

Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 26 January 2011

[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 Children, Education and Lifelong Learning
- 2 Questions to the Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport
- 4 Questions to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing
- 5 Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

To ask the First Minister

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the First Minister provide figures for how many Welsh translators have been employed by the Welsh Assembly Government over the last four years, and at what cost, with the figures broken down into each year. (WAQ56964)

Answer issued on 01 February 2011

In 2006-07, 28 (full-time and part-time) translators were employed within the Welsh Assembly Government Translation Service. The total staff cost of the Welsh Assembly Government Translation Service, which comprises both translators and administrators, for 2006-07 was £1,112,807.48.

In 2007-08, 30 (full-time and part-time) translators were employed within the Welsh Assembly Government Translation Service. The total staff cost of the Welsh Assembly Government Translation Service, which comprises both translators and administrators, for 2007-08 was £1,190,531.76.

In 2008-09, 31 (full-time and part-time) translators were employed within the Welsh Assembly Government Translation Service. The total staff cost of the Welsh Assembly Government Translation Service, which comprises both translators and administrators, for 2008-09 was £1,374,622.54.

In 2009-10, 31 (full-time and part-time) translators were employed within the Welsh Assembly Government Translation Service. The total staff cost of the Welsh Assembly Government Translation Service, which comprises both translators and administrators, for 2009-10 was £1,558,232.81.

To ask the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): What legal advice did the Welsh Assembly Government take regarding the subsidy for Welsh students to study at Higher Education Institutions in England. (WAQ56965)

Answer issued on 01 February 2011

I can confirm that the Welsh Assembly Government took legal advice. However, the legal advice provided is classed as legal professional privilege and as such I am unable to disclose the contents of that advice.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Has the Minister received any advice to suggest that the subsidy for Welsh students studying in English HEIs may contravene EU policy. (WAQ56966)

Answer issued on 01 February 2011

No.

To ask the Minister for the Economy and Transport

Brian Gibbons (Aberavon): Will the Minister provide an update on the roll out of the National Stations Improvement Programme and provide details of the stations that will benefit from the NSIP. (WAQ56968)

Answer issued on 01 February 2011

NSIP is the Department for Transport (DfT) funded improvement programme for stations in England and Wales, and the Wales and Borders franchise area received a £6m allocation for the 2009-12 period to improve stations at Aberystwyth, Carmarthen, Cardiff Central, Llandudno, Pontypridd, Severn Tunnel Junction and Swansea. A further £3m has been allocated for the period 2012-2014, and the individual stations to benefit from this are still under discussion.

I announced the Wales Station Improvement Programme (NSIP+) in July 2010. This builds upon the funding we received from DfT. It is an enhanced funding package of £40m for stations in the Convergence Areas of Wales and includes £21m of EU structural funding. This will enable more stations to be improved than under the DfT programme and for a more comprehensive package of improvements, which includes accessibility improvements and an expanded Customer Information Systems and shelter replacement programme. Again, the precise allocation to individual stations is under discussion.

The major scheme at Swansea High Street Station is however already under way and is due to be completed in August 2011.

The Easier Access (Humps) Programme for rural stations is due to take place in 2011, and major improvement schemes are under discussion for Port Talbot Parkway, Neath and a number of other stations in north and west Wales.

Brian Gibbons (Aberavon): Will the Minister make a statement on the range of financial support (loans / grants) that are available to business under the Economic Renewal Programme. (WAQ56969)

Answer issued on 01 February 2011

Economic Renewal: a new direction will concentrate financial resources where they can add the most value, acting as an enabler of growth for the economy as a whole rather than a significant deliverer of services to individual businesses. A sectoral based strategic approach to businesses support has been developed.

Within the policy there is the move to an investment culture which means that the majority of direct financial support provided will be 100% repayable on variable terms dependent upon the circumstances of each case. The range of financial support available includes Investment Growth Capital, Investments made through EU Programmes including E-business and Business Innovation and Research Development and Innovation funding.

Brian Gibbons (Aberavon): Will the Minister make a statement on the eligibility criteria for financial support available under the Economic Renewal Programme. (WAQ56970)

Answer issued on 01 February 2011

Economic Renewal: A new direction means a new approach to the provision of Business Support through my Department. The primary driver behind Economic Renewal and its associated direct support offer will be the six key sectors. Resources will initially be attributed on an equal basis but, in due course, according to need. The six sectors are:-

- ICT
- Energy and Environment
- Advanced Materials and Manufacturing
- Creative Industries
- Life Sciences
- Financial and Professional Services

Each sector will develop its own three year plan which, along with the establishment of an eternally appointed Sector Panel, will allow us to be effective in supporting and growing these sectors. It is expected that the criteria and interventions will vary according to the sector. The appointment of the Sector Panels is due to be finalised in the near future.

In addition to sector eligibility other headline criteria will be considered. A key cross economy priority will be deepening our relationships with “anchor companies” and regionally significant employers. These companies will typically be high-growth firms with the potential to increase employment dramatically, and major companies which are important national or local employers with extensive supply chains in Wales. We will look to target strategic joint investment with these companies and their supply chain.

Securing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and stimulating trade will be an integral part of our sector approach. Each sector team will be responsible for securing new investment as well as targeted aftercare of existing FDI so that we can build synergies across the sectors and encourage re-investment.

We still have a role in working with regionally important growth businesses, our approach to supporting these companies will depend on the priorities of a particular region. It may for example involve investment in infrastructure, in individual businesses or in another activity that supports the regional economy and supports its distinctive needs.

Wales will continue to be open to good ideas across the wider economy. We need to retain flexibility to support strategic projects outside our key sectors that will deliver jobs and growth. Therefore we will reserve the right to consider high-quality proposals for support, including inward investment-but only if they represent significantly better value than projects identified within our sector pipelines.

Brian Gibbons (Aberavon): How many businesses have applied for financial support under the Economic Renewal Programme arrangements. (WAQ56971)

Brian Gibbons (Aberavon): How many businesses have secured financial support under the Economic Renewal Programme arrangements. (WAQ56972)

Brian Gibbons (Aberavon): What is the value of the financial support provided to businesses under the ERP to date. (WAQ56973)

Answer issued on 01 February 2011

To date, we have received 17 applications. There have been three offers of support made with a value of £2.94 million.

Brian Gibbons (Aberavon): What is the value of financial support that has been provided to business in Wales over each of the last five financial years to 2010. (WAQ56974)

Answer issued on 07 April 2011

It is taking longer than anticipated to assemble the information but I will write with a full response once my officials have provided the relevant information

To ask the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Mick Bates (Montgomeryshire): What changes have been made to TAN 8 as a result of updating the planning policy for renewable energy in Wales. (WAQ56975)

Answers issued on 01 February 2011

In my Cabinet Written Statement of 8th June 2010 I outlined how the Welsh Assembly Government would seek to update planning policy on renewable energy which would then result in minor factual changes to TAN 8.

We are still considering the responses to the Public Consultation on the draft changes to the renewable energy section of Planning Policy Wales. We hope to finalise the policy very shortly along with updating of TAN 8. We do not intend changing the Strategic Search Areas identified in TAN 8 but rather changes to TAN 8 will be to reflect the updated Planning Policy on renewable energy.

To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services

Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North): With regard to the Department of Health's announcement on compensation payments for patients who received contaminated blood, what plans does the Minister have to ensure that patients who received contaminated blood in England but are now domiciled in Wales are appropriately compensated. (WAQ56967)

Answers issued on 01 February 2011

The Department of Health announced the outcome of the review into the support available to individuals infected with hepatitis C and/or HIV by NHS-supplied contaminated blood and blood products on 10 January. This was the first opportunity that I had had to see the report and to fully review its recommendations. I am considering the implications of the recommendations for those people affected in Wales and will announce my intentions shortly.

I will also be meeting with individuals from organisations representing people affected by contaminated blood, next week.