

## **Answers issued to Members on 3 March 2008**

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

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

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### **Questions to the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery**

**Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire):** Will the Minister make a statement on how culture fits into the Wales Spatial Plan? (WAQ51404)

**The Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery (Andrew Davies):** The Wales Spatial Plan sets a framework for the future of our six Spatial Plan Areas and aims to reflect the way people live their lives with a joined up approach to complex issues. It captures what is special about each Area so we can build on their distinctiveness and play to the strengths of each region.

Integrating culture and heritage into our work is therefore critical to its success and will have an even stronger role to play in the delivery of our Area strategies. In the Wales Spatial Plan 2008 Update document, which is currently out to consultation, we have emphasised the importance of what is unique to each part of Wales through our theme on Respecting Distinctiveness. Our aim is to lead on this work with our partnerships, primarily through Cadw, Visit Wales, and the cultural Assembly Government Sponsored Bodies.

### **Questions to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing**

**Alun Cairns (South Wales West):** Would the Minister list additional sums of money that have been paid to each local authority in Wales as a direct consequence of the flooding across parts of Wales in the summer of 2007? (WAQ51411)

**The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing (Jane Davidson):** No additional monies have been paid to local authorities as a direct consequence of last summer's floods.

I have agreed however to fund a number of pilot studies aimed at addressing flooding at specific sites. These funds will be released as the work is undertaken.

These pilot studies relate to flooding at Barry in the Vale of Glamorgan and Prestatyn in Denbighshire. Their outcomes will inform future government policy and provide examples of delivery models for application across Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government has also approved financial support (£150k) for flood damage to one of the church schools in the Vale of Glamorgan. To date no grant claim has been submitted by the school.

When unexpected events occur financial assistance can be made available by the Assembly Government under its discretionary Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme (EFAS) (i.e. formerly known as the Bellwin Scheme).

The additional costs incurred by the LAs as a result of last summer floods have proved to be less than the schemes set threshold criteria (i.e. 0.2% of their net revenue budget). No funds have therefore been released under this scheme with additional costs being accommodated within LAs' existing budgets.

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

**Nick Ramsay (Monmouth):** What action is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to support adults with autism in Wales? (WAQ51405)

**Nick Ramsay (Monmouth):** Does the Welsh Assembly Government intend on publishing an Autistic Spectrum Disorder action plan with specific reference to, and issues guidance on, the needs of adults with autism in Wales? (WAQ51406)

**Nick Ramsay (Monmouth):** What assessment has the Minister made of the needs of adults with autism in Wales? (WAQ51407)

**Nick Ramsay (Monmouth):** What action is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to ensure that local authorities and local health boards are aware of the number of adults with autism in their area? (WAQ51408)

**The Deputy Minister for Social Services (Gwenda Thomas):** Our draft Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategic Action Plan for Wales covers people of all ages, including adults. I expect the final Strategic Action Plan to issue in the Spring. It is for local authorities and local health boards to set up systems to identify and record people within their client populations who are on the autistic spectrum. This was included as one of the actions in our draft Strategic Action Plan and we have encouraged authorities to proceed with this work without waiting for the final Strategic Action Plan to be published. It is also for local authorities and local health boards to assess the care needs of adults on the autistic spectrum and to provide services to address the assessed needs.

**Alun Cairns (South Wales West):** Will the Minister make a statement on capital funding being made available to Swansea NHS Trust for each of the next 3 financial years? (WAQ51409)

**The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart):** The latest figures show the total capital funding for Swansea NHS Trust as £27.91m for 2008-09, £35.61m for 2009-10 and £42.21m for 2010-11.

These figures are estimated and subject to revision due to the normal business case approval procedure. Additionally they are subject to my approval of the All Wales Capital Programme and the merger with Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust.

### Questions to the Minister for Heritage

**Irene James (Islwyn):** What steps is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to promote the cultural heritage of Islwyn? (WAQ51379)

**The Minister for Heritage (Rhodri Glyn Thomas):** As in other parts of Wales, Islwyn has received support from a range of Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) policies and programmes managed by the Department for Heritage.

The Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Measure (STEAM) model suggests that tourism revenues for the Caerphilly Borough (including Islwyn) are £73.5m per annum.

Through Capital Region Tourism (CRT) WAG has supported the work of Southern Wales Attractions Partnership (SWAP) over a number of years. Cwmcarn is a key attraction within SWAP and WAG has encouraged the current re-investment in the visitor centre. As well as supporting the marketing campaign 'Wisdom and Walks' where Islwyn's cultural and tourism assets are featured.

Events at Islwyn's cultural venues such as Blackwood Miners' Institute and Newbridge Memorial Hall are freely promoted on CRT's Southern Wales Events website. WAG has encouraged tourism throughout Wales by financially supporting key areas which represent our Welsh culture and history. In particular the Newbridge Memorial Hall has received a grant in order to restore areas of the venue.

The Islwyn constituency lies within the boundaries of the proposed Valleys Regional Park, the preliminary development of which has been funded by WAG. This exciting proposal is set to transform and regenerate the Valleys countryside and provide more recreational activities for the public.

**Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire):** Will the Minister publish any correspondence including e-mails and the details of any telephone conversations between his department and organisers of the 2012 London Olympics? (WAQ51387)

**Rhodri Glyn-Thomas:** I met with James Purnell on Tuesday 18 December to discuss a broad range of matters, including London 2012. I also had a telephone conversation with London 2012 on 18 February to be briefed upon the forthcoming announcement about their Pre-Games Training Camp Guide. I am due to meet Lord Coe on the 20 March and am also scheduled to meet with the Chair and Chief Executive of LOCOG on the 30th June. My department's officials have regular and frequent contact with officials in DCMS and also with London 2012 on a range of issues.

### Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

**Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central):** How much have Local Authorities in Wales paid out to motorists in compensation for vehicle damage due to poor road surfaces, potholes and speed bumps? (WAQ51393)

**The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government (Brian Gibbons):** This information is not collected from local authorities in Wales.

**Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central):** How much has been spent by each Local Authority in Wales on road improvements for each year since 1999. (WAQ51394)

**Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central):** How much has been spent by the Welsh Assembly Government on road maintenance in each local authority for each year since 1999. (WAQ51396)

**Brian Gibbons:** The Welsh Assembly Government is responsible for maintaining the motorway and trunk road network in Wales. Local authorities are responsible for the local road network. Data on expenditure on maintenance of the motorway and trunk road network are held on a national basis rather than by local authority area. Details of the annual expenditure, from 1999 to 2006, are contained in table 1 below. Data on the local road network are collected from local authorities and include data on structural improvements and road maintenance. Details from 1999 to 2006 are provided in table 2.

#### Trunk Road Expenditure, 1999-2006 (extracted from Welsh Transport Statistics)

	1999/00 £m's	2000/01 £m's	2001/02 £m's	2002/03 £m's	2003/04 £m's	2004/05 £m's	2005/06 £m's	2006/07 £m's
Motorway & Trunk road Routine Maintenance	£28.4	£31.9	£28.8	£29.7	£29.7	£32.9	£33.4	£36.8
Motorway & Trunk Road Bridges & Roads Renewals	£18.4	£27.1	£24.7	£27.1	£23.4	£25.5	£24.1	£22.3
<b>Total</b>	£46.8	£59.0	£53.5	£56.8	£53.1	£58.1	£57.5	£59.1

#### Capital expenditure on local authority road improvements and structural maintenance (a) (£ thousands)

Authority	1999-00(b)	2000-01(b)	2001-02(b)	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Isle of Anglesey	542	449	1156	912	266	481	513	472
Gwynedd	2838	2461	4818	3132	2345	6707	11140	6786
Conwy	395	954	2608	1385	1249	2129	1194	1676
Denbighshire	1663	1994	5230	3524	5210	1653	1892	5242
Flintshire	2581	14569	3108	2339	810	1530	1857	2221
Wrexham	2172	2973	5240	4219	2843	2519	1633	1690
Powys	2542	2825	3492	2970	2041	3870	3651	3574
Ceredigion	854	1283	2222	2427	1935	1781	1603	6462
Pembrokeshire	1700	2119	1989	1195	1958	1340	3783	3519

<b>Carmarthenshire</b>	5290	4349	3505	1542	2513	10491	6199	8386
<b>Swansea</b>	2348	6175	8616	4949	7145	6386	5112	8493
<b>Neath Port Talbot</b>	3543	2912	4992	2036	1952	7602	12864	13826
<b>Bridgend</b>	1992	4120	3857	946	728	1703	1579	1069
<b>The Vale of Glamorgan</b>	1850	2517	3211	1487	406	510	584	741
<b>Rhondda Cynon Taff</b>	5846	8636	5700	3144	4912	8116	42378	41700
<b>Merthyr Tydfil</b>	3641	3139	956	255	420	253	52	1557
<b>Caerphilly</b>	1638	2051	3279	3019	4487	3974	11111	7370
<b>Blaenau Gwent</b>	1322	906	2671	7689	10497	8243	771	1966
<b>Torfaen</b>	2922	1517	2354	875	3148	652	978	1063
<b>Monmouthshire</b>	915	2580	1866	415	1718	2818	1877	1878
<b>Newport</b>	4085	4535	6219	6155	4483	4771	5026	11706
<b>Cardiff</b>	16435	7514	8574	4368	4522	3355	7841	17922
<b>Total Wales</b>	67114	80578	85663	58983	65588	80884	123638	149319

(a) Excludes motorways and truck roads.

(b) Includes street lighting and road safety.

**Nick Ramsay (Monmouth):** What action is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to support deaf and hard of hearing people? (WAQ51401)

**Brian Gibbons:** The Welsh Assembly Government's policies are underpinned by our vision of supporting people to live healthy and independent lives, and of promoting equality of opportunities for all. Deaf and hard of hearing issues have long been a priority for the Welsh Assembly Govt. We have also developed and published guidance for public authorities in Wales entitled 'Delivering in British Sign Language—Advice for Public Services' to build upon our commitments to equality and improving public services. Implementing the advice will enable public bodies to move towards prompt and effective service delivery in BSL.

We also have mechanisms to ensure that we are mainstreaming equality through our policies, for example via our Equality Impact Assessment process and forthcoming Single Equality Scheme.

**Nick Ramsay (Monmouth):** What assessment has the Minister made of waiting times to provide deaf and hard of hearing people with services, including providing sign language interpreters and other communication support? (WAQ51402)

**Nick Ramsay (Monmouth):** What action is the Minister taking to improve waiting times to provide deaf and hard of hearing people with services, including providing sign language interpreters and other communication support? (WAQ51403)

**Brian Gibbons:** The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that high-quality interpreting and linguistic access services are critical to effective public service delivery. In 2004 a Cabinet Task and Finish Group undertook to estimate demand for these services and, using pointers including long lead times for booking, and Interpreters from England carrying out significant numbers of assignments in Wales, was able to conclude that there was a significant shortage of BSL Interpreters in Wales. The Assembly Government has responded to those recommendations by developing this advice for publication and by providing £1.6 million as part funding for BSL Futures, a £2.7million European Social Fund partnership initiative to build BSL teaching capacity and train more than 30 new interpreters.

We have also developed and published simple, practical advice for public authorities in Wales entitled 'Delivering in British Sign Language—Advice for Public Services', and access issues for deaf and hard of hearing citizens feature as part of 'Building Better Customer Service: A Framework for Improvement'.

### Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

**Brynle Williams (North Wales):** What consideration has the Welsh Assembly Government given to providing financial assistance to farmers for fallen stock collection in the event of high bluetongue disease mortality in Wales? (WAQ51388)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs (Elin Jones):** Welsh Assembly Government currently has no plans to offer financial assistance to farmers for fallen stock collection in the event of high Bluetongue mortality in Wales.

Bluetongue has no direct driver for intervention in fallen stock disposal arrangements. Fallen stock do not pose a risk for disease spread as the virus can only be moved to new animals by biting midges, which do not feed on dead livestock. Ordinarily, infected animals are not slaughtered for disease control purposes. Exceptions are infected imported animals, which would not attract compensation, or a small number of resident animals which are perceived to pose a significant threat of virus dissemination in a new area.

It is possible that some farmers may wish to slaughter their affected livestock for welfare reasons due to an inability to move because of Restricted or Protection Zones, or on veterinary advice. This will be a business decision for farmers based on their own circumstances and would not attract any special subsidy to assist with disposal of fallen stock.

**Brynle Williams (North Wales):** What evidence have UK Ministers and Treasury Officials provided to the Minister for Rural Affairs concerning their refusal, to date, to fund a package of Foot and Mouth Disease compensation for Wales? (WAQ51399)

**Brynle Williams (North Wales):** What evidence has the Minister provided to UK Government Ministers and Treasury Officials to justify demands for the Treasury to fund Foot and Mouth Disease compensation in Wales? (WAQ51400)

**Elin Jones:** There are independent reports, publicly available, that point to the source of the foot and mouth disease outbreak in England. It is a matter of public record that the consequences of the disease outbreak had a significant adverse economic impact on Welsh farming, particularly for the sheep sector.

I continue to press the UK Government that it has responsibility to provide additional funding to address the difficulties experienced in Wales. Following my announcement on 20 February on the FMD Compensation scheme, I have made clear to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs that it is for the UK Government to reimburse the Welsh Assembly Government for the costs that are to be incurred.