was carried out in respect of human resources as part of the recent review of the Wales Screen Commission? (WAQ48439)

Lisa Francis: How much funding does the Wales Screen Commission receive from each of the local authorities in Wales? (WAQ48440)

Lisa Francis: Will the Minister make a statement on job losses from Wales Screen Commission? (WAQ48441)

Lisa Francis: Has any research been undertaken by the Welsh Assembly Government to look at the economic benefits of the Wales Screen Commission and will the Minister make this information public? (WAQ48442)

Lisa Francis: How many staff are currently employed by the Wales Screen Commission and when were they last paid? (WAQ48443)

Lisa Francis: How much funding has the Wales Screen Commission received from the Welsh Assembly Government for each of the periods 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07? (WAQ48444)

Lisa Francis: Was Gwynedd County Council consulted in any review pertaining to the Wales Screen Commission carried out by the Welsh Assembly Government? (WAQ48445)

Lisa Francis: In respect of the Creative Industries strategy, what ambition does the Minister have for the Wales Screen Commission? (WAQ48446)

Andrew Davies: The restructuring of the Wales Screen Commission is a decision based on sound business judgements, which reflect the relative contribution that each region makes to the economy. The paper relating to this decision contains information that would be regarded as being restricted on the basis of policy and staff-in-confidence and, as such, would be inappropriate to offer into the public domain. To illustrate the relative contributions, last year film-making in Wales generated recorded benefits to the economy of about £18 million, over £17 million of which was generated in south-east Wales. This year, benefits of £8 million have been recorded with, for example, just £16,000 being attributable to north Wales. The current allocation of human resource against such an imbalance, where our investment exceeds returns, is an untenable position and a reallocation, not a reduction, recognising demand is both proper and commercially sensible. Nevertheless, recognising the importance of and the need for local input, regional coverage and representation is being maintained. Our aim, through this restructuring, which will include additional marketing outside of Wales, is to increase the size of the cake for Wales as a whole.

We have consulted with the steering committee of the Wales Screen Commission, for each part of Wales, and we have consulted Gwynedd County Council as the lead body in north Wales for locations services work; all were in broad agreement with our plans. We began this process in February this year. Recognising our duty of care to the nine staff of the commission, we have consulted with them too and we continue to do so. The staff of the commission are paid monthly with the Welsh Assembly Government staff being paid at the end of the month, the latest payment on 31 October; the mid Wales staff would have received their latest payment on 15 October; and the Gwynedd staff would have been paid on 22 October.

Until April this year, funding for the Wales Screen Commission was provided by Sgrin. Since April this year, save for salaries and associated costs for direct employees, the Welsh Assembly Government has not provided funding although invoices totalling £25,000 (in respect of salaries and running costs) have been received from mid Wales and these are being processed. Local authorities make varying contributions depending upon their commercial considerations.

I want to see the Wales Screen Commission making an increasingly valuable contribution to the economy across Wales and the restructuring that we are implementing together with a re-focused Creative Business Wales provide the platform to achieve this. In building a sustainable film industry in Wales, locations services play a vital role, but the resources to fulfil that role must match customer demand. We will continually reassess the impact of the work of the commission and, should business demands determine that we should reallocate resource in the future, we would, of course, revisit the position.

Questions to the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Eleanor Burnham: Has the Minister taken any action with regard to speeding up the decision making process relating to the funding of post-16 community learning centres in Denbighshire? (WAQ48367)

The Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Davidson): This project was first developed by Denbighshire County Council under the auspices of Education and Learning Wales's learning challenge fund in 2002. I approved it in accordance with ELWa's delegations during 2005 and the project commenced in September 2005.

The project is a £4.5 million scheme designed to develop and operate seven community learning centres in Denbighshire, of which ELWa, and, after merger, the Assembly Government, agreed to fund £2.9 million.

In June 2006, Denbighshire County Council made the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills aware that the project had a projected overspend of £1.2 million. Project activity ceased while, at the invitation of my department, Denbighshire County Council redeveloped the project within the confines of the original budget. Denbighshire County Council submitted a revised project at the end of August 2006.

Due to the scale of the changes to the project, it has been necessary to carefully re-assess this project to ensure it represents proper value for money before proceeding. That review is now near its conclusion and officers will shortly be communicating the outcome to Denbighshire County Council.

Peter Black: How much of the budget for community-focused schools has been committed in the current financial year? (WAQ48389)

Jane Davidson: The full budget of £3.6 million has been allocated to local authorities.

William Graham: Will the Minister outline discussions she has held concerning standardising school holidays throughout Wales and the UK? (WAQ48392)

Jane Davidson: The responsibility for setting school holidays lies with the local education authority. My officials have discussed this issue with the Welsh Local Government Association and also individual LEAs. Each LEA sets out its own holidays in consultation with unions locally, though in recent years, a gradual move towards uniformity has taken place. We encourage LEAs in Wales to consult with each other to set their term dates, which can only be good practice, and we would welcome an all-Wales agreement, which is currently under discussion.

Janet Ryder: What assessment has been made of the impact on LEA budgets of teaching increasing numbers of children of migrant workers? (WAQ48447)

Jane Davidson: My officials have undertaken an audit of the numbers of migrant workers' children registered at schools in Wales, in conjunction with English as additional language co-ordinators in LEAs. The growing numbers place an obvious pressure on LEA budgets and service delivery. Authorities already receive annual shares of a £5 million ethnic minority achievement grant, which seeks to address the needs of children with additional language needs. We are currently reviewing with authorities how the additional pressures might be addressed.

Michael German: Will the Minister clarify whether or not, in the compilation of published statistics on GSCE pass rates, GNVQ and BTEC results are included; are they given equal weight and, if not, why not? (WAQ48455)

Jane Davidson: A range of performance indicators for key stage 4 examination performance are published annually both at a national level and, for secondary schools, at individual school level on RE2 summaries. As in previous years, where indicators refer to 'GCSEs or vocational equivalents', they include full GCSEs, GCSE short courses, GNVQs and NVQs.

The wider point score was introduced specifically to meet the need to have an indicator that recognised the full breadth of achievement of pupils in Wales. It aims to provide a points equivalency based on level and grade achieved for all approved qualifications. Most qualifications have been given a points

equivalence, based on the level and volume of learning associated with each qualification. For some qualification types, such as GCSEs and GNVQs, the same points system is used for all subjects. For other qualification types, such as BTECs, points scores have been determined separately for each qualification.

A full review of performance measures used at key stage 4 and published on school performance summaries—the RE2 form—is in hand for this academic year. The review will seek to address issues regarding the inclusion of BTECs and other approved qualifications in all appropriate performance indicators ensuring that we have a robust set of indicators that meet the needs of all our education partners in Wales.

In the interim we firmly believe that the wider points score is the most suitable and robust vehicle currently available to recognise the full range of achievement in our schools: whilst other measures may be more suitable in the future they require further work and consideration before implementation.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister confirm that the Afan Forest Park has been removed from its strategic search area? (WAQ48373)

The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones): Part of Afan Forest Park is within the boundary of strategic search area F, as defined within technical advice note 8 on renewable energy.

I understand that the consultants, Arup, have undertaken extensive research for the local authorities covered by this SSA, and will be reporting at year end to assist the authorities to refine the SSA taking account of local factors.

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on recycling across Wales? (WAQ48388)

Carwyn Jones: The latest available figures for the recycling of all wastes in Wales are published in the ‘Sustainable Development Indicators for Wales, 2006’ report. This identifies that an estimated 6.9 million tonnes (53 per cent) of the controlled waste produced in Wales in 2002-03 was recycled, composted or re-used, compared to around 4.5 million tonnes (41 per cent) in 1998-99.

National Assembly for Wales performance indicators are used to monitor local authority performance in reuse, recycling and composting of municipal waste. The all-Wales performance in the National Assembly for Wales performance indicators for 2005-06 was 23.12 per cent, compared to 19.44 per cent in the previous year. Nine local authorities have met their waste strategy target of 25 per cent in 2006-07 a year early.

Elin Jones: Will the Minister provide a breakdown on the funding provided for each scheme included within the Tir Cymru budget line within the draft budget? (WAQ48395)

Carwyn Jones: The indicative funding is as follows:

Scheme	£000s 2007-08*
Catchment sensitive farming	2,400
Tir Mynydd payments	16,772**
Tir Cynnal compulsory modulation	0
Tir Cynnal exchequer payments	5,000
Tir Cynnal receipts	0

Environmental monitoring	1,900
CCW Tir Gofal grant	28,053***
Tir Gofal receipts (voluntary modulation)	0
TOTAL Tir Cymru BEL	54,125
EU Funding	5,238
Modulation	12,000
Total projected spend	71,363

*draft budget proposals

** excludes £5.238 million EU funding

***includes £8.1 million for Tir Gofal capital works

Karen Sinclair: Has the Minister received any correspondence requesting the ceasing of waste tipping at the Hafod quarry in Johnstown from any Assembly Members other than Karen Sinclair or Janet Ryder? (WAQ48396)

Carwyn Jones: I have received letters about the case from other Assembly Members but the only other members to ask me to intervene to stop waste tipping are Brynle Williams and Nick Bourne.

Elin Jones: Will the Minister be considering, as part of his deliberations on GM co-existence measures, the legal opinion presented to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs by Friends of the Earth, the Soil Association and GM Frieze regarding its consultation on co-existence measures, and can he confirm that he has received a copy? (WAQ48397)

Carwyn Jones: I understand that the legal opinion is a direct response to the recent coexistence consultation paper issued by DEFRA. I received a copy of the legal opinion on 31 October 2006, and it will be considered in developing a separate, more robust, coexistence consultation paper for Wales.

Questions to the Finance Minister

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on the Wales consequentials arising out of the Jamie Oliver money announced by the Chancellor last year to improve the nutrition in school meals? (WAQ48368)

The Finance Minister (Sue Essex): This initiative is being funded from within the existing baselines of the Department for Education and Skills. As there was no increase to a departmental baseline, Barnett does not apply. Funding beyond 2007-08 is a matter for the next comprehensive spending review. The Assembly is however making £5 million available in 2006-07 for nutrition in schools and £10 million in 2007-08.

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the difference in pay scales for housing officers between local authorities in Wales? (WAQ48393)

Sue Essex: The roles and responsibilities of housing officers can vary between local authorities and other organisations like social landlords. Pay scales are therefore a matter for local authorities and are determined locally.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Nick Bourne: How many children are currently in care in each local authority area in Wales and will the Minister provide the figures by local authority area for the last ten years? (WAQ48369)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Brian Gibbons): The total number of children looked after by Welsh local authorities since 1998 is attached at Annex A. These exclude children looked after by an English local authority and placed in Wales.

Information published by the data unit in Social Services Statistics Wales at <http://www.dataunitwales.gov.uk/PSS> - Figures available on the site are post 1998.

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister provide details of the new Denticare surgeries in Lampeter and Aberystwyth with particular reference to the number of dentists employed and the number of patient places available? (WAQ48370)

Brian Gibbons: The Lampeter surgery currently has three dentists, with a fourth dentist due to start as soon as routine checks are complete. The practice has the capacity for 11,000 patients. There are presently four dentists at the practice in Aberystwyth, with a further two dentists joining the practice in November. An additional dentist will commence work when a back-to-work course has been completed. It has the capacity for 15,400 patients.

Leanne Wood: What statements has the Welsh Assembly Government made to the NHS trusts concerning the funding of 'Agenda for Change'? (WAQ48372)

Brian Gibbons: The 2006-07 local health board and Health Commission Wales revenue allocation document contains the national finance agreement 2006-07, including reference to 'Agenda for Change'. Although addressed to local health boards and Health Commission Wales, this contains the information required by trusts concerning 'Agenda for Change' funding in 2006-07. A copy of the document may be accessed at http://www.wales.nhs.uk/documents/WHC_2005_094.pdf.

Elin Jones: What consideration has the Minister given to a public and community health council consultation for proposed NHS trust mergers and will he detail the conditions for these consultations? (WAQ48376)

Brian Gibbons: Certain proposals to reconfigure health services across Wales have the potential to give rise to related proposals to change management arrangements. On matters of potential trust organisational change, the Welsh Assembly Government's Department for Health and Social Services issued earlier this month additional guidance to assist NHS organisations in Wales taking forward such changes and in fulfilling their statutory obligations on consultation.

Any organisational change will be of considerable interest to those who work in the service, to patients, the public and other stakeholders. Trusts have been advised that clearly communicated proposals and proper engagement and consultation, done at the right time is key to ensuring there is an understanding of why change may be needed.

A copy of this guidance has been placed in the Library. The document provides detail on how the process could work and the statutory position.

Jonathan Morgan: Will the Minister provide details of any financial debt or credit involving all Welsh NHS organisations bordering England relating to the treatment of patients from outside Wales? (WAQ48379)

Brian Gibbons: There is a net position of approximately 6,000 more English patients registered with Welsh GP's than Welsh residents registered with English GP's. The Department of Health currently transfers a net £2.217 million to the Welsh Assembly to pay for the treatment costs of these patients, which are operationally managed by local health boards.

As part of discussions on arrangements for patients currently registered with a GP across the border from the patient's place of residence in named LHBs/primary care trusts along the border, the Department of Health and the Welsh Assembly Government agreed an interim handling strategy in February 2005. In December 2005, the Department of Health and the Welsh Assembly Government agreed that the interim protocol would continue until April 2007.

Welsh Assembly Government Officials are in regular and ongoing discussions with the Department of Health to ensure that there are no unforeseen effects on either side of the border.

Jonathan Morgan: What is the average a) daily cost, b) monthly cost, and c) annual cost of hospital beds in Wales? (WAQ48380)

Brian Gibbons: Figures are available for cost per patient-day only. The average daily cost per patient for in-patient and daycase treatment is £348.50. This average cost has been calculated from NHS trust 2005-06 specialty and cost returns, and is derived from the differing costs of the wide range of procedures carried out by NHS trusts. Costs per patient day range from relatively low cost procedures such as rehabilitation medicine at £194.69 per day and geriatrics at £205.34 per day, to relatively expensive treatments such as neo-natal intensive care unit at £900.62 per day and cardiothoracic surgery at £1,109.34 per day.

It would be misleading to use the average daily cost of £348.50 per patient day to calculate an average monthly or annual cost of a hospital bed, as this would not take account of the case mix of individual NHS trusts or the significant differences in the costs of treatments.

Jonathan Morgan: How many a) Welsh registered patients were treated in England, and b) English registered patients were treated in Wales in the last month for when figures are available and will the Minister give a monthly breakdown of this figure dating back to May 1999? (WAQ48381)

Brian Gibbons: The available information relates to patients treated on an in-patient or day case basis only and is shown in the following table.

Patients treated, by month and country of registration (a)

Month	Patients registered in	
	Wales treated in England	England treated in Wales
May 1999	2,100	656
June 1999	2,397	794
July 1999	2,571	935
August 1999	2,362	1,206
September 1999	2,517	893
October 1999	2,670	683
November 1999	2,586	570
December 1999	2,516	607
January 2000	2,358	495

February 2000	2,688	496
March 2000	2,937	548
April 2000	2,402	720
May 2000	2,681	789
June 2000	2,645	878
July 2000	2,519	940
August 2000	2,640	1,275
September 2000	2,470	787
October 2000	2,660	731
November 2000	2,657	560
December 2000	2,418	541
January 2001	2,468	529
February 2001	2,452	501
March 2001	2,636	550
April 2001	2,629	770
May 2001	2,725	860
June 2001	2,536	873
July 2001	2,664	1,009
August 2001	2,778	1,362
September 2001	2,527	847
October 2001	2,851	826
November 2001	2,785	578
December 2001	2,381	623
January 2002	2,604	599
February 2002	2,420	609
March 2002	2,584	651
April 2002	2,949	841
May 2002	3,073	887
June 2002	2,555	959
July 2002	2,982	1,050
August 2002	2,777	1,321
September 2002	2,842	945
October 2002	2,780	868
November 2002	2,728	668
December 2002	2,415	636
January 2003	2,606	639
February 2003	2,438	582
March 2003	2,628	632
April 2003	2,918	869
May 2003	2,910	943
June 2003	2,944	986
July 2003	3,104	1,077
August 2003	2,831	1,479
September 2003	2,923	858
October 2003	3,036	796
November 2003	2,856	606
December 2003	2,875	649
January 2004	2,934	593
February 2004	2,772	553
March 2004	3,075	605
April 2004	3,036	816
May 2004	2,912	813
June 2004	3,183	915

July 2004	3,285	995
August 2004	3,158	1,342
September 2004	3,069	896
October 2004	3,154	715
November 2004	3,328	613
December 2004	3,155	628
January 2005	3,076	554
February 2005	2,958	487
March 2005	2,922	659
April 2005	3,606	692
May 2005	3,644	791
June 2005	3,681	866
July 2005	3,818	887
August 2005	3,694	1,252
September 2005	3,720	840
October 2005	3,747	737
November 2005	3,608	554
December 2005	3,597	605
January 2006	3,627	491
February 2006	3,381	431
March 2006	4,010	539
April 2006	3,510	750
May 2006	3,843	766
June 2006	3,865	820
July 2006	3,645	905
August 2006	3,639	1,267

Source: Patient Episode Database for Wales

(a) Hospital spells.

Jonathan Morgan: How many incidents of delayed transfers of care were there in the most recent month for when figures are available and will the Minister list this monthly figure dating back to May 1999? (WAQ48382)

Brian Gibbons: Comparable and consistent information prior to November 2002 is not available. The number of delayed transfers of care in Wales as recorded on the delayed transfer of care database at the census point each month since November 2002 is set out in the table below.

The figures include delays in all settings where an individual is not most appropriately placed. This can include, for example, where an individual is ready to be moved to another NHS setting for ongoing treatment and where their current setting is not the most appropriate for their needs. It can also include situations where no suitable place is available or where an individual refuses to move to a setting that best meets their assessed needs.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2002											1,067	987
2003	1,071	994	1,116	1,011	1,079	1,002	1,075	1,075	1,116	1,008	1,113	988
2004	1,096	1,032	1,010	934	906	856	795	829	785	790	798	738
2005	806	764	700	689	721	674	670	685	717	699	688	621
2006	659	610	618	601	611	612	574	646	731			

Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the provision of social services in Cardiff? (WAQ48387)

Brian Gibbons: The legal responsibility for assessing needs, and planning and commissioning social services to meet those needs in Cardiff rests with Cardiff County Council. The Assembly Government's role is to take action at a strategic level to support and develop the provision of services by local authorities in Wales.

The joint review undertaken on the council in 2002 showed a clear need for the authority to modernise its services and it has since made a substantial improvement in children's services, to the extent that the protocol used for dealing with serious concerns was lifted in September 2006. I understand that the council is now consulting on proposed changes to its adult services, including learning disability services.

Peter Black: How much has been spent in each NHS trust in Wales on capital maintenance in each of the last four financial years? (WAQ48390)

Brian Gibbons: Building refurbishment costs are not held centrally.

Lisa Francis: Does the Minister know if the local health board is content with the survey carried out of the proposed site of the new Porthmadog Hospital? (WAQ48431)

Lisa Francis: Can the Minister explain why, from the second week of October, cranes were static on the site of the new Porthmadog Hospital and no building work appeared to be taking place? (WAQ48432)

Lisa Francis: Does the Minister know if there are any drainage problems on the site of the new Porthmadog hospital? (WAQ48433)

Brian Gibbons: The local health board has been consulted on the re-siting of the Porthmadog Hospital to Tremadog. Gwynedd LHB is content with the surveys commissioned by North West Wales NHS Trust for the proposed new site. The LHB is represented in the hospital project group team and continues to work closely with the trust in supporting the implementation of the new build.

Work has not stopped on site since its commencement and a mass concrete pour to the foundations and floor slab along with the reinforced steel work is currently progressing. All drainage requirements have been addressed in the design and the main drains are currently under construction. In the professional opinion of the design team there are no major concerns with regard to the drainage of the site. Generally, the work is progressing steadily on the site and completion is anticipated in November 2007 as scheduled.

David Lloyd: Will the Minister detail the exact timeframe for final decision on the future of Fairwood Hospital and ward 1 at Hill House Hospital, Swansea, following Swansea LHB's decision of 19 October and will he outline the time that he has to make an appeal decision, should the community health council oppose the LHB decision? (WAQ48434)

Brian Gibbons: 'WHC (2004) 084: Shaping Services Locally' sets out the arrangements under which community health councils are involved in the process to consider changes to local health services. Should a CHC contest proposals that local NHS communities have consulted upon, the following timetable is followed:

- The CHC must confirm that it intends to agree with or contest the proposals within six weeks of the end of the consultation period
- The NHS body that is leading the consultation process is required to submit a report within one week of a request to do so by the Assembly's regional office

- That regional office will convene a meeting, in most circumstances with the relevant NHS body(ies) and the CHC, within one month with the aim of reaching local resolution
- Where local resolution cannot be reached, the regional office will make a referral to me within one week of the local meeting
- Within a further month the regional office will provide me with advice and a recommendation
- I will aim to reach a decision within four weeks of the receipt of all relevant information

The overall timescale for a decision is therefore normally expected to be within 20 weeks of the closure of the consultation.

Lisa Francis: Will the Minister confirm when the new cardiac monitoring unit at Bronglais Hospital, Aberystwyth is likely to open? (WAQ48472)

Lisa Francis: Will the Minister make a statement on the proposed staffing levels at the new cardiac monitoring unit at Bronglais Hospital, Aberystwyth? (WAQ48473)

Lisa Francis: Will the Minister provide an update on the progress of the new cardiac monitoring unit at Bronglais Hospital, Aberystwyth? (WAQ48474)

Brian Gibbons: I am delighted to advise that the enabling works for the cardiac monitoring unit at Bronglais commenced on 11 September and are scheduled for completion over the next two weeks. The current acute ward that takes cardiac patients will then be temporarily relocated elsewhere within the hospital and the building works on the cardiac monitoring unit will start during the first week of December. Staff and patients have been fully involved in the design of the new unit, which will meet the needs of modern cardiac care.

The full programme of work is expected to take nine months with patients being admitted to the new unit in the autumn of 2007. Medical and Technical support staff have already been recruited and are currently providing enhanced cardiology services to patients. The nurse recruitment will take place during the summer of next year to ensure that the requisite staff and clinical skills are in place prior to the unit opening.

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement on discussions held between the Welsh Assembly Government and the Home Office concerning the operation of police forces in Wales? (WAQ48385)

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart): I have kept the Assembly fully informed of my discussions with the Home Office on police issues through letters to Assembly Members, regular statements to Plenary and updates to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee.

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement about the Assembly Government policies to improve the life chances of children from low-income families of Wales? (WAQ48386)

Edwina Hart: The Assembly Government is fully committed to meeting our target of eradicating child poverty by 2020. In order to achieve this, a significant number of policies and programmes are in place across Assembly Government portfolios, which are tackling poverty across Wales. The child poverty implementation plan builds on these so that we can go further and provide all children in Wales with the social equality they deserve.

Helen Mary Jones: What discussions has the Minister recently held with UK Ministers regarding the number of young people from Wales currently held in custody, and the number of young people currently held in custody within facilities located in Wales? (WAQ48398)

Edwina Hart: Primary responsibility for the provision of juvenile secure accommodation in England and Wales lies with the Youth Justice Board. I have regular meetings with Professor Rod Morgan, the chairman of the Youth Justice Board and we have agreed to pursue a number of recommendations for increasing the capacity of the secure estate within Wales.

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on what further steps the Welsh Assembly Government will take to encourage sensible attitudes to substance misuse in Wales? (WAQ48399)

Edwina Hart: The fourth substance misuse annual report that I provided to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee on 21 September 2006 sets out the priorities for action in this area for the next 12 months. It can be found on the intranet.

William Graham: Will the Minister outline the need to review cross-cutting guidance to tackle substance misuse in Wales? (WAQ48400)

Edwina Hart: The eight-year Welsh substance misuse strategy, 'Tackling Substance Misuse in Wales—A partnership approach', is a cross-cutting strategy. A review of the strategy is now under way and will form the basis of the development of a new strategy to be in place from May 2008. The review will also consider the need to update those modules of the substance misuse treatment framework for Wales that are over two years old.

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on progress in tackling binge drinking among young people in Wales? (WAQ48401)

Edwina Hart: The fourth substance misuse annual report that I provided to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee on 21 September included an update on progress in tackling binge drinking. This can be found on the intranet.

William Graham: Will the Minister outline discussions held concerning the future of police forces in Wales? (WAQ48402)

Edwina Hart: I have kept the Assembly fully informed of my discussions on the future of police forces in Wales through letters to Assembly Members, regular statements to Plenary and updates to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee.

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister update us on her policies for regenerating towns across mid and West Wales? (WAQ48403)

Edwina Hart: The physical regeneration fund assists local authorities and national park authorities with capital costs in support of physical regeneration projects. Since 2004, I have approved nearly £4.8 million to schemes impacting on towns in mid and west Wales. This includes nearly £1.3 million for Llanelli town centre and £1.3 million to Powys Built Heritage. The national parks of the Brecon Beacons and the Pembrokeshire coast have received £1.26 million to enhance Brecon and Crickhowell and historic townscapes in Pembrokeshire.

Carl Sargeant: Will the Minister make a statement on the work of the fire and rescue services in Wales? (WAQ48404)

Edwina Hart: I refer you to the fire and rescue national framework, published in March 2005. This sets out our expectations of the fire and rescue service and the support that it can expect from us.

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on tackling fuel poverty in Wales? (WAQ48405)

Edwina Hart: The home energy efficiency scheme is the Welsh Assembly Government's main vehicle for tackling fuel poverty. It has assisted over 64,000 vulnerable households since 2000. Both in 2006-07 and 2007-08, an additional £5 million is available to assist pensioner households through HEES, bringing the total budget to £19.6 million in each year.

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the all-Wales youth offending strategy? (WAQ48406)

Edwina Hart: I reported progress on the delivery of the all-Wales youth offending strategy to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee on 21 September. This report is available on the Welsh Assembly Government intranet.

Jonathan Morgan: What plans does the Minister have to re-examine the criteria for allocating Communities First money? (WAQ48407)

Edwina Hart: None. The recently published interim evaluation of Communities First confirmed that my decision to focus Communities First funding on partnership support costs and capacity building among residents was the right one.

Jonathan Morgan: What discussions has the Minister had with the Home Office about youth justice initiatives in Wales? (WAQ48408)

Edwina Hart: The Youth Justice Board has primary responsibility for the operation of youth justice services in England and Wales, including the commissioning of juvenile secure accommodation. I regularly meet with Professor Rod Morgan, the chairman of the Youth Justice Board, to discuss all youth justice issues relevant to Wales. Issues that we have discussed recently include a review of arrangements for performance monitoring of youth offending teams and the future provision of juvenile secure accommodation in Wales.

Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on regeneration initiatives in Penarth? (WAQ48409)

Edwina Hart: I have approved £65,000 Physical Regeneration Fund development money for the design of a new road and parking layout for Penarth town centre. I have also approved from the community facilities and activities programme over £231,101 revenue funding for youth project workers at the Chill Out Penarth youth project and £10,725 towards electrical system renewal and other repairs at the Elfed Avenue United Church.

Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on initiatives to combat crime in South Wales Central? (WAQ48410)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government and the Home Office have provided over £26 million to community safety partnerships in South Wales Central since 1999 to help them to develop and deliver local strategies that reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.

Eleanor Burnham: What is the Welsh Assembly Government doing to tackle homelessness in Wales? (WAQ48411)

Edwina Hart: We have set out our agenda to tackle this problem in our national homelessness strategy 2006-08, which we published in November last year.

Peter Black: Will the Minister make a statement on drug and alcohol rehabilitation services? (WAQ48412)

Edwina Hart: Drug rehabilitation services are commissioned by community safety partnerships at a local level according to local needs and priorities. There are 115 places for residential rehabilitation and 46 places for in-patient detoxification in Wales.

Eleanor Burnham: Will the Minister make a statement on housing for older people in Wales? (WAQ48413)

Edwina Hart: We are taking forward housing for older people on several fronts including implementing the recommendations of the wide-ranging review on adaptations, including disabled facilities grants and research emanating from last year's national debate on independence and the housing needs of older people. These cover specialised housing accommodation, a mapping exercise on goods and services for older people and the formulation of strategic principles for local authorities to adopt in their policies for older people. We are also supporting two loan projects being undertaken by local authority consortia and are funding the care and repair movement in excess of £4 million.

In addition, we have allocated a total of £33 million over two financial years commencing in 2006-07 for the funding of eight new extra care schemes across Wales. A further £8 million has been allocated for the development of three new extra care schemes in 2008-09. This builds upon our existing programme of eight schemes, five of which are complete, with total funding of £25 million.

Karen Sinclair: What discussions has the Minister had on community policing in north Wales? (WAQ48414)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government is working closely with community safety partnerships in north Wales to deliver local strategies to reduce crime and anti social behaviour and community policing is integral to this.

The Assembly Government is also providing further funding through the Communities First programme for North Wales Police's community beat scheme. This successful project includes a co-ordinator who has established useful contacts between the police and Communities First areas and community beat officers who engage with and support the people living in those areas.

Nick Bourne: What assessment has the Minister made on the impact on Wales of the report of the House of Commons' Trade and Industry Committee on the future of post offices? (WAQ48451)

Edwina Hart: These issues are for the UK Government to address. The recommendations contained in the report reflect the views expressed by the Welsh Assembly Government in correspondence at ministerial and official level with colleagues in Whitehall.