

Written Questions answered between 6 and 13 July 2006

[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

Anne Jones: Who is the lead Welsh Minister responsible for cross-cutting measures aimed at tackling the problems caused by illegal and anti-social use of mini-motorbikes in Wales? (WAQ47487)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): While Carwyn Jones, Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside, has the lead on all problems relating to off-road vehicles in the countryside, Assembly Government Ministers with responsibility for transport, community safety and sport are also involved in this matter.

Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

Laura Anne Jones: Would the Minister make a statement on how the Welsh Assembly Government supports off-road motorcycling in Wales? (WAQ47480) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside.*

Laura Anne Jones: Would the Minister outline Welsh Assembly Government's policy for the provision of off-road motorcycling facilities in Wales? (WAQ47481) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside.*

The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones): The Welsh Assembly Government supports off-road motorcycling as a legitimate recreational activity on appropriate routes and sites in Wales and acknowledges its contribution to local economies. Earlier this year the Wales off-road motorcycling steering group produced its first report which contained a series of recommendations designed to improve provision for responsible and legal off-roading activity. These recommendations have been endorsed by the Assembly Government and are now being followed up by the group with key partners.

As part of this the Assembly Government's draft 'Technical Advice Note (Wales) 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Spaces' indicates that local authorities should seek to identify suitable sites for off-road motorcycling taking account of noise, conservation and other relevant issues.

Questions to the Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on transport policy in Wales? (WAQ47442)

The Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks (Andrew Davies): I refer you to the answer I gave you on 28 June 2006 to WAQ47355.

Mark Isherwood: Will the Minister confirm a) ERH Communications Limited's obligation provide the Welsh Assembly Government with a copy of its annual accounts; b) whether or not the Welsh Assembly Government has received these accounts; and c) if they have not been received, give the reason why? (WAQ47486)

Andrew Davies: I can confirm that:

- a) before considering any firm for a contract Transport Wales requires a copy of its annual accounts for scrutiny;
- b) ERH Communications Limited provided those accounts;

c) not applicable.

David Lloyd: What discussions has the Minister had on the safety of liquefied natural gas with regard to the pipeline from Milford Haven to Herefordshire, and the gas pressure reduction station at Cilfrew? (WAQ47488)

Andrew Davies: I have attended a number of meetings with National Grid Transco concerning the LNG pipeline, at which safety has been discussed.

I discussed the pressure reduction installation near the village of Cilfrew at a recent meeting with National Grid Transco at which it advised that following public concern about the installation being too close to the village it has identified an alternative site which is 0.5 km away.

Ann Jones: How many of the staff in the Minister's department work on (a) rail, (b) road, (c) aviation, (d) waterways, (e) walking and (f) cycling related matters? (WAQ47493)

Andrew Davies: Of the 171 staff in post in Transport Wales on 1 July, (a) 11 full-time equivalent staff work on rail transport, (b) 130 work on roads (including staff working on land acquisition and management and statutory orders), (c) two work on aviation, (d) no staff work on waterways (which is a non-devolved policy area), (e) and (f) three work on cycling and walking. The balance of the staff are engaged in supporting these.

In addition two members of staff within my department's policy and strategy group have an interest in transport matters.

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the development of a new, more rigorous, cycling proficiency test in Wales? (WAQ47494)

Andrew Davies: A new national standard for cycle training—a successor to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents's cycling proficiency test has been developed for use in the UK. I would encourage local authorities in Wales, who are responsible for providing cycle training, to use this national standard.

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the funding for initiatives to promote cycling in Wales relative to England, Scotland and Northern Ireland? (WAQ47495)

Andrew Davies: Each part of the UK determines its own funding mechanism according to its circumstances. Each part contributes to funding UK-wide cycle programmes, for example, Bike Week.

I would also refer you to my reply to Nick Bourne's WAQ45836 on 15 February 2006, and Alun Pugh, the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport's replies to Janet Ryder's WAQ46916 on 18 May 2006, and to John Griffiths's WAQ4426 on 5 October 2005.

Ann Jones: What support is the Minister's department giving to (a) Denbighshire and (b) other Welsh local authorities to encourage children to cycle to school? (WAQ47496)

Andrew Davies: Since 2000 Denbighshire County Council has received £588,800 to progress safe routes to school schemes in their area. Across Wales approximately £22 million has been allocated to this initiative.

Ann Jones: What has been the change in the extent of cycling as a result of the various cycling initiatives undertaken in Wales since 2000? (WAQ47497)

Andrew Davies: It is not possible to quantify the change in extent of cycling as a result of initiatives since 2000. National transport statistics for cycling rates show no meaningful change over this period of time.

Ann Jones: On what basis do local authorities determine (a) along which stretches of major roads cycle lanes are provided and (b) how those cycle lanes are to interlink with other infrastructure, with particular reference to bus stops and parking bays? (WAQ47499)

Andrew Davies: It is a matter for individual local authorities to determine the need for cycling infrastructure and its links to modal interchanges in their area, with reference to the walking and cycling strategy for Wales. The Assembly does however spend approximately £1.0 million per annum providing infrastructure allowing national and local cycle routes to safely negotiate the trunk road network in consultation with the local authorities.

Ann Jones: How many times has the Minister met with representatives of Wales's cycling community in the last 12 months? (WAQ47500)

Andrew Davies: I have redirected formal meetings with Wales's cycling community to my Deputy Minister, Tamsin Dunwoody, who chairs our walking and cycling forum for Wales. I do, however, in the course of carrying out my engagements/duties meet such representatives informally but would not be able to identify how many times this has happened in the last 12 months.

Ann Jones: How many miles of cycle lanes have been constructed in Wales in each year since 2000, broken down by local authority area? (WAQ47501)

Andrew Davies: The Welsh Assembly Government does not routinely collect this information.

The attached table provides available information for specific cycling schemes mainly targeted at promoting safe cycling on the trunk road network and providing interfaces with local and national cycle routes.

SUSTRANS Cymru has indicated that the following lengths of the national cycle network have been completed from 2000.

National cycle network (miles)

2001	65
2002	80
2003	55
2004	50
2005	80

Cycleway lengths completed on trunk roads in Wales since 2000 (metres)

Local Authority Area	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
Monmouthshire	550	850					1,400
Cardiff					2,400		2,400
Neath Port Talbot	110						110
Carmarthenshire		1,930	1,970	2,950			6,850

Local Authority Area	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
Pembrokeshire	3,700		2,150		1,390		7,240
Ceredigion			5,590		2,400	420	8,410
Powys		2,400		720	750	2,600	6,470
Denbighshire				1,200	4,000		5,200
Conwy			2,070				2,070
Flintshire			1,930				1,930
Gwynedd		1,530	2,000	550		1,170	5,250
Total	4,360	6,710	15,710	5,420	10,940	4,190	47,330

Ann Jones: What estimate has the Minister made of the number of people in Wales who used a pedal cycle at least once a week in the last period for which figures are available? (WAQ47502)

Andrew Davies: Information from the national travel survey suggests that around 12 per cent of people living in Wales (aged six and over) used a bicycle at least once a week during 2003: that is equivalent to over 300,000 people. This compares with around 14 per cent of people in Great Britain as a whole.

A more recent figure, for 2005, will become available later this year, when the results of the 2005 'Living in Wales' survey are published.

Ann Jones: How does the Minister's department (a) assist and (b) assess progress of Welsh local authorities in (i) developing cycling, (ii) setting local targets for cycling and (iii) preparing the cycling element of local transport plans? (WAQ47503)

Andrew Davies: In 2000, Welsh local authorities were required to submit local transport plans and the then transport department provided guidance for their preparation. The plans included chapters on cycling facilities. They were followed by annual progress reports, which detailed achievements, including progress on walking and cycling strategies. The transport department prepared feedback reports on local transport plans and their annual progress reports and suggested improvements for future years. The department has also published the walking and cycling strategy for Wales.

The Assembly Government has provided capital and revenue funding for the provision of cycling schemes.

The Transport (Wales) Act 2006 requires the Assembly to prepare the Wales transport strategy. One of the themes of the draft strategy is the achievement of a greater use of healthy and sustainable modes of travel (including cycling). Monitoring and evaluation of key transport indicators is incorporated in the strategy. An example of such indicators is 'Walking and cycling as a percentage of local trips for all purposes of less than five miles'.

The new Act requires the four regional transport consortia in Wales to prepare regional transport plans, which will replace the local transport plans.

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on his Department's strategy for (a) increasing cycle journeys and (b) reducing cycling injuries and deaths in Wales? (WAQ47504)

Andrew Davies: In relation to part (a) increasing cycle journeys I refer you to my previous replies to John Griffiths, on 30 November 2005 to WAQ44969 and to WAQ44670 on 9 November 2005.

For part (b) our strategy to help reduce cycling injuries and deaths is in the road safety strategy for Wales, published in 2003.

Mick Bates: Why under the concessionary travel scheme are applicants not permitted to purchase a bus pass as well as using the concessionary travel tokens in order that they can travel further afield? (WAQ47527)

Andrew Davies: Under the concessionary travel scheme bus passes are statutorily free and the tokens are at the discretion of the local authorities.

The notes for guidance make it clear that, at the discretion of the local authority, qualifying people may surrender their free bus passes and request travel tokens instead. We included this option as some rural areas of Wales have relatively infrequent local bus services. However, a local authority has the discretion to extend our concessionary fares scheme provided it complies with the Assembly Government's criteria and it funds any additional service.

Nick Bourne: What representations has the Minister made to Royal Mail about the threat of job losses in Wales due to the introduction of new sorting machines? (WAQ47529) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration.*

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart): I meet representatives from the Royal Mail on a regular basis to discuss the range of matters relating to the business in Wales, including new investment and the impact on jobs.

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the roadworks on the A44 at Llanbadarn, Aberystwyth? (WAQ47530)

Andrew Davies: Late last month normal maintenance resurfacing work commenced on two sites in this area of the A44, one either side of Llanbadarn square. These works are now completed.

My department has commissioned studies into ways of improving traffic flow through the Llanbadarn square junction, and now believe that we have identified a viable improvement. The Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency has made arrangements to display these proposals to the local community at the Parc Llety Hotel in Llanbadarn on 19 July.

Nick Bourne: What is the Minister doing to tackle overcrowding on trains between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury? (WAQ47531)

Andrew Davies: As I announced yesterday, I have strengthened the Cambrian Coast, Cambrian mainline and Heart of Wales railways with funding for extra rolling stock. This will relieve summer overcrowding and is additional to Arriva Trains Wales having already increased the number of carriages on a number of services between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury. I have also commissioned a feasibility study on the case for undertaking the infrastructure works required to enable an enhancement of the service between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury, from two hourly to hourly, in conjunction with the project for installing the European rail traffic management system.

Questions to the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Ann Jones: What assessment has the Minister made of the principal effects of using the Cymorth formula to allocate funding for Flying Start instead of the free school meals formula set out in the consultation? (WAQ47444)

The Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Davidson): The principal effect of using the Cymorth formula to allocate Flying Start funding is that the monies are more evenly distributed across Wales and between urban and rural areas, reflecting that this is a community-based rather than a school-based intervention.

Ann Jones: When does the Minister plan to announce the final funding allocations under Flying Start? (WAQ47455)

Ann Jones: Will the Minister list for each local authority in Wales how much Flying Start funding they (a) would have received using the free school meals formula originally proposed in the consultation document, and (b) would receive as a result of using the Cymorth formula? (WAQ47445)

Jane Davidson: I have confirmed the final funding allocations, and local authorities have been notified. I will also be making a Cabinet written statement shortly.

A table showing allocations for 2007-08 as proposed in the consultation document (using the free school meal formula) and as confirmed (using the Cymorth formula) is shown below.

Local Authority	Proposed 2007-08 funding allocation in consultation document	Confirmed 2007-08 funding distribution
	£	£
Isle of Anglesey	482,063	544,088
Gwynedd	619,268	804,099
Conwy	422,326	816,332
Denbighshire	255,486	745,967
Flintshire	551,218	1,045,145
Wrexham	1,107,648	1,041,585
Powys	272,300	685,921
Ceredigion	169,419	431,213
Pembrokeshire	511,933	938,929
Carmarthenshire	639,959	1,330,125
Swansea	3,111,388	2,081,398
Neath Port Talbot	1,127,117	1,334,975
Bridgend	941,297	1,106,463
Vale of Glamorgan	493,286	929,574
Rhondda Cynon Taf	3,057,832	2,405,871
Merthyr Tydfil	823,673	746,396
Caerphilly	1,814,800	1,845,877
Blaenau Gwent	741,368	823,930
Torfaen	605,045	974,744
Monmouthshire	312,412	453,813
Newport	2,832,710	1,635,068
Cardiff	5,107,451	3,278,489

Ann Jones: How will the Minister ensure that Flying Start funding is genuinely additional to existing general revenue funding allocated by local education authorities to early years provision? (WAQ47446)

Jane Davidson: Local authorities will be required through grant terms and conditions to use the funding in line with Assembly Government guidance, which is prescriptive about the types of intervention that can be funded under the initiative, and draws upon a menu of a range of options that have demonstrated effectiveness. In addition, local children and young people's partnerships will be required to submit proposals for their Flying Start provision to the Assembly Government for approval before funding is released.

Ann Jones: Will the Minister publish the responses to the consultation on Flying Start? (WAQ47447)

Jane Davidson: The summary report has been published as an annex to the statement of information SF/JD/285/06 at <http://www.information.wales.gov.uk/content/decisionreports/education/education-e.asp>

The full report will be made available via the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills website as soon as practicable.

Ann Jones: How many of the responses received by the consultation on Flying Start advocated using the Cymorth formula as the principal driver for allocating funding? (WAQ47448)

Ann Jones: How many of the responses received by the consultation on Flying Start supported the use of free school meals as the principal driver for allocating funding? (WAQ47450)

Jane Davidson: Thirty-three correspondents, from both rural and urban areas, indicated concern about the use of free school meals as a way of allocating funding, its limitations, and the need to use other poverty indicators. There was no clear indication as to the preferred alternative.

Ann Jones: How many responses have been received by the consultation on Flying Start? (WAQ47449)

Jane Davidson: There were 132 written responses received.

Ann Jones: To what extent was the Ministers' decision to change the formula for allocating Flying Start funding influenced by concerns over the validity of the free school meals pupil level annual school census data supplied by Denbighshire local education authority? (WAQ47452)

Ann Jones: To what extent was the Ministers' decision to change the formula for allocating Flying Start funding influenced by concerns over the validity of the free school meals pupil level annual school census data supplied by local authorities? (WAQ47451)

Jane Davidson: The consultation process raised concerns among respondents that too much emphasis had been placed on the deprivation clusters of the urban south of Wales, and that rural poverty was not necessarily concentrated in centres of population in the same way. In addition, a number of other points were raised:

- A number of the schools listed in the consultation document were scheduled for closure or had unusually large catchments.
- Some of the school catchment areas in this list did not coincide with Cymorth Target areas. Flying Start depends on some Cymorth expenditure in order to achieve the required intensity of intervention.
- Small changes among the pupil population, or the way in which the annual school census was conducted, led to large swings of money as entire schools were included or excluded.

- Anomalous results were recorded, in that well-known areas of severe deprivation were not represented in the free school meal statistics. While I have confidence in the pupil level annual school census process, the high threshold for inclusion of schools in the consultation document (45% free school meal eligibility) exaggerated local difficulties.
- Officials from Denbighshire County Council made representations on these matters, and these were taken account of in reviewing the allocation methodology.

Ann Jones: What representations has the Minister received regarding the validity of the free school meals pupil level annual school census data supplied by Denbighshire local education authority? (WAQ47453)

Ann Jones: What discussions have the Minister and her officials had with Denbighshire local education authority regarding the validity of its free school meals pupil level annual school census data over the last six months? (WAQ47454)

Jane Davidson: Since the start of the year I and my officials have received a number of representations from seven individuals on behalf of Denbighshire LEA or schools which raised specific concerns about the validity of free school meals pupil level annual school census data. Pupil level annual school census data is validated a number of times by school and LEA, I do not see how further validation or checking could be built into the system. Schools and LEAs have a responsibility to ensure the information is accurate: amendment can only be made by receipt of a new pupil level, PLASC file from a school.

Ann Jones: How does the Minister plan to ensure that funding under Flying Start is effectively targeted at children from the most deprived backgrounds? (WAQ47456)

Jane Davidson: The funding is to be targeted at a limited number of school catchment areas in order to invest intensely. The number of children to be reached is capped for each authority, to prevent dilution of funding and to ensure consistency of approach across Wales. This means that approximately £2,000 is available for each targeted child, regardless of where they live in Wales. Local partnerships have total discretion in selecting the school catchments to be targeted, but they are required to demonstrate to the Assembly Government before funding is released that their choices have been based upon recognised poverty indicators such as the 2005 Welsh index of multiple deprivation.

For all catchment areas selected, partnerships have to make a statement as to how they will engage and support the hardest to reach children and families.

Ann Jones: How does the Minister plan to measure the outcomes delivered by the Flying Start programme? (WAQ47457)

Ann Jones: What minimum outcomes does the Minister expect to be delivered by the Flying Start programme? (WAQ47458)

Jane Davidson: There will be an evaluation of the Flying Start scheme to examine its effects and outcomes.

The key measurable outcomes that Flying Start is intended to target are:

- Language development
- Cognitive development
- Social and emotional development
- Physical health
- Early identification of high needs

Anne Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the success of the 'Want2Work' pilot scheme in Rhyl? (WAQ47525)

Jane Davidson: The joint Welsh Assembly Government and Jobcentre Plus Wales European structural funds funded Want2Work project has been operating in Rhyl since February 2006, and is not yet running at full capacity, with two of the team of six advisers due to complete their specialist training shortly.

However, the project is developing partnerships with a number of key local organisations, and latest information from Jobcentre Plus Wales (as at 13 June) indicates that nine people previously claiming inactive benefits were helped into employment during the period March to May 2006.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside

Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on sites of special scientific interest? (WAQ47464)

The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones): Sites of special scientific interest are notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) and represent some of the best examples of our natural heritage of wildlife habitats, geological features and landforms. There are over 1,000 SSSIs in Wales.

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on what further steps the Welsh Assembly Government is taking to reduce litter in Wales? (WAQ47465)

Carwyn Jones: The environment strategy action plan sets out our plans to develop a strategic approach to local environmental quality including tackling litter.

Powers within the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 are due to be implemented in Wales over the next year. These new powers will be extremely valuable in combating littering and fly-tipping offences. We are currently drawing up a timetable for commencement of the remaining sections of the Act in Wales.

The 2005 Act will also enhance litter authorities' functions in connection with fixed penalty notices so that, among other matters, they will be able to specify the level of fixed penalties to apply in their respective areas, and to give discounts for early payment (subject to regulations made by the National Assembly). Further, the 2005 Act will create a new offence where a person to whom an authorised officer proposes to issue a fixed penalty notice fails to give a (or gives a false or misleading) name and address. Local authorities in Wales will therefore be able to take a more proactive approach and step up enforcement action.

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on what action is being taken to improve access to the coast and the countryside in Wales? (WAQ47466)

Carwyn Jones: The public right of access to open countryside under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 was successfully introduced across Wales in May 2005. Research for the Countryside Council for Wales indicates that additional walkers are taking advantage of the new right. In addition, the Assembly Government has recently announced a new coastal access improvement programme. The programme aims to improve access to the coast for local communities and visitors through local path improvements, including new circular routes and sections suitable for horse riders and cyclists. In the longer term our aim is for a good quality all Wales coastal path to be developed linking up existing trails like the Pembrokeshire coastal path.

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on measures to make the Welsh Assembly Government carbon neutral? (WAQ47467)

Carwyn Jones: Our present sustainable development action plan runs only until 2007. We cannot achieve carbon neutrality by 2007 (the UK Government's target date is 2012), but when we come to refresh our sustainable development agenda, we shall certainly look at the plans others are making, to see what we can learn from them.

There are three elements to achieving carbon neutrality. The first is reducing our use of fuel and energy. The second is buying the fuel and energy we use from sustainable sources where possible. The third is offsetting those carbon emissions we cannot avoid. Measures being taken are:

- 1) Reducing our use of fuel and energy on the administrative estate and in our day-to-day business
 - Establishment of an environmental management system via the Green Dragon scheme, which manages the organisation's environmental impacts, including 'energy use' and 'transport'.
 - Commissioning energy audits of all buildings to enable prioritisation and implementation of energy efficiency works.
 - Improving energy efficiency aspects of our service contracts and landlord/lease agreements.
 - Monitoring of gas, electricity use on all our sites and reporting on performance and carbon emissions.
 - Research to upgrade our Building environmental management system.
 - Aiming for 'excellent' Building Research Establishment environmental appraisal method for all new builds and 'very good' aspiring to 'excellent' for major refurbishments.
 - Working with the Carbon Trust at the planning stage of new builds and refurbishments to incorporate sustainable approaches and technologies into our buildings.
 - Implementing a WAG travel policy to encourage more sustainable modes of travel, and local travel plans for all offices to encourage sustainable modes of travel for staff and visitors.
 - Implementation of Green Fleet management to improve the sustainability of vehicles owned and leased by WAG.
 - Our new car hire contract ensures that staff are offered low emission cars (less than 150 gm carbon dioxide per km).
 - Encouraging the use of remote communication/conferencing.
 - Monitoring our business travel in all its forms and reporting on performance and carbon emissions.

2) Reducing our use of fuel and energy on the Department for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks's estate

All new developments which DEIN supports, whether through direct action or by grant aid, are subject to the detailed guidance contained in the documents 'Creating Sustainable Places' and 'Working Differently'. These encourage the highest practical levels of energy efficiency in new buildings, including identifying the potential for more carbon efficient sources of energy.

3) Buying fuel/energy from sustainable sources

Procuring renewable electricity for all administrative buildings by 2010.

4) Carbon offsetting

The present sustainable development action Plan does not include any commitment to offset our carbon emissions, but we are aware of steps the UK Government is taking to offset the emissions from ministerial and official air travel, and we are considering whether we can match or surpass that commitment. That would be part of our exercise to refresh our sustainable development agenda.

Laura Anne Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on how public service bodies are being encouraged to use Welsh local farm produce? (WAQ47468)

Carwyn Jones: My officials have been working alongside Value Wales to improve awareness of availability among procurement officers of Welsh food and drink products and to support the development of skills within the industry to enable suppliers to tender for public sector contract. In addition, activity has been focused on promoting opportunities for collaborative ventures involving the farming industry. Welsh food and drink suppliers' share of the public sector market has increased from 18 per cent in 2003 to 24 per cent in 2005.

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister provide a spend profile (or detail the lowest possible level) per local authority for the provision of the rural retailer grant scheme for each year the funding has been in place? (WAQ47492)

Carwyn Jones: Support for rural retailers is delivered through the rural retail support scheme, which has two elements. The first is an advisory service and the second a small grant which is only accessibly following an advisory session. Details of the awards made in each financial year since the scheme started in 2003-04 are set out in the tables below.

Financial Year 2003-04				
Local Authority	Total Number of Grants	Grant Value (paid)	Total Number of Advice Sessions	Value of Advice Sessions
Anglesey	0	0	2	£1,022.00
Gwynedd	0	0	0	0
Conwy	0	0	2	£ 896.50
Flintshire	0	0	0	0
Denbighshire	0	0	3	£1,154.75
Wrexham	0	0	0	0
Powys	0	0	2	£1,089.75
Vale of Glamorgan	0	0	0	0
Monmouthshire	0	0	0	0
Pembrokeshire	0	0	0	0
Ceredigion	0	0	0	0
Carmarthenshire	0	0	1	£821.32

Financial Year 2004-05				
Local Authority	Total Number of Grants	Grant Value (paid)	Total Number of Advice Sessions	Value of Advice Sessions
Anglesey	3	£13,493.00	6	£2,906.01
Gwynedd	0	0	1	£738.51
Conwy	0	0	1	£437.50
Flintshire	0	0	0	0
Denbighshire	0	0	6	£2,315.75
Wrexham	0	0	0	0
Powys	0	0	7	£2,939.75
Vale of Glamorgan	0	0	0	0
Monmouthshire	0	0	1	£1,250.00
Pembrokeshire	2	£3,582.15	3	£3,659.50
Ceredigion	0	0	1	£428.00
Carmarthenshire	1	£1,825.00	4	£2,576.00

Financial Year 2005-06				
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Local Authority	Total Number of Grants	Grant Value (paid)	Total Number of Advice Sessions	Value of Advice Sessions
Anglesey	2	£6,943.22	4	£1,628.53
Gwynedd	3	£10,728.00	6	£2,682.70
Conwy	2	£5,260.00	1	£405.00
Flintshire	0	0	0	0
Denbighshire	0	0	1	£390.00
Wrexham	0	0	0	0
Powys	0	0	8	£3,167.43
Vale of Glamorgan	0	0	3	£2,040.00
Monmouthshire	0	0	3	£2,645.00
Pembrokeshire	5	£23,367.09	9	£5,784.50
Ceredigion	0	0	6	£2,349.62
Carmarthenshire	1	£1,305.00	0	0

Financial Year 2006-07				
Local Authority	Total Number of Grants Committed to Date	Grant Value committed to Date	Total Number of Advice Sessions Committed	Value of Advice Sessions Committed
Anglesey	2	£10,000.00	3	£2,314.75
Gwynedd	3	£10,113.00	1	£329.00
Conwy	0	0	0	0
Flintshire	0	0	0	0
Denbighshire	0	0	1	£407.20
Wrexham	0	0	0	0
Powys	1	0	3	£1,125.00
Vale of Glamorgan	3	£11,000.00	0	0
Monmouthshire	0	0	0	0
Pembrokeshire	3	£11,400.00	0	0
Ceredigion	1	£6,658.50	0	0
Carmarthenshire	0	0	0	0

Laura Anne Jones: What research has been done into compulsory dry recycling schemes and the impact such schemes have on the disabled? (WAQ47521)

Carwyn Jones: The Assembly Government has not commissioned any research specifically into the impact of recycling schemes on disabled people. We are however, very sensitive to the needs of all sections of the population of Wales in the implementation of our waste strategy.

I would also expect local authority waste management departments and others involved in this industry to act with a degree of sensibility and exercise appropriate discretion towards disabled and elderly people when exercising their powers regarding the sorting and storing of domestic waste for kerbside collection schemes.

Welsh Assembly Government funding for local authority recycling is £32 million in 2006-07. Authorities are using this to increase the reach of recycling schemes and also to improve their civic amenity bring sites to make them more accessible to all, including disabled people.

Questions to the Finance Minister

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on reform of public services in Wales? (WAQ47443)

The Finance Minister (Sue Essex): I expect to make a statement on public service reform shortly after the publication of the report of the review of local service delivery being led by Sir Jeremy Beecham.

Alun Ffred Jones: Beth oedd y cyfraniad o fewn y setliad grant cynnal refeniw yn 2005-06 i gynghorau Cymru ar gyfer yr adolygiad tâl o fewn awdurdodau lleol? (WAQ47462) [W]

Sue Essex: Dros y tair blynedd o 2005-06 hyd 2007-08 i gydnabod y costau ychwanegol a ddaeth yn sgil cynnal adolygiadau cyflog cyfartal, mae setliad llywodraeth leol yn cynnwys cynnydd ariannol sy'n gyfwerth â 4.5 per cent o'r bil cyflogau staff nad ydynt yn athrawon. Mae hwn wedi'i seilio ar waith ymchwil oedd yn amcangyfrif mai hwn fyddai'r gost flynyddol ychwanegol barhaus (Adroddiad Sefydliad Cyflogwyr Llywodraeth Leol 2004).

Alun Ffred Jones: What was the contribution to Welsh councils within the revenue support grant settlement in 2005-06 for the pay review within local authorities? (WAQ47462) [W]

Sue Essex: Over the three years 2005-06 to 2007-08, in recognition of the additional costs arising from equal pay reviews, the local government settlement includes an increase in funding equivalent to 4.5 per cent of the non teaching pay bill. This is based on research which estimated that this will be the additional annual ongoing cost (Local Government Employers Organisation Report 2004).

Alun Ffred Jones: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad am y cynnydd tebygol yng nghyfanswm y derbyniadau o daliadau trethi annomestig yng Nghymru rhwng 2005-06 a 2006-07? (WAQ47463) [W]

Sue Essex: Amcangyfrifir y bydd cyfanswm y derbyniadau o ardrethi annomestig, gan gynnwys derbyniadau o'r rhestr ganolog, yn cynyddu o £672 miliwn i £730 miliwn.

Alun Ffred Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the likely increase in total receipts from non-domestic rate payments in Wales between 2005-06 and 2006-07? (WAQ47463) [W]

Sue Essex: The increase in total receipts from non-domestic rates, including receipts from the central list is estimated to increase from £672 million to £730 million.

Karen Sinclair: Will the Minister make a statement on local development plans in Wales? (WAQ47469)
Transferred for answer by the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside.

Carwyn Jones: Local development plan regulations, local development plan Wales guidance and the local development plan manual are now in place. Local planning authorities seem to be adapting well to the new system, with Assembly officials working with them on their delivery agreements. I intend reporting on progress to a future Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee meeting.

Peter Black: What discussions has the Minister had with UK Government Ministers regarding the future funding of the Welsh Assembly Government? (WAQ47470)

Sue Essex: I meet regularly with Treasury Ministers and raise issues as appropriate.

Karen Sinclair: Will the Minister make a statement on the Welsh Assembly Government's budget for the next three years? (WAQ47471)

Sue Essex: The Assembly budget for 2006-07 is £13.7 billion and 2007-08 is £14.6 billion, an increase of 6.5 per cent. The 2007 comprehensive spending review will provide the Assembly with revised allocations for 2008-09 onwards.

Owen John Thomas: What recent discussion has the Minister received from the Minister for Culture, Welsh language and Sport regarding additional funding for the culture, Welsh language and sport portfolio? (WAQ47472)

Sue Essex: As part of the budget planning round consultation process I meet with all of my Cabinet colleagues to discuss future funding requirements.

William Graham: Will the Minister outline discussions held on the future requirements of the budget for the education, lifelong learning and skills portfolio? (WAQ47473)

Sue Essex: As part of the budget planning round consultation process I meet with all of my Cabinet colleagues to discuss future funding requirements.

John Griffiths: Will the Minister give a progress report on Value Wales? (WAQ47474)

Sue Essex: Value Wales formally came together in April 2006 as part of the Department of Public Services and Performance, to help the public sector to achieve the efficiencies identified in the 'Making the Connections' action plan.

Value Wales is organised into four arms, three of which have an external focus: strategic partnerships, capital and property (including estates) and procurement with estates and corporate procurement services, providing services to the Welsh Assembly Government.

The procurement arm is well established, building on the work of the Welsh procurement initiative. It has a number of successful projects under its belt and other initiatives underway. The capital and property and strategic partnerships teams are being developed to meet the main priorities for 2006-07 and beyond.

Smarter Procurement

Value Wales has recorded some notable achievements to date: delivering efficiency improvements, embedding sustainable development principles, and securing Welsh jobs.

Total savings of £19.15 million were achieved during 2005-06 through:

- collaborative procurement (£14.6 million). Nine collaborative framework contracts let including for personal computers, car hire, and stationery, among others. Price savings of up to 30 per cent on these frameworks have been retained by individual organisations to be used to improve public services;
- Welsh purchase card use has saved over £4 million. Over 50 per cent of the Welsh public sector has Welsh purchase card programmes supported by Value Wales, resulting in process savings of over £4 million on 144,000 transactions;
- E-auctions have saved over £3.66 million. Value Wales has successfully used e-auctions in the stationery and PC collaborative procurement frameworks, saving £3.15 million, and other individual public sector tenders saving an additional £0.5 million.

'Smarter Buying – Sharing Success' draft published for consultation

The first draft of the all-Wales sourcing plan covering 2006-09 has been issued for consultation—identifying expenditure areas suitable for cross sector and single sector collaboration with recommendations for each sector.

Better procurement resources

Value Wales has completed an analysis of public sector expenditure. Data have been consolidated into one powerful tool for tracking change and identifying collaborative procurement opportunities. Value Wales has provided various routes to training resulting in a growth of more than 10 per cent in qualified procurement professionals in Wales, the provision of over 2,600 delegate days of training, and the establishment of a 16 plus apprenticeship scheme and a masters cohort. A procurement routeplanner set of best practice is in development.

Sustainable Procurement

Value Wales is working to embed sustainable development principles into procurement, and is closely aligned with the Business Procurement Taskforce in actively forging links between Welsh suppliers and the Welsh public sector.

- Better opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises;
It is estimated that every additional 1 per cent of public sector expenditure in Wales will result in an additional 2,000 jobs. Work is continuing to make public sector contracts more accessible to smaller, more local suppliers, and to supported enterprises. In June Value Wales launched the ‘Opening Doors’ charter for SME-friendly procurement. The charter seeks to set a minimum level of good practice for both the public sector and SMEs, and is one of the ways the business procurement taskforce is starting to change and challenge mindsets. Another is the use of the national procurement website www.sell2wales.co.uk. Over 63 public sector organisations are now using this to post contract advertisements. Over 16,000 suppliers have registered and have free access to opportunities worth over £1.2 billion.
- Social and Community Benefits being delivered.
The community benefits pilots have been completed and have successfully demonstrated that contractors can be required to train and employ economically inactive people to address skills gaps. Wider adoption could generate an additional 500 to 2,000 jobs in Wales.

2006-07 plans:

This work continues in 2006-07 and other priority themes are being progressed including the national sourcing plan and e-procurement.

Implementation of Welsh public sector sourcing plan:

A final publication of the sourcing plan is expected in autumn 2006 and this will then be implemented over the next three years. For the first time Wales will have an agreed forward plan of collaborative procurement activity to unlock potential savings on a national, regional and local basis.

E-procurement:

Putting in place an e-procurement hub for the public sector in Wales, which aims to link purchasers and suppliers electronically both in terms of orders and invoices. This will also provide purchasers with details of public sector collaborative contracts they are able to use, thus avoiding the cost and time involved in competitive tendering, whilst at the same time achieving value for money. The business case is currently being developed including research into potential providers.

Schools revenue programme:

Assisting schools, in conjunction with their LEAs, to better manage their revenue costs, through promoting the potential benefits of, and providing effective access to, collaborative procurement contracts.

Better management of capital investment

The role of the capital and property arm of Value Wales is to bring professional expertise to public sector capital projects in order to facilitate and enable public sector bodies to adopt best practice and identify

synergies and opportunities to improve performance in project and programme management of such projects. Developmental work has started which will be taken forward throughout 2006-07.

Gateway Reviews

Value Wales has trialled the gateway review process on eight Assembly projects in 2005-06, with further projects to be included in the 2006-07 programme. Value Wales will apply the gateway review process across relevant large or significant projects funded by the Assembly. Value Wales will facilitate the training and development of a pool of gateway reviewers across the Welsh public sector and enable the exchange of lead reviewers between organisations/sectors.

Schools Capital Programme

This offers a number of opportunities to improve efficiency in capital expenditure. This will involve not only LEAs but also the Welsh Local Government Association, Partnerships UK, 4Ps and others. The aim will be to ensure that asset management plans are used in the formulation of long term strategies coupled with good practice guidance for managing projects. Also to consider alternative funding models and collaborative consultancy support.

Financing capital projects

Examining alternative means of financing capital projects across the public sector in Wales.

Strategic partnerships and shared services

The role of this new team is to promote and support changes in the way in which services are organised and delivered in the Welsh public sector by encouraging and facilitating joint arrangements and shared services. The focus to date has been in forging contacts in the Welsh public sector and supporting the messages coming from 'Making the Connections' through involvement in roadshows and other fora. The following are priorities for 2006-07 and beyond.

Supporting collaboration: waste management

The need for specialist help was identified as a consequence of the first round of the 'Making the Connections' improvement fund. Working with both local authorities and the environment division of WAG, Value Wales is coordinating a two-year project to assist local government to take forward its regional waste management project proposals through four collaborative projects. The aim is to identify the most sustainable waste management option for the regions.

Shared services

Value Wales will work with specific projects and promulgate opportunities and lessons learned from the development of shared services to the wider public sector:

- exploring the potential for developing functions on a shared basis between Assembly sponsored public bodies and the Welsh Assembly Government.
- gaining a good understanding of two key shared services projects: Newport and Cardiff councils shared service project (human resources) and NHS north Wales shared service pilot project, (finance, HR, procurement and Wales-wide IT platform), and enable sharing of best practice and lessons learned.

Local authority partnerships

The WLGA has established four regional partnership boards which will examine areas of collaboration and joint working. And have appointed four regional local authority co-ordinators to support this work. Working with the WLGA, Value Wales will help to support and develop this regional partnership working and ensure that the lessons learned are disseminated widely.

Sharing knowledge and skills

Value Wales will work with other projects approved for funding from the 'Making the Connections' improvement fund to encourage the sharing of information and best practice, e.g. through the 'Making the Connections' website.

In conjunction with the work of Public Service Management Wales, Value Wales intends to establish a database of people and their skills to support the wider dissemination and sharing

John Griffiths: Will the Minister give a progress report on the Welsh Assembly Government's capital investment programme for the next three years? (WAQ47475)

Sue Essex: 'Firm Foundations' sets out our capital plans for the next three years—a total of £4.9 billion. We will monitor delivery of the outcomes closely and revisit plans as part of our budget process. Investment is proceeding in line with our plans.

In addition, we have established Value Wales, which will improve our strategic approach to management of capital investment.

Ann Jones: How does the Minister ensure that changes to the budgetary process assist her Cabinet colleagues in delivering better and more effective services? (WAQ47477)

Sue Essex: The budget process is designed to ensure that allocations are made in line with our strategic aims set out in 'Wales: A Better Country'. These are founded on providing quality public services to the people of Wales.

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the work of the Welsh Assembly Government's Statistical Directorate? (WAQ47478)

Sue Essex: The Statistical Directorate's role is to support decision-making, resource allocation, research and debate within government and the wider community, by providing reliable and efficient statistical services.

The directorate is part of the wider government statistical service and operates in accordance with the UK framework for national statistics and the associated code of practice and protocols.

The Statistical Directorate's work programme for 2006-07 to 2008-09 is published on the Welsh Assembly Government's internet site. The Statistical Directorate is not the only producer of statistics about Wales and the work programme also directs users to other relevant organisations.

Publication dates for a comprehensive list of upcoming statistical headlines, releases, bulletins and publications are also published, in advance, on the internet and updated daily.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the capital city's ambulance service? (WAQ47440)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Brian Gibbons): It is for the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and its commissioners, Health Commission Wales, to determine the provision of emergency ambulance services in individual local health board areas. I am aware that there is a variance in the levels of performance across Wales and I am concerned that performance is below the all-Wales average in certain areas of the south-east region. The Welsh ambulance trust is finalising a modernisation plan and has already introduced a number of initiatives in lower-performing LHB areas, including locally agreed performance measures and the deployment of extended paramedic practitioners, to help improve performance. The trust is continuing to explore how resources can best be used to further improve the performance of the emergency ambulance service.

The detailed performance information for all LHB areas is held in the public domain and is available on the following link: www.wales.gov.uk/statistics

Michael German: Will the Minister make a statement on his priorities for the health services during the remainder of his term of office? (WAQ47441)

Brian Gibbons: Our priorities include further reducing waiting times for hospital treatment, cutting down on health inequalities, and forging ahead with the work of planning the future shape of world-class health services in Wales.

Christine Gwyther: Will the Minister give details of the numbers of clinical staff employed in each local health board in Mid and West Wales for each year since 1999? (WAQ47459)

Brian Gibbons: Information on the number of staff, by staff group, employed by Local Health Boards can be found on the StatsWales site:

<http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=1277>

It is not known centrally if any of these staff are clinical staff, i.e. that they treat patients. A breakdown by local health board is first available for 2003, the year the boards were set up.

Christine Gwyther: Will the Minister give details of the increases in the budgets of each local health board in Mid and West Wales for each year since 1999? (WAQ47460)

Brian Gibbons: The local health boards were set up in April 2003. In Mid and West Wales the allocations at the beginning of each financial year and the increases from one year to the other for hospital and community health services and general medical services were as follows:

	2003-04	% increase	£ million increase	2004-05	% increase	£ million increase	2005-06
	£ million			£ million			£ million
Bridgend	113.36	26	29.46	142.82	11	15.11	157.93
Carmarthen	148.83	20	30.41	179.24	12	21.21	200.45
Ceredigion	69.72	18	12.66	82.38	11	9.05	91.43
Neath Port Talbot	120.68	20	24.3	144.98	10	14.33	159.31
Pembrokeshire	105.16	18	18.46	123.62	11	13.82	137.44
Powys	115.42	14	15.86	131.28	17	22.04	153.32
Swansea	183.49	22	40.33	223.82	9	21.11	244.93
TOTAL	856.66	20	171.48	1,028.14	11	116.67	1,144.81

Christine Gwyther: Will the Minister give details of the capital expenditure items in the budgets of each local health board in Mid and West Wales for each year since 1999? (WAQ47461)

Brian Gibbons: The local health boards in Mid and West Wales were established in 2003. The figures quoted below relate to LHBs in the Mid and West Wales region. The main capital expenditure is reported in the accounts of NHS trusts.

Capital spend in LHBs in Mid and West Wales

	£'000
2003-04	
Powys LHB	1,234
2004-05	
Powys LHB	2,289
Carmarthen LHB	42
2005-06	
Powys LHB	1,974
Pembrokeshire LHB	36
	5,575

Source: Annual Accounts.

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

Mark Isherwood: Will the Minister detail the break down of the allocation for the social housing grant for each year from 2003 to date? (WAQ47479)

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart): I refer you to the attached table.

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Social housing grant	£56,400,000	£56,400,000	£72,400,000	£72,400,000
Drugs and substance misuse projects	-	£3,000,000	£4,000,000	£4,000,000
Wanless—elderly persons provision	-	-	-	£10,000,000
Total budget	£56,400,000	£59,400,000	£76,400,000	£86,400,000

Owen John Thomas: Pryd fydd y Gweinidog yn cymryd camau i sicrhau bod Gorchymyn 29 Deddf Plant 2004 yn cael ei weithredu? (WAQ47482) [W] *Trawsglwyddwyd ar gyfer ateb gan y Gweinidog dros Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau.*

Owen John Thomas: Pa ddeddfwriaeth fydd y Llywodraeth yn ei chyflwyno dan adran 29 Deddf Plant 2004 a beth yw'r amserlen? (WAQ47483) [W] *Trawsglwyddwyd ar gyfer ateb gan y Gweinidog dros Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau.*

Owen John Thomas: Pryd fydd y Gweinidog yn cynnal trafodaethau gyda'r Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol i sicrhau bod Gorchymyn 29 Deddf Plant 2004 yn cael ei wneud? (WAQ47484) [W] *Trawsglwyddwyd ar gyfer ateb gan y Gweinidog dros Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau.*

Owen John Thomas: A wnaiff y Gweinidog gyhoeddi'r papur ymgynghori ynghylch adran 29 y Ddeddf Plant, pan fydd wedi'i gwblhau? (WAQ47485) [W] *Trawsglwyddwyd ar gyfer ateb gan y Gweinidog dros Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau.*

Jane Davidson: Mae sefydlu cronfa neu gronfeydd data o dan adran 29 o Ddeddf Plant 2004 yn gynnig sylweddol. Bydd yn rhaid inni ystyried a mynd i'r afael â materion allweddol sy'n ymwneud â chyfrinachedd, mynediad, diogelwch a gwerth. Bydd yn rhaid wrth ddadansoddiad cadarn o'r penderfyniadau ar sut i yrru'r broses hon yn ei blaen, gan ddeall pa mor dda a pha mor aml y caiff data ei ddefnyddio i gynnal y broses o ddatblygu canlyniadau positif i blant. Bwriedir dechrau ar y gwaith yn yr hydref eleni.

Unwaith y bydd y cynigion wedi cael eu datblygu, byddant yn destun ymgynghoriad eang a fydd yn cynnwys yr ystod lawn o bortffolios y Gweinidogion, ynghyd â rhanddeiliaid allanol allweddol y mae eu gwaith yn effeithio ar blant.

Owen John Thomas: When will the Minister take steps to ensure that Order 29 of the Children Act 2004 is made? (WAQ47482) [W] *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.*

Owen John Thomas: What legislation will the Government introduce under section 29 of the Children Act 2004 and what is the timetable? (WAQ47483) [W] *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.*

Owen John Thomas: When will the Minister hold discussions with the Minister for Health and Social Services to ensure that Order 29 of the Children Act is made? (WAQ47484) [W] *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.*

Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister publish the consultation paper on section 29 of the Children Act once completed? (WAQ47485) [W] *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.*

Jane Davidson: The establishment of a database or databases under section 29 of the Children Act 2004 is a significant proposal. We shall need to consider and address key issues of confidentiality, access, security and value. Decisions on the way forward will require robust analysis, identifying how well and often data are utilised to support the development of positive outcomes for children. The work is scheduled to begin this autumn.

Once proposals have been developed, they will be subject to wide consultation, incorporating the full range of ministerial portfolios and key external stakeholders whose work impacts upon children.