

Written Questions answered from 9 to 15 November 2001

[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

Ryder Cup 2010

Alun Cairns: What specific actions has the First Minister taken to prepare Wales for Ryder Cup 2010? (WAQ13207)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): In addition to working with the Celtic Manor resort and the European Ryder Cup board on arrangements for the tournament itself, arrangements are in hand for a continuation of the successful private-public partnership which secured the Ryder Cup to cover the interim nine years and to secure the maximum benefits for the whole of Wales. This will include learning lessons from similar exercises being undertaken in Ireland by the Government of the Irish Republic and its partners, albeit on a different timescale, as regards Ireland hosting the Cup in 2006.

Invitations to the First Minister

Alun Cairns: Would the First Minister please list all the invitations he has received to speak or attend events in his capacity as First Minister since 6 July 2001? (WAQ13565)

Alun Cairns: Would the First Minister please list all invitations he has accepted to speak or to attend events in his capacity as First Minister since 6 July 2001? (WAQ13566)

Alun Cairns: Would the First Minister please list all invitations he has declined to attend in which he was invited to speak at or to attend events in his capacity as First Minister since 6 July 2001? (WAQ13567)

The First Minister: This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Military Action in Afghanistan

Peter Rogers: Does the First Minister intend to raise with the Secretary of State for Wales the issue of whether multinational corporations are the cause of Her Majesty's Government's military action in Afghanistan? (WAQ13653)

The First Minister: Military action in Afghanistan is not the devolved responsibility of the National Assembly. The discussions I have with the Secretary of State will continue to focus on the impact of the international situation on Wales. We maintain a constant exchange of information and are working jointly on contingency planning initiatives at a UK level.

Promoting the International Image of Wales

William Graham: What measures has the First Minister taken to promote the international image of Wales? (WAQ13867)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): Raising the profile of Wales is a key priority for the Cabinet. It is working with a range of public sector bodies to develop a more co-ordinated approach at an all-Wales level, to enhance Wales's international profile. During the summer recess, I led successful trade missions to California and South Africa. The visit to California included the highly successful 'Wales Week' promoting Welsh industry and culture.

Our recent successes in attracting major sporting events to Wales, such as the Rugby World Cup, the Network Q Rally, FA Cup finals, culminating in massive opportunities that our hosting of the Ryder Cup in 2010 will bring, all help to promote the international image of Wales.

We will continue to explore new opportunities and exploit existing ones to promote Wales internationally, including not only the sporting but also the cultural, political and media fronts.

The Effectiveness of Ministerial Colleagues

Alun Cairns: How does the First Minister monitor the effectiveness of his ministerial colleagues? (WAQ14039)

Alun Cairns: How does the First Minister monitor the effectiveness of the Minister for Economic Development? (WAQ14048)

The First Minister: The effectiveness of Cabinet colleagues is monitored through the normal Cabinet and Cabinet sub-committee structures and through frequent contact and discussions with them.

Recording Invitations

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please confirm, or otherwise, that there is a log of all invitations received, those accepted and those declined? (WAQ14041)

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister make it his policy to record the invitations he has received, those accepted and those declined, centrally? (WAQ14043)

The First Minister: All correspondence is logged by my office. Although separate logging of invitations is regarded as desirable as a matter of good office practice, it is not always possible. A high percentage of correspondence will express a wish to meet me or for me to visit sometimes without a specific date or occasion in mind. All invitations are addressed to me as First Minister and are not logged by my office by subject category.

The detailed information requested could not be produced without analysing all the correspondence received and that could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Publishing Received Invitations

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please publish all the invitations he has received, rejected or declined during the full week commencing 5 November 2001? (WAQ14045)

The First Minister: No.

Video Conferencing Facilities

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please list all occasions on which he has used the video conferencing facilities since 1 March 2001? (WAQ14071)

The First Minister: Since 1 March 2001, I have used the video conferencing facilities on 1 March and 23 October.

The Wales Tourist Board

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please list all the official engagements he has had with the Wales Tourist Board since 6 July 2001? (WAQ14080)

The First Minister: I have met the chair and other members of the board as well as officials of the Wales Tourist Board on numerous occasions during this time, including many discussions and contacts during the run-up to the Ryder Cup decision and the joint presentations to the travel trade and travel writers in California and in Gauteng Province, South Africa.

Engagements with the WDA

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please list all the official engagements he has had with the Welsh Development Agency since 6 July 2001? (WAQ14081)

The First Minister: I have met the chair and other members of the board as well as officials of the agency on numerous occasions during this period, including addressing the senior staff conference on 24 September.

The Use of Subordinate Legislation

Alun Cairns: What discussions has the First Minister had with UK Government Ministers over their proposals to encourage the use of subordinate legislation to dispose of irrelevant legislation? (WAQ14086)

The First Minister: Discussions at various levels have resulted in the Assembly being given a formal role under the Regulatory Reform Act 2001.

UK Ministers must seek the Assembly's agreement to any regulatory reform Order that affects the Assembly's functions, and must consult the Assembly on any regulatory reform Order affecting Wales. We are currently involved in several regulatory reform Order exercises with Whitehall departments.

The UK Government's Consultation on Smacking Children

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister outline the Government of Wales's response to the UK Government's consultation on smacking children? (WAQ14162) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Health and Social Services.*

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): The UK Government's recent response to its consultation on physical punishment of children concerned the non-devolved issue of primary legislation.

The Assembly has already acted within the scope of its devolved powers by banning, or proposing to ban, the physical punishment of children within all regulated children's settings in Wales, including childminding.

The Government of the National Assembly for Wales is in favour of initiatives that aim to educate and support parents in dealing with this area of family life. Children in Wales will therefore be actively involved in the National Family and Parenting Institute's positive parenting project announced by the UK Government.

Questions on Economic Development to the First Minister

Unemployment in Llandrindod Wells and Ystradgynlais

Nick Bourne: What has the First Minister done to improve the unemployment problems in Llandrindod Wells and Ystradgynlais? (WAQ13144)

The First Minister: In Llandrindod Wells the average claimant count unemployment rate has fallen from 4.2 per cent in the year to September 1997 to 3.6 per cent in the year to September 2001, compared to the equivalent Welsh rate of 4.1 per cent. In Ystradgynlais, the numbers on the claimant count have fallen by over a third since September 1997 to the current level of 66 people.

Every effort is being made to attract investment to the Swansea Valley, including the Ystradgynlais area. Bluebird Electric Vehicles is setting up production in the 37,000 sq ft former BAW factory at Pontardawe at the lower end of the valley. This is excellent news for the area and represents an innovative project in the automotive sector.

Llandrindod Wells benefits from the multi agency rural area network project linking the three rural Welsh counties of Powys, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire via a high-speed wireless backbone network enabling shared internet and network access.

Impact of Business and Support Levers

Alun Cairns: What timescales has the Minister set for the task and finish group co-ordinated to review impact of business support levers? (WAQ13204)

The First Minister: I have received the group's report. I shall be putting it, together with an action plan, to a meeting of the Economic Development Committee in the near future.

Economic Benefits of the Ryder Cup 2010

Alun Cairns: How does the First Minister plan to ensure that the economic benefits of the Ryder Cup extend beyond Newport? (WAQ13205)

The First Minister: It was clear at the outset that hosting the Ryder Cup in Wales would benefit the whole of Wales—not least by providing very significant opportunities to raise Wales's international profile. That is why all-Wales bodies such as the Welsh Development Agency, the Wales Tourist Board, the Sports Council for Wales and the Welsh Local Government Association joined in the bid as partners.

Between 2001 and 2010 the plans of the Assembly Government, WDA and WTB will seek to maximise the marketing opportunities which will become increasingly available as a result of the Ryder Cup coming to Wales both as regards golf package holidays, tourism generally and inward investment. These will include measures to ensure that the benefits are spread throughout Wales and I intend to make sure that that is the case.

Money Allocated for Public and Private Sector Projects in North Wales

Peter Rogers: What are the proportion of moneys for Objective 1 projects in north Wales that have been allocated between public and private sector projects in north Wales? (WAQ13223)

The First Minister: Many of the projects approved under Objective 1 support the private sector directly or indirectly, even when the formal sponsor of a project is from the public or voluntary sectors. Of some £20 million committed so far to local projects in north Wales, one project with grant of £366,000 is from a private sector company. There are also two major regional projects which will benefit the private sector in north Wales: OpportunitE Wales with grant of almost £11 million, and Business Connect Plus north-west Wales with a grant of £4 million.

Private Sector Involvement in the Delivery of Public Services

Christine Chapman: What use is made of the private sector in the delivery of public services by the national health service, local government and other public agencies in Wales? (WAQ13560)

The First Minister: In the financial year 1998/99, £2,447 million was spent across the public sector in Wales on the procurement of goods and services (excluding capital procurement), the vast majority from the private sector, but there is no specific figure available for expenditure on service delivery.

Invitations to the First Minister as Minister for Economic Development

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please list all invitations he has declined to attend in which he was invited to speak at or to attend events in his capacity as economic development Minister since 6 July 2001? (WAQ13568)

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please list all invitations he has accepted to speak at or to attend events in his capacity as economic development Minister since 6 July 2001? (WAQ13569)

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please list all invitations he has received to speak at or to attend events in his capacity as economic development Minister since 6 July 2001? (WAQ13570)

The First Minister: This information is not held centrally.

'Business Angels' Network

Glyn Davies: What action has the First Minister taken to promote a 'business angels' network in Wales? (WAQ13621)

The First Minister: We have actively supported the development of Xénos, the Welsh business angels network set up to help our indigenous companies, through the WDA and Finance Wales.

Since its inception, participating companies have received over £5 million of support and there are plans to further expand the network in the near future. Wales is now considered one of the UK's top three regional 'hotspots' for business angel activity by the British Venture Capital Association.

Inward Investment

Peter Rogers: Is it the First Minister's policy to seek to attract inward investment from large overseas businesses? (WAQ13647)

The First Minister: Yes.

Business Ethics

Peter Rogers: Does the First Minister use any sort of business ethics model before supporting a company which complies with all relevant UK legislation and which is seeking to invest in the Welsh economy? (WAQ13648)

Peter Rogers: Are there any companies which operate legally in the UK with which the First Minister refuses to assist in investing in Wales on ethical grounds? (WAQ13649)

The First Minister: The main scheme operated by the Government of the Assembly for supporting businesses wishing to invest in Wales is regional selective assistance. The scheme has been approved by the European Commission for application in all assisted areas of the UK. The operation of the scheme is governed by common UK guidelines and decisions are made on a commercial basis. There are no specific or block exemptions for assistance under the scheme other than those specified in the European state aid rules. While grants made under the scheme are discretionary, the Assembly Government has not, to date, refused assistance to any company on ethical grounds. Each case is considered on its merits.

Automotive Industry

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister make a statement on the supply chain support for the automotive industry in Wales? (WAQ13819)

The First Minister: The automotive industry is an important part of the Welsh economy, and our aim must be to improve the competitive position of component suppliers in Wales. Accelerate Wales is a Wales Automotive Forum sponsored initiative that is supported by the Government of the National Assembly for Wales. It is aimed at helping the Welsh automotive sector to improve its performance, so that companies involved may compete effectively in the new global market. It is an example of how we are responding to the needs of industry to achieve substantial benefits for automotive companies and their supply chains. The project was also granted £1.7 million in Objective 1 funds to expand its operations.

The Accelerate Wales programme has already recruited 150 companies; more are expected to join the programme in the coming months.

While a full report on achievements in the first year of running the programme is expected in March 2002, it is already having a substantial effect.

Wales Automotive Forum

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister make a statement on latest developments with the Wales Automotive Forum? (WAQ13820)

The First Minister: The automotive industry is an important part of the Welsh economy, and the Wales Automotive Forum chaired by Professor Garel Rhys OBE, continues to play its part in developing the sector to meet the challenge of world class competitiveness, for example through the Accelerate Wales programme, for which the forum has established an appraisal panel.

The forum has recently expanded its services to members. Its human resource sub-group has been re-established to look at the future skills needs of the industry within the global automotive market.

The automotive technology group will enable member companies to channel technology related issues through the forum, which, in turn, will find solutions by linking to other fora, academia and research and development centres. This will be of particular benefit in helping companies with the development of new products and materials, and will cover design and manufacture, including prototype activity.

Funding for Technium

Alun Cairns: Further to my Plenary question on 25 October, will the First Minister make a statement on funding for Technium? (WAQ13826)

The First Minister: Technium I in Swansea received Objective 2 funding of £3.2 million with match funding from the Welsh Development Agency. An application for Objective 1 funding for Technium II, also in Swansea, has been made and is currently being considered. As stated in the reply to the question on 25 October, the Assembly has allocated a further £13.1 million towards the roll out of the Technium programme across Wales.

The Proposed Manufacturing Centre of Excellence

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister give a detailed report on the proposed manufacturing centre of excellence? (WAQ13896)

The First Minister: Following high level Assembly representations, the Department of Trade and Industry agreed to include Wales in its strategy to establish regional centres of manufacturing excellence as part of a UK wide manufacturing advisory service network announced in the White Paper 'Opportunity For All In A World Of Change' published in February 2001.

As a consequence, the Assembly and the DTI will be co-funding the Welsh service over its formative first three years up to a total figure of £3 million.

The WDA has recently invited tenders from organisations interested in delivering the service, and the successful tenderer is expected to be announced in December.

Briefly, this major new initiative will deliver pro-active practical advice about production and other key business issues to small and medium sized enterprises operating in the manufacturing sector in Wales to help them improve their competitiveness. Typically, the services provided will include relevant learning opportunities, and information on the practical application of latest technologies, including access to 'hands on' facilities.

The centre will provide a focus for manufacturing advice and expertise across a full range of disciplines, while bringing together under one banner, the disparate support mechanisms, which currently operate in support of manufacturing in Wales.

As a 'host centre', the Welsh centre will co-ordinate the activities of such as the WDA's centres of excellence for technology and industrial collaboration (CETICs) and the former Corus technology centre at Port Talbot, as well as other satellite services, and will work closely with Business Connect, and the innovation and technology counsellors.

The centre will be driven by six to eight newly appointed advisers located across Wales.

Business Connect

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister give details of how he plans to evaluate the success or otherwise of the reorganised Business Connect? (WAQ13897)

The First Minister: The new arrangements will be judged by results. Over the next few months the Welsh Development Agency will be holding detailed discussions with its partners over the type of service agreements and contracts that need to be put in place from 1 April 2002 to provide top quality support to small business, including quality standards and evaluation.

Evaluation of Business Connect

Alun Cairns: When will the First Minister be able to give details of how he plans to evaluate the success or otherwise of the reorganised Business Connect? (WAQ13909)

The First Minister: I refer you to the answer I gave to WAQ13897.

Recording Invitations

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister make it his policy to record the invitations he has received, those accepted and those declined, centrally? (WAQ14040)

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please confirm, or otherwise, that there is a log of all invitations received, those accepted and those declined? (WAQ14042)

The First Minister: All correspondence is logged by my office. Although separate logging of invitations is regarded as desirable as a matter of good office practice, it is not always possible. A high percentage of correspondence will express a wish to meet me or for me to visit, sometimes without a specific date or occasion in mind. All invitations are addressed to me as First Minister and are not logged by my office by subject category.

The detailed information requested could not be produced without analysing all the correspondence received and that could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Publishing Invitations Received

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please publish all the invitations he has received, rejected or declined during the full week commencing 5 November 2001? (WAQ14044)

The First Minister: No.

Official Engagements

Alun Cairns: How many official engagements has the Deputy First Minister attended in place of the Minister for Economic Development? (WAQ14046)

The First Minister: I am not aware of any.

The Deputy Minister for Economic Development

Alun Cairns: On how many occasions has the Deputy Minister for Economic Development had to stand in for the Minister for Economic Development since 6 July 2001? (WAQ14047)

The First Minister: The Deputy Minister for Economic Development has undertaken around 30 engagements in that capacity since 6 July 2001, but no distinction is possible between those engagements where he was deputising and those when he was not.

Full Board Meetings Held by Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies

Nick Bourne: What is the frequency of both closed and open full board meetings held by Assembly sponsored public bodies in Wales for which the Minister has responsibilities? (WAQ14050)

The First Minister: The Welsh Development Agency meets monthly. The Wales Tourist Board meets quarterly. The meetings of both bodies comprise some elements of business, which are open to the public. The Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board meets monthly but is not open to the public.

Video Conferencing Facilities

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please list all occasions on which he has used the video conferencing facilities since 1 March 2001? (WAQ14074)

The First Minister: Since 1 March 2001, I have used the video conferencing facilities on 1 March and 23 October.

Official Engagements with the Welsh Development Agency

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please list all the official engagements he has had with the WDA since 6 July 2001? (WAQ14082)

The First Minister: I refer you to the answer I gave to WAQ14081.

Wales Tourist Board

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please list all the official engagements he has had with the Wales Tourist Board since 6 July 2001? (WAQ14083)

The First Minister: I refer you to the answer I gave to WAQ14080.

Questions to the Minister for Assembly Business

Promoting the Growth of Indigenous Businesses

Peter Black: What action is the Government of Wales taking to promote the growth of indigenous businesses dealing in information and communications technology? (WAQ13802)

The Minister for Assembly Business (Andrew Davies): The National Assembly is committed to encouraging a strong business sector in Wales. This includes both indigenous companies and those from elsewhere which deal in and use ICT to its greatest potential as part of their everyday business.

Cymru Ar-lein—Online for a Better Wales set out in the strategic framework the ways in which we will achieve this by supporting a range of business support mechanisms. These include programmes such as the ICT and management skills for farmers, a network of ICT support centres throughout Wales, the major Objective 1 funded OpportunitE Wales, the Neath Port Talbot supply chain project and the WDA's smE-Business. Also projects such as the recently announced BT Ignite data centre in Cardiff help our businesses achieve their ICT aspirations.

Cymru Ar-lein also sets out the Assembly's commitment to using the demands of the public sector in Wales to stimulate activity in the private sector. Creation of a substantial electronic purchasing regime in the public sector will also stimulate the private sector to engage in e-business.

We aim to develop an e-procurement system that will enable us to purchase locally produced items from small businesses taking into account the bilingual needs of the public sector in Wales. As part of the review undertaken into procurement in the public sector we will be commissioning a study into the best way of driving this forward.

The Assembly's ICT System

David Davies: To what extent is the efficient running of the Assembly's ICT system reliant on the vagaries of the weather? (WAQ13803)

Andrew Davies: The Assembly's system has suffered very little disruption due to the weather. Since the OSIRIS system was accepted into service in January 1997 there have been two incidents, both in the last 12 months, when the service was affected by extreme weather conditions. The first was when an exceptionally heavy rain storm in the Cardiff area resulted in the drains in Cathays Park overflowing and water entering the server farm. The system was shut down to ensure electrical safety. The second incident occurred when the Cathays Park building was hit by lightning knocking out electrical power, which resulted in a controlled shutdown of the network. On that occasion very heavy rain threatened to flood into the building and prevent powering up the system which would have in turn threatened the integrity and safety of power supplies. This storm also caused widespread disruption to BT circuits affecting the Assembly's wide area network connections across Wales.

Questions for the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language

Financial Support for Art Practitioners

Jonathan Morgan: What proportion of the proposed budgeting increases between 2001/02 and 2002/03 will directly benefit arts practitioners in the form of financial support? (WAQ13122)

The Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language (Jenny Randerson): I intend for all of the proposed increase in the Arts Council of Wales's budget to go directly to support the arts in Wales. It will, of course, be for the arts council to decide how to allocate these additional funds, working within the remit and policies set by me.

Revenue Support for the Wales Millennium Centre

Peter Black: What level of revenue support will the Wales Millennium Centre require from the National Assembly for Wales when open? (WAQ13124)

Jenny Randerson: The Wales Millennium Centre business plan is currently predicated on achieving a break-even position. This is based on the Assembly making available the £2 million in subsidy outlined by the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities in her statement to Plenary on 5 April.

Anticipated Expenditure on the Wales Millennium Centre

Peter Black: What is the National Assembly's total anticipated expenditure, revenue and capital, on the Wales Millennium Centre between 01/04/01 and 21/03/05, broken down for each year? (WAQ13126)

Jenny Randerson: Planned provision of £35.761 million for capital expenditure has been set aside for the Wales Millennium Centre between 2001-02 and 2005-06, should it be required. The information for each year given in the following table. Provision for the revenue costs of the centre, in line with the April statement, will be made in subsequent budget planning rounds. Together with expenditure of £1.239 million incurred during 2000-01, this reconciles with the maximum potential Assembly contribution to the project of £37 million.

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Capital funds set aside for the Wales Millennium Centre	4.861	10.400	13.700	6.600	0.200

Budget Increase for the Arts Council of Wales

Jonathan Morgan: Will the proposed budgeting increase for the Arts Council of Wales provide for the restructuring as outlined in the Everitt report? (WAQ13161)

Jenny Randerson: I am extremely pleased with the proposed budget for the Arts Council of Wales. It represents, by 2004, a 35 per cent increase over the original plan for 2001-02. The one-off staff costs of restructuring have been absorbed in the settlement for the current financial year. The ongoing costs are broadly cost neutral. The increase proposed in the arts council's baseline will therefore be applied in full to benefit the arts in Wales.

Football Forum Taskforce

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on the football forum taskforce? (WAQ13197)

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on how she expects the football forum taskforce to receive evidence from all interested parties? (WAQ13198)

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on how the members of the football taskforce were selected? (WAQ13199)

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on the timescale she expects the football forum taskforce to respond to the Minister's report? (WAQ13215)

Jenny Randerson: I established a football forum earlier this year and the first meeting was held on 1 October. The main purpose of the forum will be to establish a strategy for the development of football in Wales for young people and an effective structure for its implementation. The forum will also look into the roles and responsibilities of the various football bodies within the new strategy.

I believe the forum represents every aspect of Welsh football and views from interested parties should be relayed to Gareth Davies, the chair of the forum.

The appointments to the forum were based on recommendations received from the Sports Council for Wales and the Football Association of Wales.

As for timescale, I have asked the chair of the forum to report to me with the recommendations by the end of March next year, at which time I will consider future action.

Promotion of Sport and Tourism

Alun Cairns: How does the Minister plan to use the Ryder Cup as an opportunity to promote sport and tourism in Wales? (WAQ13206)

Jenny Randerson: An associated programme of tourism and sports development throughout Wales will take effect immediately. The plans of the Wales Tourist Board and the Sports Council for Wales will include specific action to maximise the opportunities which will become increasingly available to the whole of Wales in the lead up to, and after, the Ryder Cup 2010. A team Wales approach will ensure that we exploit those opportunities for maximum benefit.

Our success in attracting the Ryder Cup in 2010 will in itself help to promote Wales as a world-class place to visit and do business. It will also help to develop our profile in the sporting world as a top class venue for world-class events.

Emphasis will now be placed on developing the game of golf in Wales. The Sports Council for Wales is overseeing Wales's golf strategy, the focus of which is the provision of 'golf for all' with a particular emphasis on women's and girls' participation.

As part of the plan, golf development officers have been appointed to cover both north and south Wales to help promote the game of golf in Wales. They will work closely with the golfing unions, Professional Golfers' Association, the sports council, schools, private clubs, funding bodies and local authorities on developing a coherent and cohesive policy of development at all levels. The clear message to be delivered is that golf is fun and accessible. They will also promote golf to participants in other sports, especially those in the age group 30 plus, who may be looking for a more flexible form of sports exercise.

The golf development officers will be at the sharp end of expanding the golf market and will also work closely with golf clubs throughout Wales on attracting new members and retaining existing ones, as well as organising golf open days and roadshows.

Winning the bid for the Ryder Cup also gives us a platform on which to build and develop our other sports. Raising Wales's international profile will attract inward investment to Wales which can bring benefits in terms of business sponsorship and partnerships in sport. This will help raise participation levels, improve access to facilities and raise standards of achievement.

Gaming Licenses

David Davies: What discussion has the Minister had with the UK Minister for Sport regarding proposals to change gaming licenses? (WAQ13785)

Jenny Randerson: None.

BBC Wales Productions on the UK Network

William Graham: Will the Minister outline any discussions she has had with representatives of BBC Wales concerning increasing the number of its productions broadcast on the UK network? (WAQ13786)

Jenny Randerson: I have dealt with this issue on several occasions in meetings with BBC Wales. I would like to see more BBC Wales productions networked across the UK, but this is an issue for the BBC itself, in light of the obligations placed upon it by its Royal Charter. I very much welcome the launch of BBC2 W, the new digital service, which will be available to viewers of digital transmissions outside Wales. Welsh produced programming will be broadcast at peak time and will include programmes such as *Dragons Eye*, *Heineken Cup Rugby* and *The Bench*.

Celebrating the Queen's Jubilee

Nick Bourne: What plans has the Minister got for celebrating the Queen's Jubilee in mid and west Wales? (WAQ13787)

Jenny Randerson: The celebrations are a matter for Buckingham Palace, Lord Lieutenants and local communities. However, Her Majesty the Queen will be visiting Wales between 11 and 13 June in 2002. A programme for her visit has been put together by Buckingham Palace, in close consultation with the Lord Lieutenants in Wales. Further details of the Queen's visit will be available next year.

Preserving the Welsh Language

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the comments made by John Elfed Jones and Becca Brown over the summer about the English and English speakers, and the effect this had on preserving the Welsh language? (WAQ13788)

Jenny Randerson: Such comments are inconsistent with National Assembly policies which seek to build on the broad consensus which already exists in favour of promoting the Welsh language. The good will of the 80 per cent of the population who do not speak Welsh is as important to the future of the language as is the commitment of the 20 per cent who do speak Welsh. We want to see that percentage grow, and this growth should be the result of opportunities, support and encouragement. Remarks that cause offence and division will only cause damage to the future survival of the language.

Football in Wales

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister make a statement on the future of football in Wales? (WAQ13789)

Lynne Neagle: What support is the Minister providing for grass-roots football in Wales? (WAQ13790)

Jenny Randerson: I realise that football in Wales has for many years experienced different kinds of problems. This is the reason that I established a football forum earlier this year. The first meeting was held on 1 October. The main purpose of the forum is to establish a strategy for the development of football in Wales for young people at grass-roots level and to create an effective structure for its implementation. The forum will also look into the roles and responsibilities of the various football bodies within the new strategy.

Football is very popular in Wales and I believe that there is a lot of untapped potential that we must draw out from around the country. The forum will play an important part in the drawing out process and lay a solid foundation that we can build upon.

Cardiff's Capital of Culture Bid

Peter Black: Will the Minister make a statement on the implications of Cardiff's Capital of Culture bid on the rest of Wales? (WAQ13791)

Jenny Randerson: Cardiff City and County Council's bid to become European Capital of Culture in 2008 will benefit the whole of Wales. Cardiff council is involved in discussions with local authorities throughout Wales to ensure that all areas benefit from the bid. I have already announced an extra £2 million to enable a programme of support for arts, theatre and performance across Wales, which will be introduced when the Wales Millennium Centre comes on stream.

The Partnership Government's Culture Strategy

Peter Black: When does the Minister anticipate being able to publish the partnership Government's culture strategy? (WAQ13792)

Jenny Randerson: I will be presenting the final draft of my culture strategy to the Culture Committee on 21 November and I expect to launch the published strategy in the new year.

Youth Music Schemes

Rosemary Butler: Will the Minister report if there are any plans to fund youth music schemes in Wales? (WAQ13793)

Jenny Randerson: The Arts Council of Wales already supports youth music schemes in Wales, of which there are a significant number, through lottery awards and grant in aid. Lottery awards in the region of £500,000 have been awarded to date this year involving music and young people. These projects include work to develop the National Youth Choir of Wales and the National Youth Orchestra of Wales, BBC NOW and projects with Community Music Wales. These organisations offer extensive programmes for young people (Welsh National Youth Opera, for example) and projects (e.g. Katya in Merthyr, involving 200 pupils, run by Welsh National Opera).

I am also pleased that the music development fund, which originates from grant from the Arts Council of Wales and from the Assembly's grants for education support and training programme, has been extended for a further year to 2002-03. The fund extends and strengthens the opportunities for young people to make music of all kinds through extra curricular activities. For example, in 2000-01 the allocation of funding to local education authorities under this fund enabled around 6,500 pupils to take part in vocal activities and 26,000 to undertake instrumental activities.

The £30 million of lottery money given to the National Foundation for Youth Music is from the Arts Council of England and can only be used for projects in England because lottery regulations mean that each country has its own allocation of financial resources. This means that in order to work in the other UK countries, the foundation has to find alternative sources of funding. The foundation is pursuing this with the Arts Council of Wales in terms of Wales.

Recent Visit to New York

Rosemary Butler: Will the Minister report on the benefits for Wales of her recent visit to New York? (WAQ13794)

Jenny Randerson: I visited New York from 18 to 21 October. I felt it was important to show solidarity with New Yorkers and with our cultural events there after the decision to go ahead with the UKwithNY festival.

It is important to place the festival (and my visit) in context. New York is in a state of shock. The decision to go ahead with the festival was taken after careful consideration by the festival board and before the anthrax attacks. A number of artists took the personal decision, at that juncture, to pull out. Others decided they would take the risk.

I believe the decision to go ahead with the festival was right. While audiences were certainly reduced, for the UK generally the festival has achieved a good deal.

The festival has undoubtedly helped to put Wales on the map and raise its profile in the USA. The festival brochure referred directly to Wales six times. Eddie Ladd had a quarter page promotion in *Time Out*. The Morriston orpheus choir appeared not only at Grand Central and Carnegie Hall (where it was nothing short of inspirational) but also on television, and the Sherman Theatre made a special impact on the students at the Tisch School of Art. Also, in a joint UK exhibition Wales has held its own with Betsan Rees's cutting edge 'body art', alongside three other British artists, but clearly the centre of attention; Sean O'Reilly's installation was on view at Snug Harbour, again with other British artists. Welsh film was covered extensively in cinema and animation events.

I attended a service at St Thomas's Church where I presented prayers from Wales. I also visited ground zero and paid my respects at the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary at Battery Park at the very southern tip of Manhattan, where I presented prayers and flowers from Wales.

The Future of the Independent Television Network

Owen John Thomas: What discussions has the Minister had with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport Ministers in Westminster regarding the future of the independent television network in Wales? (WAQ13795)

Jenny Randerson: I discussed this issue, among other topics, when I met the Minister with responsibility for broadcasting, Kim Howells. I met representatives of the Independent Television Commission recently to discuss regional programming provided by HTV. Any proposed changes in the services provided to Wales would be subject to regulation by the ITC, on which there is a national member for Wales. The Assembly has repeatedly affirmed its support for public service broadcasting and for regional programming.

Full Board Meetings Held by Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies

Nick Bourne: What is the frequency of both closed and open full board meetings held by Assembly sponsored public bodies in Wales for which the Minister has responsibilities? (WAQ14054)

Jenny Randerson: The council of the National Museums and Galleries of Wales meets quarterly in closed session but the twice yearly meetings of its court are open.

The National Library of Wales has five council meetings and one meeting of its court each year, all of which are open.

The Sports Council of Wales holds six meetings a year. All are open.

The Welsh Language Board meets six times a year, five of which meetings are open. One closed session is held to discuss grant applications.

The Arts Council of Wales meets six times a year. Each meeting has a closed and open session.

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales meets three times a year in closed session but the minutes are posted on its website.

Video Conferencing Facilities

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister please list all occasions on which she has used the video conferencing facilities since 1 March 2001? (WAQ14075)

Jenny Randerson: Since 1 March 2001, I have on no occasion used the video conferencing facilities.

Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Education and Learning Wales (Welsh-medium Services)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: What steps has ELWa taken to ensure that it is fully equipped and able to deliver its full range of services, courses and initiatives through the medium of Welsh? (WAQ13601)

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson): My remit letter to the National Council for Education and Training for Wales, ELWa makes clear the importance I attach to the development of Welsh-medium provision, and I am aware that the council is taking seriously its responsibilities in this area. Programme details are operational matters for the council and I have asked the chief executive to write to you.

Testing of Seven-year-old Children

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister make a statement on plans set out in ‘The Learning Country’ for the abolition of testing for seven-year-olds in Wales? (WAQ13602)

Jane Davidson: To date, the proposal to discontinue testing of seven-year-olds at the end of key stage 1 has received a very positive response from teachers, parents and others within teaching. The consultation period on ‘The Learning Country’ runs until 31 October and I plan to make an announcement on this particular proposal very soon after that date.

Private Finance to Provide New Schools

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on the use of private finance to provide new schools in Wales? (WAQ13603)

Jane Davidson: 10 schools in Wales are programmed to receive support under private finance initiative arrangements at an overall value of around £160 million. Edwina Hart has carried out a consultation on the future use of public-private partnerships and the private finance initiative and will be making a statement to the Assembly on the outcome of this consultation in the next few weeks.

European Union Youth White Paper

Rosemary Butler: What input is the Assembly having on the European Union youth White Paper? (WAQ13604)

Jane Davidson: The European White Paper on youth is currently being drafted by the European Commission. It is due to be published on 21 November and launched in Ghent on 26 November.

Both I and my officials contributed to the ideas for the White Paper when European Commission colleagues visited the UK earlier this year. We also informed them of current developments in Wales, including our plans for the extending entitlement agenda.

Although we have not seen the draft White Paper, I and my officials, in close collaboration with the Wales European Centre, have been following its progress. The implications of the White Paper for Wales will be the subject of a national conference in Risca on 6 December.

Entrepreneurial Opportunities

David Davies: Will the Minister outline her plans to provide entrepreneurial opportunities that allow parents and educators to develop the school they believe will best educate their children? (WAQ13605)

Jane Davidson: My policy proposals for the continued improvement of all aspects of schools in Wales, which will be taken forward in partnership with our local communities, are set out in 'The Learning Country'.

Training for Craftsmen

David Davies: What steps is the Minister taking to introduce technical and vocational training to ensure a pool of trained craftsmen in Wales? (WAQ13606)

Jane Davidson: An extensive suite of programmes is already available, delivered by ELWa, including modern apprenticeships and our new Wales-only modern skills diploma for adults. My draft skills and employment action plan, which I unveiled on 24 October and which will be issued for consultation shortly, proposes a range of actions to raise our skills levels in Wales.

Recommendations of the Rees Commission

Peter Black: When does the Minister plan to implement the recommendations of the Rees Commission? (WAQ13607) [R]

Jane Davidson: Some of the recommendations entirely within the Assembly's remit have been implemented already: for example those that relate to the increased provision, composition and distribution of hardship and access funds for 2001/02. Other recommendations have significant financial implications for the Assembly and need very careful consideration. I should be in a position to make a more detailed announcement shortly.

Development of a Rural Schools Policy

Peter Black: Will the Minister give an update on the development of a rural schools policy? (WAQ13608) [R]

Jane Davidson: I intend to put a paper to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee on 31 October. Following its consideration of this paper, local education authorities and others will be consulted on revised guidance.

Audit of the Educational Provision for Deaf Children

Lorraine Barrett: Will the Minister conduct an audit of the educational provision for deaf children in Wales? (WAQ13609)

Jane Davidson: As you are aware it is my intention to replace the three existing special educational needs pilot projects with an all-Wales group, led by the Assembly, as from April 2002. I propose to ask this group to identify the number of teachers who currently work with hearing-impaired children and the number who hold recognised qualifications. I also propose that they should hold discussions with relevant training providers to ensure that adequate training opportunities exist to meet future demand.

Increasing Participation in Higher Education by People from Deprived Communities

Huw Lewis: What measures is the Minister planning to implement to increase participation in higher education by people from deprived communities? (WAQ13611)

Jane Davidson: The Assembly is committed to widening access to higher education for all those who have the ability to benefit from it and particularly to encourage participation by those students from low income or socially disadvantaged backgrounds as well as other under-represented groups.

In response to the independent investigation into student hardship in Wales, I took immediate action to help students faced with financial difficulties by putting £20 million into access and hardship funds. Any other changes in student support, including those recommended by the investigation group, will be informed by the outcome of the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee's review of higher education and the UK Government's fundamental review of higher education student support, which specifically aims to secure more up-front support for students from less well-off backgrounds. I will ensure we have an input into that review to get the best deal for students in Wales.

The Assembly also looks to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales to help meet its aims of widening access to higher education. HEFCW has developed a range of programmes and initiatives designed to promote the recruitment and retention of students from under-represented groups. From 2000/01 HEFCW has drawn together all the previous funding initiatives for widening access to provide a £1.5 million a year widening access fund. HEFCW's aim is for institutions to develop a strategic and planned approach to widening access to higher education in the context of their own missions, experience and knowledge of the needs of their own communities, with funding being released on the production of acceptable widening access strategies.

Improving Access to Higher Education

Huw Lewis: What discussions has the Minister had with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills regarding measures to improve access to higher education for mature students and students from deprived communities? (WAQ13612)

Jane Davidson: I met the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on 24 September.

One of the key areas we discussed was the independent investigation group's report into student hardship in Wales and the impact of the current student support system on student recruitment, especially from disadvantaged groups. I am very pleased that this is one of the key areas to be addressed by the UK Government in its review of the student support system announced recently.

As higher education policy is a devolved function, I did not discuss the detailed policies that have been developed by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales aimed at encouraging participation in higher education by non-traditional students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Budget Allocation for Higher Education

Nick Bourne: What discussions has the Minister had with university vice chancellors about the higher education allocation in this month's budget? (WAQ13613)

Jane Davidson: I do not specifically meet individual higher education institutions to discuss the funding requirements of the Welsh higher education sector—that is the role of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, although funding may be among the issues raised when I meet with individual vice chancellors. HEFCW submits advice to me on the sector's funding requirements prior to the start of the annual budget planning round. This is taken into account in reaching decisions.

Rural Schools Policy

Nick Bourne: When does the Minister propose to announce a rural schools policy for Wales? (WAQ13614)

Jane Davidson: I intend to put a paper to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee on 31 October. Following its consideration of this paper, local education authorities and others will be consulted on revised guidance.

Homework Given to School Children

William Graham: Will the Minister outline the administration's policies with regard to the amount of homework to be given to school children in Wales? (WAQ13615)

Jane Davidson: Good quality homework plays an important role in stimulating learning and achievement. In particular, it provides an opportunity for young people to develop their learning skills while extending their knowledge and understanding of specific subject areas.

It is for the governing body and the headteacher of each school to determine the approach to be taken in the provision and management of homework. This should include the amount of time pupils of different ages should spend on homework and the range of activities that can be undertaken. Documents such as home-school agreements play an important role in ensuring that parents are aware of what is expected.

Schools should review, regularly, their approach to homework, with standards monitored as part of school inspections conducted by Estyn. Given the importance of this area I have asked the Chief Inspector of Education and Training to keep me informed of current practice and to provide advice on any steps needed to improve standards.

The Maintenance and Repair of School Buildings

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement on the provision of finance for the maintenance and repair for school buildings? (WAQ13616)

Jane Davidson: Funding for revenue repairs and maintenance is the responsibility of local education authorities and resources are included in schools' delegated budgets. Local authorities are able to undertake capital repairs, maintenance, improvements and provide new school buildings from their annual capital allocations—general capital funding—but it is for them to determine the level of resources devoted to individual service sectors such as education and thereafter which school projects are to benefit. The Assembly also provides additional capital funding for schools, which is ring-fenced. Local education authorities are given an allocation but again it is for them to decide priorities and decide which schools projects are to be funded. Overall, the Assembly is providing £293 million in capital resources over this year and the next two years to support the 'Betterwales.com' objective of ensuring all schools are in good physical shape by 2010.

Training for Heavy Goods Vehicle Drivers

Peter Rogers: Will she make a statement on the provision of training in Wales for HGV drivers. (WAQ13650)

Jane Davidson: The main Government-funded support for HGV driver training in Wales is made through the modern apprenticeship programme, which is administered by the National Council for Education and Training for Wales, ELWa. Through the road haulage modern apprenticeship, assistance is provided to enable people to gain a HGV license as part of a broader range of skills, including national vocational qualifications and key skills appropriate to the industry. Support through the work based training for adults programme is also available to adults who have a guaranteed offer of a job.

The relaxation to the age limit of 25 for completion of modern apprenticeships and the modern skills diploma for adults, introduced on 1 April this year, will benefit the road haulage industry. These changes will enable older entrants to the programme, in line with the traditional age profile of entrants to the road haulage sector and the need for HGV drivers to be over 21 years of age.

ELWa officials have recently met with representatives of the road haulage sector in Wales and have agreed, in broad principle, how support for HGV training will be provided. More detailed planning of such support will take place following advice from the sector to identify clearly the key areas in Wales for action and how the sector can be best supported.

We are awaiting the outcome of a review being carried out for the Department for Education and Skills into the feasibility of introducing a transferable training loan scheme, which is due to report in December this year.

Penlan Comprehensive School

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister please confirm or otherwise that she has received a copy of a report detailing the condition of the Penlan Comprehensive School building in Swansea? (WAQ13817)

Jane Davidson: I have not received a report detailing the condition of the former Penlan Comprehensive School building in Swansea. Any issues relating to the state of the building are matters for Swansea City and County Council.

The Condition of Penlan Comprehensive School

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister please place a copy of any report she has received in relation to the condition of the Penlan Comprehensive School building in the Assembly Library for scrutiny? (WAQ13818)

Jane Davidson: I have not received such a report.

Questions to the Minister for Environment

Funding to Alleviate Flooding Problems

Alun Cairns: What guarantees has the Minister received that any additional funding planned to alleviate flooding problems was actually used for those purposes? (WAQ13651)

The Minister for Environment (Sue Essex): Additional funds to alleviate flooding following last autumn's floods have been made available to support flood alleviation schemes promoted by the operating authorities. Any application from an operating authority for financial support for flood defence works will be carefully vetted by Assembly officials before approval is given for works to commence. An Assembly official will inspect the completed works and an appraisal of the scheme final account is made to ensure that only appropriate works have been included for grant aid purposes.

Source of Funding to Alleviate Flood Problems

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister please give details of the source of funding made available to alleviate flood problems? (WAQ13652)

Sue Essex: The sources of funding depend on the designation of the watercourse. Flood alleviation works on statutory main rivers are usually funded by local flood defence committees. Flood alleviation works on non-statutory watercourses are usually funded by the local authorities or internal drainage boards.

Financial support in the form of grant aid is offered by the Assembly in support of eligible projects. The grant rate offered varies from authority to authority and ranges from 35 per cent to 85 per cent.

Finance Available for Flood Defence

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister please make a statement on finances made available for flood defence? (WAQ13654)

Sue Essex: I have made a total of £25 million of Assembly money available to flood defence operating authorities over the next three years to support the promotion of improved flood and coastal defence works in Wales. This includes an additional £3 million, which I announced following the catastrophic floods of last autumn. In order to assist operating authorities in progressing flood defence improvements identified during last autumn's events I have recently announced that full funding will be made available for local authorities to carry out pre-feasibility flood defence studies. In conjunction with this, I have agreed to fully fund the Environment Agency's catchment flood management plans for the Dee, Teifi and Ely rivers and have agreed to fully fund certain feasibility studies for specific problem sites. Officials are currently considering applications for financial support for certain schemes being promoted by local authorities.

Additional Funding to Alleviate Flooding Problems

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister please give details of any additional funding specifically earmarked to alleviate flooding problems, in Wales as a whole and for each local authority area? (WAQ13655)

Sue Essex: I announced on 14 November 2000 that an extra £3 million was being made available for flood defences in Wales. The £25 million that is now available includes this additional sum. This money is available to provide financial support for improvement works across Wales, subject to acceptable applications being made by the appropriate operating authorities.

Houses in the Torfaen Borough

Lynne Neagle: How many windfall houses have been built in the Torfaen borough subsequent to the planning inspectorate report on the Torfaen County Borough Council local plan in 1998? (WAQ13775)

Sue Essex: Information on housing completions is contained in joint housing land availability studies, co-ordinated for each unitary authority area in Wales by the Welsh Development Agency. However, these studies do not specifically identify housing completions on windfall sites, and indeed these studies generally only identify sites of more than 10 units. Consequently it is not possible to quantify the number of houses built specifically on windfall sites in Torfaen over the specified timespan. The information should, however, be routinely collected by Torfaen County Borough Council as part of its development plan monitoring.

Landfill Tax Credits (Restoring Buildings)

Glyn Davies: What was the total amount of landfill tax credits being utilised for restoring places of religious worship and buildings of architectural or historic interest since the start of the landfill tax credit scheme in Wales? (WAQ13776)

Sue Essex: Entrust, the regulators of the scheme, has advised that £1.3 million of landfill tax credits have been spent on such activities.

Percentage of Landfill Tax Given to Environmental Bodies

Glyn Davies: What percentage of landfill tax has been given by landfill operations in Wales to environmental bodies in each year since the landfill tax liability scheme has been in existence? (WAQ13777)

Sue Essex: Taxation issues are a matter for Her Majesty's Treasury. I understand that the figures you have requested are not available because the tax information is accounted for by the head office of a landfill site operator, which may be in a different part of the UK from a specific landfill site.

Natur Cymru Magazine

Glyn Davies: What financial commitment is required from the National Assembly or any of its sponsored public bodies or agencies, to meet the costs of the *Natur Cymru* magazine published by the Wales diversity group? (WAQ13814)

Sue Essex: *Natur Cymru* is a new environment, wildlife and countryside magazine produced by a partnership of public and voluntary sector partners as an initiative of the Wales biodiversity group. The funding provided by partners to pump-prime this project is as follows:

- £13,500 from the Assembly over three years, for the dissemination of research and monitoring studies in Wales;
- £20,000 from the Countryside Council for Wales and one day per week of an editor's time, over three years;
- £2,000 from the Forestry Commission over two years;
- £2,000 from the National Museums and Galleries of Wales over two years;
- £9,000 from voluntary sector partners (World Wildlife Fund, Welsh wildlife trusts and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) over five years.

The publication is financed through subscriptions to supplement partner contributions, and it is intended that, at the end of its first three years, the magazine will be substantially or completely self-financing. With over 1,200 subscribers already, this is definitely achievable.

Penhesgyn Landfill

Peter Rogers: Will a further risk assessment be conducted at Penhesgyn landfill due to two cattle over five years old being buried there? (WAQ13824)

Sue Essex: The Minister for Rural Affairs will write to the Member and place a copy of his letter in the Library.

Marine Aggregate Dredging Policy

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister give the timescale in which she expects to have the marine aggregate dredging policy framework in place? (WAQ13825)

Sue Essex: The draft marine aggregate dredging policy was issued for consultation in May, and over 1,200 responses have been received.

The document will be reviewed in light of all the comments, and presented to the Assembly when any changes have been incorporated. This will be done as soon as practicable.

Gwelliant yr A499 ger Llanystumdwy

Dafydd Wigley: Ar ba ddyddiad y cyflwynodd yr arolygydd ei adroddiad ar yr ymchwiliad cyhoeddus i welliant yr A499 ger Llanystumdwy? (WAQ13859) [W]

Sue Essex: Cyflwynodd yr arolygydd ei adroddiad ar yr ymchwiliad cyhoeddus i gynllun yr A497 o Abererch i Lanystumdwy ar 4 Mai 2000.

Improvement of the A499 near Llanystumdwy

Dafydd Wigley: On what date did the inspector present his report on the public inquiry into the improvement of the A499 near Llanystumdwy? (WAQ13859) [W]

Sue Essex: The inspector presented his report on the public inquiry for the A497 Abererch to Lanystumdwy scheme on 4 May 2000.

Ymchwiliad Cyhoeddus i Welliant A499 ger Llanystumdwy

Dafydd Wigley: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad mewn perthynas â'r adroddiad a gyflwynwyd gan arolygydd yr ymchwiliad cyhoeddus i welliant yr A499 ger Llanystumdwy? (WAQ13860) [W]

Sue Essex: Anfonodd yr arolygiaeth gynllunio lythyr ar Gyngor Gwynedd ar 26 Medi 2001, yn nodi 80 o faterion y byddai'n rhaid mynd i'r afael â hwy yn dilyn yr ymchwiliad cyhoeddus. Dim ond ar ôl i'r cyngor ymateb i'r arolygiaeth gynllunio y gellir symud ymlaen ymhellach â'r mater.

Public Inquiry into the A499 Improvement near Llanystumdwy

Dafydd Wigley: Will the Minister make a statement regarding the report presented by the inspector of the public inquiry into the A499 improvement near Llanystumdwy? (WAQ13860) [W]

Sue Essex: The planning inspectorate sent Gwynedd Council a letter on 26 September 2001, detailing 80 issues that needed to be addressed following the public inquiry. It is for the council to respond to the planning inspectorate before the matter can be progressed further.

A40 in Pembrokeshire

Delyth Evans: What plans are there to dual the A40 in Pembrokeshire? (WAQ13862)

Sue Essex: The transport framework for Wales, which is intended to provide a set of aims and objectives to create a better co-ordinated and sustainable transport system, will be published later this month. The trunk road programme will be developed in accordance with the principles set out in the framework. I cannot comment on individual trunk road schemes until the programme has been announced but the results of the Babbie study on the dualling of the A40 west of St Clears will be taken into account.

Talgarth Bypass

Delyth Evans: What progress is being made on options for the construction of the Talgarth bypass in mid Wales? (WAQ13863)

Sue Essex: The feedback from the consultation held in the town in October/November 2000 into various alternative routes for a relief road is being assessed and I hope to announce a preferred route shortly.

The Safety of Incineration Plants

Peter Black: What research is the Minister aware of on the safety of incineration plants? (WAQ13994)

Sue Essex: The Environment Agency is funding a research initiative that will review incineration and other combustion techniques in relation to emissions and the potential consequences for public health. A consortium of the Universities of Birmingham, Sheffield, and Leeds, and the Medical Research Council Institute for Environment and Health is undertaking the work. The Assembly is represented on the project board. A report is expected in spring 2002. Regulation of incinerators requires emissions to be tightly controlled within the limit values prescribed in European Union legislation. The limit values imposed and the regulatory decisions taken on these processes are designed to ensure that a high level of protection is afforded to human health and the environment.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Elin Jones: Will the Minister confirm how many sites of special scientific interest are in 'favourable conservation' status? (WAQ13995)

Sue Essex: The information requested is not available. The Countryside Council for Wales intends to monitor the condition of features on sites of special scientific interest using the UK common standards monitoring system developed by the joint nature conservation committee. This will review whether the features for which the sites of special scientific interest have been selected are in 'favourable condition'. Data on the condition of SSSIs that are also national nature reserves are reported in the Countryside Council for Wales/Forestry Commission publication, 'A Living Environment for Wales'. Using additional resources provided by the Assembly, CCW intends to extend its monitoring programme to other SSSIs.

Signposting on Trunk Roads

Delyth Evans: What plans does the Minister have to improve signposting on trunk roads in Wales? (WAQ13996)

Sue Essex: Traffic signing on the trunk road network in Wales is under constant review. The National Assembly has a regular inspection and maintenance regime in place, which is carried out by its trunk road agents. As a result of these inspections damaged or worn out traffic signs are replaced and where necessary upgraded. Any deficiencies or inconsistencies reported to us by our agents or members of the public are also looked into and rectified where necessary.

There have been many changes in the principles of direction signing over the past 10 years and these new principles are being incorporated into all new road schemes. However, signs normally have a design life of between 15 and 20 years, so at the present time there are both old and new type signs on the trunk road network. The current traffic signs regulations lists those signs that have to be replaced by certain dates, thereby ensuring that these new signing principles will be adopted as a matter of course.

Second and Holiday Homes

Delyth Evans: Will the Minister make a statement on progress on the second and holiday homes and the land use planning system research project? (WAQ13997)

Sue Essex: This research to examine the land use implications of second and holiday homes in rural areas started in August and is due to be completed by February 2002. It aims to establish the number and location of second and holiday homes in rural communities; make recommendations about how data collection systems could be improved; and establish the effect on the local housing market in relation to the availability of affordable housing for sale and rent in meeting local needs. The results of the research will feed into the development of planning policy.

The first phase of the project has been completed. That included an examination of the policy context at the national and local level by identifying issues raised in national planning policy, affordable housing

policy and other strategies, all unitary development plans, housing strategy and operational plans, and housing needs assessment surveys.

The second and the third phases are currently underway. They include interviews with stakeholders and other potentially interested organisations and detailed case studies of five areas; Lleyn Peninsula, Gwynedd, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Brecon Beacons National Park, and Radnorshire, Powys).

The steering group—made up of representatives from local authorities, the national parks, the Royal Town Planning Institute in Wales and the National Assembly—will be meeting again in December to review progress.

Repairing Potholes in Roads

William Graham: Will the Minister detail the estimated time and the cost of repairing the potholes in our roads? (WAQ 13998)

Sue Essex: The National Assembly is directly responsible for trunk road maintenance. The standards for repairing minor defects are set out in the trunk road maintenance manual. Defects requiring immediate or urgent attention must be corrected or made safe as soon as possible and in any case within 24 hours. The cost of these repairs will vary from year to year and will be met from the Transport Directorate's current structural maintenance budget.

For local roads, the unitary authorities are the highway authorities. It is for them to determine their own programmes for repair and how much they will allocate for that. However, an additional £25 million has been allocated in the draft budget for special grant payments to local highway authorities to help address the problems of local roads and structures maintenance.

These additional payments are to be spread over two years—£5 million for this financial year and £20 million for next year. The payments will address specific repair proposals submitted by the unitary authorities.

Statement on Marine Aggregate Dredging

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on the timescale when she expects to have in place the policy on marine aggregate dredging? (WAQ13999)

Sue Essex: I refer to my answer to WAQ13825. There has been a large, and in some cases detailed, response to the consultation draft on marine aggregate dredging policy. All these responses must be analysed in detail before any redrafting can take place. I envisage this process taking some months.

Implementing the Marine Aggregate Dredging Policy

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on the delay in the implementation of the policy on marine aggregate dredging? (WAQ14000)

Sue Essex: The answer to WAQ13999 refers to that.

When it was issued for consultation earlier this year, the draft policy met with a great deal of comment, which requires careful attention. Clearly, the implementation of any policy is out of the question until it is approved. It is important that due consideration is given to the consultation responses. Only when due consideration has been given to all the views expressed can the document be finalised.

Cycling Strategy in North Wales

Alun Pugh: Will the Minister make a statement on the cycling strategy and how she intends to promote it in north Wales? (WAQ14001)

Sue Essex: Work on developing a joint walking and cycling strategy for Wales is being taken forward by a sub-group of the Welsh transport forum. I hope to issue the strategy for formal public consultation early next year. I will be considering ways to promote the strategy throughout Wales, possibly by means of regional seminars, once the final document has been agreed.

Full Board Meetings Held by Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies

Nick Bourne: What is the frequency of closed and open full board meetings held by those Assembly sponsored public bodies in Wales for which the Minister has responsibility? (WAQ14052)

Sue Essex: Each year, and at regular intervals, the Countryside Council for Wales holds eight meetings that are open to the public and eight meetings that are closed. These sessions, though separate, are held on the same day and at the same location.

The Environment Agency—which is jointly sponsored by the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions—holds one meeting a year in Wales, part of which is open to the public.

Video Conferencing Facilities

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister please list all occasions on which she has used the video conferencing facilities since 1 March 2001? (WAQ14077)

Sue Essex: On several occasions, with Carwyn Jones and individually.

Questions to the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities

Investment in South West Wales

Peter Black: How much money has been allocated to the Welsh Development Agency next year to assist investment in the South West Wales region? (WAQ13147)

The Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities (Edwina Hart): The Assembly's draft budget proposals for 2002/03 include an allocation to the WDA of £198 million, plus £14 million from end year flexibility. The final budget figures will inform the agency's plans for next year, and will be outlined in its business plan for 2002/03. The business plan, which is currently being drafted, will set the agency's regional priorities. The plan will be laid before the Economic Development Committee in the new year, prior to approval by the economic development Minister.

Expenditure Plans for Public Services

Lorraine Barrett: Will the Minister make a statement regarding the new expenditure plans for key public services in Wales? (WAQ13148)

Edwina Hart: I refer to my statement in Plenary on 18 October in which I gave a full explanation of expenditure plans for public services contained in the draft budget proposals.

Funding Formula for Council Tax

David Davies: Have any changes been made to the funding formula for council tax? (WAQ13656)

Edwina Hart: Decisions by local authorities and police authorities determine the level of council tax in each area of Wales. The National Assembly allocates revenue support grant to local authorities, calculated using a standard spending assessment formula.

There are changes to the formula for the 2002/03 settlement. Details are contained within annex 1.1 of the Partnership Council paper 10(4). This document is available in the Library and on the internet.

Cost of Employing Cabinet Special Advisers for 1999-2000

Glyn Davies: What was the total cost of employing Cabinet special advisers for the financial year 1999-2000? (WAQ13780)

Edwina Hart: The cost (gross salary plus pension contributions) of employing special advisers to the Assembly Cabinet for the financial year 1999/2000, for the period from July 1999 to March 2000, was £107,577. This represented 0.161 per cent of the Assembly's total staff budget.

Cost of Employing Cabinet Special Advisers for 2000/01

Glyn Davies: What was the total cost of employing Cabinet special advisers for the financial year 2000/01? (WAQ13781)

Edwina Hart: The cost (gross salary plus pension contributions) of employing Cabinet special advisers for the financial year 2000/01 was £139,000. This represented 0.193 per cent of the Assembly's total staff budget.

Estimated Cost of Employing Cabinet Special Advisers for 2001/02

Glyn Davies: What is the estimated cost of employing Cabinet special advisers for the financial year 2001/02? (WAQ13782)

Edwina Hart: The *estimated* cost (gross salary plus pension contributions) of employing Cabinet special advisers for the financial year 2001-02 is £233,092. This represents 0.290 per cent of the Assembly's total staff budget.

Estimated Cost of Employing Cabinet Special Advisers for 2002/03

Glyn Davies: What is the estimated cost of employing Cabinet special advisers for the financial year 2002/03? (WAQ13783)

Edwina Hart: The *estimated* cost (gross salary plus pension contributions) of employing Cabinet special advisers for the financial year 2002/03 is £238,838. This represents 0.269 per cent of the Assembly's total staff budget.

The New Assembly Building

Glyn Davies: What is the total site works costs, which includes things such as temporary road surfaces and the costs of the suspension of the new Assembly building? (WAQ13871)

Edwina Hart: It is necessary to conclude the settlement of the final account with the management contractor. To protect the Assembly's position, the details must remain commercially in confidence for the time being.

Private Sector Interest in the New Assembly Building

Glyn Davies: How many expressions of interest have there been from the private sector to complete the proposed new Assembly building? (WAQ13872)

Edwina Hart: We have had a substantial number of expressions of interest from companies with credible reputations. Since we are at the start of a competitive tendering process, we will not release how many expressions of interest were received or the names of interested companies. That could act against the Assembly's commercial interests in securing proper competitive bids. That is in accordance with the Assembly's standard procurement procedures.

The Cost of Erecting Boundary Fences

Glyn Davies: What were the total costs involved in erecting boundary fences around the site of the proposed new Assembly building? (WAQ13873)

Edwina Hart: The cost of purchasing and erecting the hoarding around the site of the Assembly building was approximately £33,000, inclusive of VAT.

Duration of Contracts for the Boundary Fence

Glyn Davies: What is the duration of any agreed contracts for the boundary fence around the site of the proposed new Assembly building? (WAQ13874)

Edwina Hart: The Assembly has purchased the boundary fence in order to avoid any ongoing contractual costs.

Contracts for the Boundary Fence

Glyn Davies: What contracts have been agreed in respect of the boundary fence around the proposed Assembly building? (WAQ13875)

Edwina Hart: I refer the Member to the answers given to the questions WAQ13873 and WAQ13874.

Maintenance Costs of the Boundary Fence

Glyn Davies: What are the costs involved in maintaining the boundary fence around the site of the proposed new Assembly building up to the next Assembly election date? (WAQ13876)

Edwina Hart: It is not anticipated that there will be any costs involved with the maintenance of the boundary fence.

The Richard Rogers Partnership

Glyn Davies: What discussions are anticipated with the Richard Rogers Partnership in relation to the new Assembly building? (WAQ13877)

Edwina Hart: I have no plans to have any further discussions with the Richard Rogers Partnership.

Improving Community Services

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement concerning the application of Best Value in the improvement of our community services? (WAQ14002)

Edwina Hart: I am sure that local government is committed to providing continuous improvement in services for our communities. The implementation of the Best Value legislation needs a radical overhaul to allow local government the freedom to do that. The Wales programme for improvement, which was discussed at the Partnership Council with local government on 15 October, sets out a way forward based on greater local authority ownership, ensuring that authorities have the systems and culture in place to deliver change, putting a greater emphasis on support for improvement and proposing a much more targeted approach to regulation.

The Improvement and Development Agency Report

Alun Cairns: Does the Minister foresee any need for action following the Improvement and Development Agency report on Swansea City and County Council? (WAQ14003)

Edwina Hart: I do not foresee the need for any direct action by the Assembly in response to this report. It is for the council to consider the report's recommendations and to take whatever action it deems necessary in response to them.

Progress of Communities First

Alun Pugh: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress of Communities First? (WAQ14004)

Edwina Hart: Following the end of the consultation in March, I announced the areas to be included in Communities First.

The guidance for the programme was issued at the end of September 2001. Eligible communities are now free to submit community action plans for consideration by the Assembly.

I have already approved expenditure amounting to almost £2 million. Around £900,000 has been allocated under the Communities First support fund to assist the National Assembly in delivering the programme at local level. I have also allocated £967,000 to local authorities and partner organisations to carry out a range of tasks to help them prepare for the implementation of the programme.

At a Local Government and Housing Committee meeting on 24 October 2001, I announced the additional sub-wards to be included in Communities First. The programme now covers the 100 most deprived wards as identified by the Welsh index of multiple deprivation. It also targets a further 32 sub-ward areas that show deprivation comparative to that found in the 100 most deprived wards. There are, in addition, nine communities of interest or imaginative proposals that cover further wards.

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

Alun Pugh: Has the Minister discussed the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 with the Secretary of State for Wales, Paul Murphy? (WAQ14005)

Edwina Hart: I have regular contact with Paul Murphy on a wide range of issues, including proposed changes to the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Financial Penalties for Police Forces

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement concerning the decision to financially penalise our police forces by capping their grants? (WAQ14006)

Edwina Hart: There has been no decision to penalise police authorities in Wales by capping their grants. I have stated my intention of using the actual budgets set for 2001-02 as the baseline against which future increases in police authority budget requirements will be judged.

Homebuy Scheme

Delyth Evans: Will the Minister make a statement on progress on the take up of the homebuy scheme in Wales? (WAQ14007)

Edwina Hart: Local authorities have determined that just over £3.3 million of the £53.17 million social housing grant available to them for 2001-02 should be used for the homebuy scheme. Up to £1.5 million of additional resources have been made available for homebuy schemes in rural areas. In total, that should enable approximately 250 people/families to purchase homes under this scheme in this financial year. To date, 68 homes have been taken up. A table is attached showing the breakdown by local authority.

Local Authority	Social Housing Grant Allocated by Local Authorities for the Homebuy Scheme	National Assembly for Wales Match funding for Rural Homebuy	Total Allocated	Total Estimated Units (inc. rural)	Rural Homebuy only	Take up to date
Caerphilly	300,000		300,000	22		
Cardiff	885,000		885,000	40		17
Ceredigion	200,000	200,000	400,000	20	20	
Conwy	120,000	120,000	240,000	15	15	6
Denbighshire	120,000	120,000	240,000	20	20	1
Flintshire	230,000	130,000	360,000	15	10	2
Gwynedd	320,000	320,000	640,000	50	50	21
Monmouthshire	20,000	20,000	40,000	2	2	
Pembrokeshire	360,000	120,000	480,000	13	4	6
Rhondda Cynon Taff	579,000		579,000	24		
Ynys Môn	200,000	200,000	400,000	30	30	15
TOTAL	3,334,000	1,230,000	4,564,000	246	151	68

Support for Local Authorities Affected by Flooding

Delyth Evans: Will the Minister make a statement on support available for local authorities affected by flooding? (WAQ14008)

Edwina Hart: The Assembly supports local authorities affected by flooding in a number of ways.

In response to the unprecedented October 2000 floods, the Assembly made additional financial assistance available to local authorities by activating an emergency Bellwin scheme. A Bellwin scheme provides additional revenue to councils coping with disasters, usually at a rate of 85 per cent of eligible costs above a threshold, set at 0.2 per cent of a council's budget. However, in recognition of the extreme circumstances faced by authorities in mounting an effective response to the October 2000 floods, the Assembly increased the aid rate to 100 per cent. The amount of Assembly funding involved is likely to be around £6.5 million.

Furthermore, in response to the unprecedented flooding last October, and in recognition of the damage that had been caused to structures for which local authorities have responsibility, the Assembly established the severe weather capital grant scheme. This is a one-off grant scheme aimed at helping local authorities to fund the capital works necessary to return damaged infrastructure—for the most part, highway infrastructure—to pre-flood condition. To date, just under £15 million has been promised to local authorities for this purpose, although the final figure could be much higher.

The Assembly also supports operating authorities across Wales in facilitating the delivery of the Assembly's flood and coast defence policy aims, which include the provision of sound and sensible flood defences. Following last autumn's floods, the Assembly increased budget provision for such work by £3 million. The available budget for flood and coast defence works over the next three years is now £25 million. This financial support is provided to operating authorities in the form of grant aid. The release of this grant depends on having received applications from authorities for sound flood defence schemes.

The Costs of Consultants on the New Assembly Building

Glyn Davies: What is the total cost of the consultants involved in progressing with the new Assembly building following the Ministers decision to suspend the project? (WAQ14009)

Edwina Hart: The amount paid to date to consultants involved in progressing the project since 17 July is £95,381 inclusive of VAT.

Full Board Meetings Held by Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies

Nick Bourne: What is the frequency of closed and open full board meetings held by those Assembly sponsored public bodies in Wales for which the Minister has responsibilities? (WAQ14051)

Edwina Hart: The Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales meets regularly each month, but open sessions are only held when requested by the public. In the last year only the annual general meeting was open.

The Running Costs of the Assembly

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister please make a statement on the total running costs of the Assembly? (WAQ14065)

Edwina Hart: The Assembly's administration expenditure in 2000-01, which includes staff costs and items such as capital expenditure as well as running costs, was £105.1 million. This figure does not include the costs of the Presiding Office, which were £18.9 million.

Video Conferencing Facilities

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister please list all occasions on which she has used the video conferencing facilities since 1 March 2001? (WAQ14078)

Edwina Hart: None, there have not been any occasions when video conferencing facilities would have been appropriate.

Staff Employed at Gwydyr House (November 2001)

Glyn Davies: How many staff employed by the National Assembly worked at Gwydyr House on 1 November 2001? (WAQ14163)

Edwina Hart: That is a matter for the Secretary of State for Wales.

Staff Employed at Gwydyr House (November 2000)

Glyn Davies: How many staff employed by the National Assembly worked at Gwydyr House on 1 November 2000? (WAQ14164)

Edwina Hart: That is a matter for the Secretary of State for Wales.

Staff Employed at Gwydyr House (November 1999)

Glyn Davies: How many staff employed by the National Assembly worked at Gwydyr House on 1 November 1999? (WAQ14165)

Edwina Hart: That is a matter for the Secretary of State for Wales.

Barnett Formula

Dafydd Wigley: Will the Minister arrange to meet Lord Barnett to discuss the need to review the Barnett formula? (WAQ14172)

Edwina Hart: I will seek a meeting with Lord Barnett when and if I think it would be of benefit to do so.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Continuation of Services Established by Additional Funding

Alun Cairns: What guarantees can the Minister make that new services set up by one-off additional funding payments will be continued? (WAQ13200)

Alun Cairns: What guarantees can the Minister make that new services set up by additional funding payments will be continued? (WAQ13201)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): Whether new services are developed as a result of one-off or recurrent additional funding, I would normally expect those services to be continued subject to satisfactory evaluation of their quality and cost-effectiveness. However, except in cases where the Assembly continues to ring-fence the funding for these services, it will ultimately be for local or health authorities or their successor bodies to determine, in the light of local priorities and resource constraints, whether new services should be continued.

Reconfiguration of National Health Service Trusts

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister comment on the effects the reconfiguration of NHS trusts has had on generating savings at each new trust level? (WAQ13202)

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister detail what the costs have been of NHS trust reconfiguration? (WAQ13203)

Alun Cairns: Detailing savings at each new trust level, what savings were realised as a result of reconfiguring NHS trusts? (WAQ13216)

Jane Hutt: The 1999 reconfiguration of NHS trusts, when 26 trusts were reduced to 16, was intended to improve clinical continuity and viability as well as achieve savings. At the time, it was anticipated that restructuring costs would amount to £10.6 million over seven years but that recurrent annual savings of £6.9 million would be achieved by 2002-03, with cumulative net financial savings of some £24.2 million being achieved by 2003-04.

The Auditor General for Wales's report on the *NHS (Wales) Summarised Accounts 1999-2000* shows that at 31 March 2000, trusts had achieved savings of £3.9 million (£1.2 million higher than originally forecast) and costs of £4.4 million (£3.2 million lower than forecast)—a cumulative net cost at that date of £0.5 million.

The estimated costs and savings for each new trust created on 1 April 1999 are provided in the tables below. The creation of the Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust on 1 April 2000 out of the Cardiff and District Community NHS trust and the University Hospital of Wales and Llandough Hospital NHS Trust is not expected to generate additional costs or savings to those estimated for the creation of the two former trusts on 1 April 1999.

SUMMARY TABLES OF COSTS AND SAVINGS OF REORGANISATION

SUMMARY

	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-2	2002-03	2003-04
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimated costs of reorganisation	(75)	(7,559)	(2,256)	(336)	(236)	(120)
Estimated savings	0	2,770	5,360	6,660	6,860	6,860
Net Costs/Savings	(75)	(4,789)	3,104	6,324	6,624	6,740
Cumulative	(75)	(4,864)	(1,760)	4,564	11,188	17,928

1. Bro Morgannwg

	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-2	2002-03	2003-04
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimated costs of reorganisation	(75)	(564)	(106)	(106)	(106)	0
Estimated savings	0	100	350	350	350	350
Net Costs/Savings	(75)	(464)	244	244	244	350
Cumulative	(75)	(539)	(295)	(51)	193	543

2. Swansea

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimated costs of reorganisation	(210)	(170)	(120)	(120)	(120)	(60)
Estimated savings	180	350	350	350	350	350
Net Costs/Savings	(30)	180	230	230	230	290
Cumulative	(30)	150	380	610	840	1,130

3. Conwy and Denbighshire

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimated costs of reorganisation	(1,000)					
Estimated savings	200	300	400	500	500	500
Net Costs/Savings	(800)	300	400	500	500	500
Cumulative	(800)	(500)	(100)	400	900	1,400

4. North East Wales

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-2	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimated costs of reorganisation	(1,000)					
Estimated savings	250	500	500	500	500	500
Net Costs/Savings	(750)	500	500	500	500	500
Cumulative	(750)	(250)	250	750	1,250	1,750

5. North West Wales

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-2	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimated costs of reorganisation	(1,000)					
Estimated savings	400	700	700	800	800	800
Net Costs/Savings	(600)	700	700	800	800	800
Cumulative	(600)	100	800	1,600	2,400	3,200

6. Gwent Healthcare

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimated costs of reorganisation	(300)					
Estimated savings	300	700	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Net Costs/Savings	0	700	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Cumulative	0	700	1,900	3,100	4,300	5,500

7. Carmarthenshire

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimated costs of reorganisation	(125)					
Estimated savings	0	300	350	350	350	350
Net Costs/Savings	(125)	300	350	350	350	350
Cumulative	(125)	175	525	875	1,225	1,575

9. Pontypridd and Rhondda

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimated costs of reorganisation	(860)	(280)	(110)	(10)	0	0
Estimated savings	340	460	510	510	510	510
Net Costs/Savings	(520)	180	400	500	510	510
Cumulative	(520)	(340)	60	560	1,070	1,580

10. Cardiff Community

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-2	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimated costs of reorganisation	(500)	(200)				
Estimated savings	300	300	300	300	300	300
Net Costs/Savings	(200)	100	300	300	300	300
Cumulative	(200)	(100)	200	500	800	1,100

11. University Hospital of Wales and Llandough Hospital

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-2	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Estimated costs of reorganisation	(2,000)	(1,500)				
Estimated savings	700	1,400	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Net Costs/Savings	(1,300)	(100)	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Cumulative	(1,300)	(1,400)	600	2,600	4,600	6,600

Publishing Prescription Cost Analysis

Rod Richards: Does the Minister have any proposals to emulate the Northern Ireland Health, Social Services and Public Safety Committee department and publish prescription cost analysis for Wales? (WAQ13376)

Jane Hutt: High level prescribing data are published annually in Health Statistics Wales. It is Health Solutions Wales's intention to publish more detailed prescribing data for Wales on the internet as soon as workload pressures and other priorities at its prescribing services unit permit.

Community Hospital for North Meirionnydd and East Dwyfor

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister make a statement on Assembly funding for the new community hospital for North Meirionnydd and East Dwyfor at Porthmadog? (WAQ13561)

Jane Hutt: The Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities said, during her draft budget speech on 18 October, that she would give careful consideration to providing capital resources to take forward new hospital developments, particularly those at Porthmadog and in the Rhondda. This is very welcome news and, with my officials, I am looking at ways these schemes can be funded centrally, and will announce my decisions as soon as I can.

Extra Capacity in Independent Sector Residential Homes

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister make a statement on whether she will commission extra capacity for the elderly in independent sector residential homes this winter? (WAQ13563)

Jane Hutt: On 18 October I made an announcement about an additional £8 million to help health and social services meet immediate winter pressures and tackle delayed transfers of care. This package will also have the effect of helping to stabilise the care homes sector, where there is spare capacity.

I have regular meetings with representatives of the care home sector and on 15 October I held a meeting involving care sector representatives, local government and Assembly officials. This meeting considered the pressures on the care home sector and how we can best deal with blockages in the transfer of care to free up capacity in the acute sector.

Planning and the supply of care is a statutory responsibility of local government. The National Assembly cannot tell local authorities what they should be paying independent providers. The care home sector is still a market and we need to be very mindful of that. I do take the problems of the care sector very seriously and I will continue to be active in seeking solutions to the range of interrelated problems impacting on the sector at the moment, including fee levels.

We are already addressing some of the workforce issues affecting the sector following the Chief Inspector of Social Services' task group report, and I have provided funding for this work. I have commissioned some further analysis of the current position of the care homes sector across Wales. We will also be issuing new guidance to local authorities on their commissioning responsibilities next year. Officials will be meeting representatives of the sector and local authorities for further discussion on these issues shortly. The Health and Social Services Committee is also due to receive evidence from care sector representatives on 7 November.

Palliative Care

Delyth Evans: What plans does the Minister have to extend palliative care in Wales? (WAQ13572)

Jane Hutt: The provision of palliative care services is currently the responsibility of the health authorities. Guidance issued to the health authorities states that everyone in Wales should have access to an equally high standard of palliative care and that the NHS and the voluntary hospice movement should work together to ensure this is achieved. Ultimately the health authorities must determine the pattern of services, bearing in mind that palliative care may be provided in a variety of settings including at home, in a nursing home or in hospital, as well as in a hospice.

Officials are in the process of developing a palliative care strategy for Wales. The strategy will draw on the report on palliative care services commissioned by the Welsh Medical Committee earlier this year. The Welsh Association for Hospice and Specialist Palliative Care, as well as a number of leading health professionals in the field of palliative care, are also involved in the development of the strategy.

Extending the Compulsory Retirement Age for NHS Dentists

Rosemary Butler: Has the Minister any plans to extend the compulsory retirement age for dentists working in the NHS? (WAQ13574)

Jane Hutt: This is not a devolved matter but I can advise you that a review of the retirement arrangements is currently underway.

Under the current pension scheme, the compulsory retirement age of dentists employed by the NHS is 65. Under certain conditions, dentists may continue to work as locums in hospitals until they are 70, although nothing may be added to their pensions.

In-patient Treatments

Rosemary Butler: Will the Minister make a statement on the number of in-patient treatments in the NHS in Wales last year? (WAQ13575)

Jane Hutt: The latest figures on NHS Wales hospital activity were published on 28 September in statistical first release SDR 45/2001, 'NHS Wales Hospital Activity: June 2001', a copy of which is in the Library. They show that the total number of in-patients and daycases treated in the 12 months to end June 2001 was up 2.6 per cent compared with the 12 months ending June 2000. The total number of elective in-patients and daycases treated was up 6.3 per cent.

Maternity Provision in Brecon and Radnorshire

Nick Bourne: What representations has the Minister had for a public inquiry into maternity provision in Brecon and Radnorshire? (WAQ13588)

Jane Hutt: You asked for a public inquiry into maternity services in rural areas in your letter to me of 10 August. I therefore refer you to my reply to it.

I have had one additional request for an Assembly inquiry into this service.

Fees Paid to Independent Residential and Nursing Care Homes

Peter Rogers: Is the Minister taking any action to secure a rise in the fees paid to independent residential and nursing care homes? (WAQ13600)

Jane Hutt: I refer you to the answer I gave to WAQ13563.

Hospices in Wales Receiving Support from Health Authorities

Ieuan Wyn Jones: Will the Minister list the hospices in Wales which receive support from health authorities? (WAQ13778)

Jane Hutt: The following is a list of all hospices funded by the Welsh health authorities. This includes both in-patient hospices and voluntary organisations providing day care, palliative care and support in the community.

Bro Taf Health Authority

- George Thomas Hospice Care, Cardiff.
- Marie Curie Centre, Holme Tower, Penarth.
- Marie Curie Nurse Link.
- Tŷ Hafan Children's Hospice, Sully, Vale of Glamorgan.

Dyfed Powys Health Authority

- Tŷ Bryngwyn Hospice, Llanelli.
- Hope House Hospice, Shrewsbury.
- Tŷ Hafan Children's Hospice, Sully, Vale of Glamorgan.
- St Michael's Hospice, Herefordshire.
- Usk House Day Hospice.
- Shropshire and Mid Wales Hospice.

Gwent Health Authority

- Tŷ Hafan Children's Hospice, Sully, Vale of Glamorgan.
- Marie Curie Centre, Holme Tower, Penarth.
- St David's Foundation Hospice, Newport.
- St Anne's Hospice, Newport.
- St Michael's Hospice, Herefordshire.
- Hospice of the Valleys, Tredegar.

Iechyd Morgannwg Health Authority

- Tŷ Hafan Children's Hospice, Sully, Vale of Glamorgan.
- Marie Curie.
- Tŷ-Olwen.
- West Glamorgan Crossroads.

North Wales Health Authority

- Nightingale House.
- Hope House Hospice, Shrewsbury.
- St David's Hospice, Llandudno.
- Hospice of the Good Shepherd.
- St Kentigern Hospice.

Proportion of Hospices' Income Coming From Health Authorities

Ieuan Wyn Jones: What is the proportion of the income of hospices in Wales which comes from health authorities? (WAQ13779)

Jane Hutt: We do not hold information on the overall income of voluntary hospices. However, we have asked health authorities for information on how much funding they provide to voluntary sector organisations providing a range of palliative care services including in-patient hospices, day care facilities, and palliative care and support in the community.

The total sum of money budgeted to voluntary organisations for these services across Wales for the 2001/02 term is £2,553,654. This does not include the funding health authorities provide for palliative care services provided by the statutory sector. It is important to bear in mind that palliative care may be provided in a range of settings, including at home or in hospital, as well as in a hospice.

Anti-TNF Therapy for Rheumatoid Patients

David Davies: What discussions has the Minister had regarding the endorsement of anti-tumour necrosis factor therapy for rheumatoid patients by the all-Wales medical forum? (WAQ13796)

Jane Hutt: The all-Wales medical forum was established by health authorities themselves, working together to avoid duplication of effort on assessment of new drugs. These arrangements recognise that policy on managed introduction of new drugs remains the responsibility of individual health authorities and trusts.

I am minded to discuss the implications of forthcoming National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines with representatives of patients and professionals in Wales once NICE publishes its draft appraisals on this subject.

Universal Neonatal Hearing Screening

Pauline Jarman: What plans does the Minister have to introduce universal neonatal hearing screening in Wales? (WAQ13804)

Jane Hutt: Earlier this year, the National Assembly invited Clive Sparkes, a consultant audiological scientist at Glan Clwyd Hospital, to undertake a stocktake of current levels of neonatal hearing screening in Wales. This work has been completed and his report, 'Stocktake of Hearing Screening in Wales to prepare for UNHS', will be delivered shortly.

The funding of the scheme will be considered following consideration of the report. There is no existing financial provision for this programme. However, discussions will be taking place with health authorities to establish whether or not the costs of the scheme can be covered through their increased discretionary allocations.

Free Personal Healthcare

David Melding: Will the Minister make a statement on the Assembly's powers to fund free personal healthcare? (WAQ13856)

Jane Hutt: We are currently evaluating the implications of changing the current arrangements for charging in respect of personal care as part of the development of the strategy for older people and are committed to further debate on this issue in Committee and Plenary. It is important that we consider this issue in the wider context of our emerging policies and priorities to improve the lives of older people generally. We need to take a complete view of the care system and how resources might best be deployed. Primary legislation would be required to change current social care legislation in order to implement free personal care.

In-patient Detoxification Services

David Melding: Will the Minister make a statement on the future of in-patient detoxification services in Cardiff? (WAQ13857)

Jane Hutt: The in-patient service currently provided at Whitchurch Hospital has eight beds. Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust is to upgrade the ward environment, which necessitates its temporary closure. From 4

November the unit will relocate to the Royal Hamadryad Hospital for approximately three months while the work is carried out.

On completion of the work at Whitchurch the unit will return and operate in an upgraded facility. This will encompass 12 beds, four of which will be for people with a dual diagnosis of combined substance misuse and mental health problems. Additionally, there will be single rooms for service users and separate male/female facilities.

Healthy Living Centres

David Melding: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress to establish healthy living centres in Wales? (WAQ13858)

Jane Hutt: To date, seven healthy living centres have been announced in Wales. These include: Cywaith Joseff, north Wales; Powys Mental Health Alliance, Powys; Powys County Council project, Powys; Caerphilly Healthy Living Centre, Gwent; Bridges Community Centre, Gwent; Grangetown/Butetown, Cardiff; and St Mellons, Cardiff. An additional two have been approved and will be announced imminently. A further 33 bids have passed the first stage of the assessment process. Their second stage bids will need to be submitted by 21 January 2002. It is thought that Wales is on course to commit the £19.5 million by September 2002, as stated in the policy directions.

Moneys for Healthy Living Centres

David Melding: What is the projected take-up of the moneys for healthy living centres in Wales during the life of the scheme? (WAQ13864)

Jane Hutt: It is anticipated that all of the £19.5 million healthy living centre allocation for Wales will be committed by the end of the programme in September 2002.

Including Nurses on Executive Committees of Local Health Boards

David Melding: Will a nurse be included on any executive committees of the proposed local health boards as a consequence of the Munich declaration on nursing? (WAQ13865)

Jane Hutt: In the spirit of the declaration and given the importance of nursing and nurses in the development of primary care, due consideration is being given to the inclusion of nursing in the arrangements for the executive of any future local health boards. The establishment of local health boards in Wales is currently the subject of consultation.

Money Allocated for Healthy Living Centres

David Melding: What proportion of the £19.5 million allocated under the new opportunities fund for healthy living centres in Wales has been drawn down to date? (WAQ13866)

Jane Hutt: A sum of £6 million, representing just under one third of the total allocation of healthy living centre funding, has been committed to date. This is in line with projected spending at this point in the programme and consistent with the fact that nearly 50 per cent of total bids were received in the last month of the 18 month bidding process. Healthy living centre money is allocated to successful projects that can continue to draw down this funding for up to five years from the start of the project, according to the proposed project timeframe.

Support for Young Carers

Delyth Evans: What funding is available by the National Assembly to support young carers in Wales? (WAQ13869)

Jane Hutt: The National Assembly has made £20.7 million available for the implementation of the carers strategy from 2001 to 2004. Young carers are a particularly disadvantaged group and we are committed to addressing their specific needs. Through the carers strategy, via carers special grant funding to local authorities, it is the intention to stimulate greater quantity and flexibility of carers' services, which include those developing for young carers. Plans for services under the carers special grant for this year indicate that 10 per cent—almost £400,000—of the total grant allocated would be spent on services to young carers following consultation with carers themselves and carers' organisations.

Research into Young Carers

Delyth Evans: Can the Minister give an update on research into young carers in Wales? (WAQ13870)

Jane Hutt: In the first report on the carers strategy, published in June 2001, I highlighted two research projects that had been commissioned in the last year. The first of these reports addressed the needs of young carers and the impact of their caring role on their lives. This research was undertaken by Dr Nigel Thomas of the University of Wales, Swansea. The second piece of work dealt with services provided by local authorities for young carers and was undertaken by Dr Diane Seddon of the University of Wales, Bangor. The findings of these studies were reported to a major conference on young carers held by the National Assembly on 15 October. Some important issues have come to light as a result of the studies.

The research found a good deal of variation in the support and information available to young carers. No standard definition of a young carer is used. The research highlighted weaknesses such as a lack of awareness of young carers within the education system, and little evidence of key agencies working together to identify and support young carers. The research also showed that the emotional impact of the young carers' role was a key issue and that it was difficult to separate this from the emotional impact of having a parent or sibling who is ill or disabled. That said, I am pleased to see that, through the carers special grant, local authorities and the key partners are now looking at some imaginative schemes to support and benefit young carers.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and I will now be looking carefully at feedback from the conference and the detail of the research reports to determine how the Assembly should best become involved in helping young carers.

The Social Services Inspectorate for Wales has commissioned a piece of research into young carers' and children's services, the findings of which are not currently available but will be in the near future.

Research reports are available in the Assembly Library and via the carers website page at www.wales.gov.uk/subisocialcarers/.

Physiotherapy for Stroke Patients

Rod Richards: What is the Minister's policy on the provision of physiotherapy for patients who have suffered a stroke? (WAQ13992)

Jane Hutt: At present, the provision of all health services, including those for people requiring physiotherapy services, is the responsibility of local health authorities. They must assess the needs of the local area and, working with NHS trusts, local health groups, the voluntary sector and others, plan and prioritise their health services through their health improvement programmes to meet that need within the resources available.

We would expect the health authorities to work with voluntary organisations such as the Stroke Association in planning and prioritising services and we would encourage the Stroke Association to be proactive and engage in discussions with local commissioning bodies.

Policy on Physiotherapy for Stroke Sufferers

Rod Richards: Is the Minister's policy on providing physiotherapy for stroke sufferers different from the policy in England and if so, how? (WAQ13993)

Jane Hutt: The Department of Health published a national service framework for older people on 27 March 2001. Stroke is covered by standard five in the English national service framework. It states that people who are thought to have had a stroke should have access to diagnostic services and be treated appropriately by a specialist stroke service and subsequently, with their carers, participate in a multidisciplinary programme of secondary prevention and rehabilitation. Standards and service models will apply to all, regardless of age.

We are considering how to take forward in Wales the standards in the national service framework. My officials have recently met representatives of the Stroke Association including Margaret Goose, the chief executive, to discuss the standard relating to stroke and other issues.

At present, the provision of all health services, including those for people requiring physiotherapy services, is for local determination.

Full Board Meetings Held by Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies

Nick Bourne: What is the frequency of both closed and open full board meetings held by Assembly sponsored public bodies in Wales for which the Minister has responsibilities? (WAQ14053)

Jane Hutt: The Welsh National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting convenes every three months and each meeting has both open and closed sessions. The Care Council for Wales has only been in operation since the beginning of October. It is intended that it shall hold open meetings on a monthly basis.

Treatments Available on the NHS in Wales

Rod Richards: Will the Minister list those treatments available on the NHS in Wales that are not available in England? (WAQ14063)

Jane Hutt: I regret that the information required is not held in a form which would allow the question to be answered.

Video Conferencing Facilities

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister please list all occasions on which she has used the video conferencing facilities since 1 March 2001? (WAQ14079)

Jane Hutt: Since 1 March 2001 I have used the video conferencing facilities on the following four occasions: 20 June, 26 June, 11 July and 11 October.

Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

Organic Agricultural Production

Peter Rogers: What percentage of agricultural production in Wales is currently organic? (WAQ13219)

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Carwyn Jones): Some 3 per cent of agricultural land in Wales is either in full organic production or in the process of conversion.

Designation of the Boundaries of an Infected Area

Peter Rogers: What action has the Minister taken as a result of my inquiries to his department on 31 May, 4 June and 20 August concerning issues relating to holding No. 53/18/08, and the designation of the boundary of an infected area, to which I have not received a response? (WAQ13226)

Carwyn Jones: The designation of the boundaries of an infected area is not a responsibility exercised by the National Assembly. In response to the query raised, advice had been sought from the then Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and again of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. I expect to write to the Member in the next few days.

Age of Livestock Buried at Penhesyn, Anglesey

Peter Rogers: What was the oldest age of any livestock buried at Penhesyn, Anglesey? (WAQ13562)

Carwyn Jones: Information covering species of livestock is not available in the form requested. I will write to the Member.

Pigmeat Exports

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister make a statement on the delay of the resumption of pigmeat exports from Wales, due to begin on 22 October 2001? (WAQ13617) [R]

Carwyn Jones: Conclusions reached in the European Union standing veterinary committee relating to the resumption of pigmeat exports from the UK were given European legal effect in the detail set out in the commission decision 2001/740 EC. The decision document, received on 22 October, altered previous EU rules on foot and mouth disease protection measures within the UK, and came into force on 22 October.

The changes set out in 2001/740/EC revoked and remade previous restrictions on imports and exports and also opened the way for Great Britain pigmeat exports.

The immediate priority was to consolidate the commission decision into GB law. The National Assembly legislated on 22 October to ensure that the legal framework for dealing with disease control on imports and exports in relation to foot and mouth disease was in place, including provisions relating to pigmeat exports. Parallel action took place in England and Scotland.

The commission decision imposes strict conditions on the export regime for pigmeat. These have been outlined to industry interests, which accept that an integral part of the decision requires accurate movement records to enable pigs to be sent for slaughter. The detail of a licenced movement regime for exporting pigmeat will need to satisfy commission legal and veterinary requirements and provide assurance on the exercise of proper control on the farm, during slaughter and at the point of export in accordance with 2001/740/EC. This work is now proceeding as a matter of urgency.

Average Age of People Employed in Agriculture

Glyn Davies: What is the average age of people employed in agriculture in Wales for each of the last 10 years? (WAQ13618)

Carwyn Jones: This information is not collected centrally.

The nearest data available to the National Assembly are from the European Community structure survey. This survey is conducted every two to four years. The survey only asks for the ages of the principal farmer. These farmers will tend to be older than the general workforce is. The figures from the structure survey will thus overstate the average age of the general agricultural workforce. This survey estimates that the average age of principal farmers in Wales was around 55 in 1997, the most recent figures

available. This figure is similar to the UK estimate. This estimate is similar to that for the 1990, 1993 and 1995 surveys.

Number of People Employed in Agriculture

Glyn Davies: How many people were employed in agriculture in Wales (full-time equivalents) in each of the last 10 years? (WAQ13619)

Carwyn Jones: Data collected from the Welsh agricultural and horticultural census give the numbers of agricultural workers but do not allow the estimation of full-time equivalents. The most recent data for agricultural workers is as follows:

	Farmers (a)	Regular full time workers (b)	Others (c)	TOTAL
1990	46,700	5,900	12,500	65,000
1991	46,200	5,700	12,700	64,600
1992	46,900	5,400	12,600	64,900
1993	47,500	5,400	12,300	65,100
1994	46,500	5,100	12,100	63,800
1995	46,000	5,200	12,400	63,600
1996	46,200	5,100	12,800	64,100
1997	45,800	5,000	12,600	63,400
1998	45,300	4,600	12,000	62,000
1999	44,200	4,100	11,300	59,500
2000	43,400	3,400	8,900	55,700

Notes

(a) Farmers and their spouses and directors and partners.

(b) Employed for over 20 weeks per year for at least 39 hours per week. Includes unpaid family members.

(c) All other workers. Includes regular workers employed for less than 39 hours per week, seasonal and casual workers and gang labour. Includes unpaid family members and other unpaid labour.

Detail on the long-term trends in agricultural statistics can be found in the agricultural chapter of 'The Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics'. This covers data for 1974 up to 2000. This is available in the Assembly Library. The tables are also available on the Assembly website.

Percentage of People Under the Age of 40 Employed in Agriculture

Glyn Davies: What percentage of the population of Wales employed in farming is under 40 years of age, for each of the last 10 years? (WAQ13620)

Carwyn Jones: These figures are not collected centrally.

The figures for the number of agricultural workers are collected in the annual agricultural and horticultural census. These figures are not divided by the ages of the workers. The following table shows the overall numbers of agricultural workers compared to the overall working age population.

	Agricultural workers (⁰⁰⁰)(a)	Working age population (⁰⁰⁰) (b)	Share
1991	65	1,724	3.7%

1992	65	1,724	3.8%
1993	65	1,725	3.8%
1994	64	1,727	3.7%
1995	64	1,730	3.7%
1996	64	1,737	3.7%
1997	63	1,743	3.6%
1998	62	1,749	3.5%
1999	60	1,756	3.4%
2000	56	1,767	3.2%

Notes

(a) – headcount of all agricultural workers from the annual agricultural census.

(b) – mid-year population estimates from Office for National Statistics. Working age is defined as males between 16 and 64 and females between 16 and 60.

Holding No. 53/131/0061

Peter Rogers: When was holding No. 53/131/0061 near Penhesgyn served with an A-form notice? (WAQ13784)

Carwyn Jones: 3 April 2001.

New Legislation for Animal Medicines

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement concerning the European Union recommendation to introduce new legislation for animal medicines requiring all veterinary medicines administered for food-producing animals to be dispensed by prescription? (WAQ13797)

Carwyn Jones: Responsibility for legislative controls on medicines rests with Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Ministers. I am advised that the proposed amendments to current European legislation are scheduled to be discussed at a series of council working group meetings. I also understand that it is likely to take between three and five years for any new community legislation to emerge from these negotiations.

Restrictions on Driving Tractors

David Davies: What effect will the new restrictions on driving tractors have on Welsh agriculture? (WAQ13798)

Carwyn Jones: Negotiations are currently ongoing in Brussels, under the proposed Physical Agents (Vibration) Directive, to afford proper protection to workers from the effects of vibrations. Among other provisions, it is proposed to set a mandatory limit for exposure to whole body vibration. Limiting whole body vibration would affect tractor driving time but the impact will vary, depending on factors such as seating and cab design.

The UK Government is aware of industry concerns and has negotiated a compromise solution which provides a more realistic limit on whole body vibration exposure and a lengthy transition period for agriculture. Under the transition arrangements proposed and agreed by the European Parliament, agriculture would be exempt from these requirements until 2013. The directive has not been agreed and further discussions are planned before a final decision is reached.

The Farming Futures Strategy Document

Huw Lewis: Will the Minister make a statement on the publication of the Farming Futures strategy document? (WAQ13799)

Carwyn Jones: I will be releasing the long-term strategy for agriculture in Wales on 21 November.

Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister publish a policy statement on the basis of his discussions with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs about reform of the common agricultural policy? (WAQ13800)

Carwyn Jones: The European Commission's proposals for the mid-term review of the common agricultural policy are expected to be available from next June. I and my ministerial colleagues from the other UK agriculture departments have yet to hold any detailed discussions.

Food-Producing Animal Medicines and Horse Medicines

Nick Bourne: Is the Minister aware of proposals by the European Union Commission to make all food-producing animal medicines and horse medicines prescription only, and the financial effects this will have on farmers? (WAQ13801)

Carwyn Jones: I am informed that Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Ministers have agreed that the UK should seek to modify the proposals to enable a flexible approach to the distribution of veterinary medicinal products.

Burying Cattle

Peter Rogers: Further to his reply to WAQ13562, did the Minister's department ever seek documentary evidence that cattle being buried at Penhesgyn were born before or after 1 August 1996? (WAQ13805)

Peter Rogers: Further to his reply to WAQ13562, with respect to laws governing cattle born before 1 August 1996, did the Minister's department make provision for ascertaining the age of cattle buried at Penhesgyn? (WAQ13806)

Peter Rogers: Further to his reply to WAQ13562, will the Minister make a statement on the recommendation of veterinary risk assessment No. 2 that cattle should not be buried? (WAQ13807)

Peter Rogers: Further to his reply to WAQ13562, what actions has the Minister taken to ascertain whether any livestock older than five years were buried at Penhesgyn? (WAQ13808)

Peter Rogers: Further to the Minister's reply to WAQ13562, were any livestock older than five years buried at Penhesgyn? (WAQ13809)

Peter Rogers: Further to his reply to WAQ13562, what is the format of the information relating to livestock buried at Penhesgyn that the Minister's department does possess? (WAQ13810)

Peter Rogers: What plans has the Minister made to deal with cattle over five years of age which have been incorrectly buried at the Penhesgyn site? (WAQ13811)

Peter Rogers: Further to the Minister's reply to WAQ13562, why were the cattle buried at Penhesgyn not sent for rendering? (WAQ13812)

Carwyn Jones: I will write to the Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Publications on Rural Policy

Glyn Davies: What new publications are to be launched by the National Assembly to explain rural policy before the end of the current financial year, and at what estimated cost? (WAQ13813)

Carwyn Jones: The Assembly has set out its proposals for supporting rural Wales in 'Plan for Wales 2001', which was published in October, and the draft national economic development strategy, 'A Winning Wales'. In addition, the Assembly is working to develop rural policy together with the rural partnership but does not anticipate publishing any documents as a result of this work before the end of the current financial year.

The Assembly's statistical directorate will shortly publish a statistics bulletin on 'A Statistical Focus on Rural Wales' which will give information on rural areas based on existing data sources.

Risk Status of Areas within Wales

William Graham: Will the Minister outline the risk status of areas within Wales? (WAQ13815)

Carwyn Jones: At 30 October, the foot and mouth disease classification of county areas in Wales is:

<u>Free</u>	<u>At risk</u>
Swansea	Blaenau Gwent
Vale of Glamorgan	Caerphilly
Cardiff	Merthyr Tydfil
Neath Port Talbot	Rhondda Cynon Taff
Conwy	Monmouthshire
Gwynedd	Torfaen
Bridgend	Powys south
Powys north	Newport
Pembrokeshire	
Ceredigion	
Carmarthenshire	
Denbighshire	
Flintshire	
Isle of Angelsey	
Wrexham	

Fair Prices for Farming Produce at Auction

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister elaborate on his statement in Plenary on 25 October 2001 that 'it is difficult for farmers to obtain a fair price through auction'? (WAQ13816)

Carwyn Jones: This is on the public record. I refer to my response later in Plenary on 25 October to the supplementary question from the Member for Ceredigion on question 20 (OAQ12691).

Burial of Cattle at Penhesgyn

Peter Rogers: What was the Minister's department's involvement in the process leading to the burial of two cattle aged more than five years at the Penhesgyn landfill site? (WAQ13821)

Peter Rogers: What advice did the Minister receive from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs concerning the age of cattle buried at Penhesgyn landfill? (WAQ13822)

Carwyn Jones: I will write to the Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Tier 2 Demonstration Farms

Peter Rogers: How is the work of tier 2 demonstration farms promoted within the farming community? (WAQ13823)

Carwyn Jones: The network of tier 2 demonstration farms will evolve and develop following the completion of objective 5b programmes, and as we move into the next period of structural funds. The demonstration farm network will be promoted through the development centres and the wider communication strategy for Farming Connect, including the local facilitators.

A-form Notices (Foot and Mouth Disease)

Peter Rogers: How many premises on Anglesey were served with A-form notices during the foot and mouth disease crisis? (WAQ13868)

Carwyn Jones: Eighty nine.

Prosecutions for UK Vessels Fishing without a Licence

Richard Edwards: How many prosecutions during the last five years have been made for UK vessels fishing for profit without a ministry licence, often referred to as the 'black economy'? (WAQ14038)

Carwyn Jones: None in Wales.

Full Board Meetings Held by Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies

Nick Bourne: What is the frequency of both closed and open full board meetings held by Assembly sponsored public bodies in Wales for which the Minister has responsibilities? (WAQ14055)

Carwyn Jones: The Agricultural Wages Committee meets very infrequently and in closed session.

Fisheries Offences

Richard Edwards: How many fisheries offences have been detected in Wales and Welsh waters during the last five years by the Sea Fisheries Inspectorate? (WAQ14056)

Richard Edwards: How many fisheries offences have been detected in Wales and Welsh waters during the last five years by the Royal Navy? (WAQ14057)

Richard Edwards: What is the cost per boarding of boarding fishing vessels in each of the last five years under the auspices of sea fisheries committees? (WAQ14058)

Richard Edwards: What is the cost per boarding of boarding fishing vessels in each of the last five years by Royal Navy fishery protection vessels? (WAQ14059)

Richard Edwards: What is the length of patrol time in Welsh waters in each of the last five years under the auspices of sea fisheries committees? (WAQ14060)

Richard Edwards: What is the length of patrol time in Welsh waters in each of the last five years by Royal Navy fishery protection vessels? (WAQ14061)

Richard Edwards: How many fisheries offences have been detected in Wales and Welsh waters during the last five years by sea fisheries committees? (WAQ14066)

Richard Edwards: What is the number of inspections on land undertaken in each of the last five years by sea fisheries committees? (WAQ14067)

Richard Edwards: What is the number of inspections on land undertaken in each of the last five years by the Sea Fisheries Inspectorate? (WAQ14068)

Carwyn Jones: I will write to you shortly and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

Public Inquiry on the Foot and Mouth Disease Crisis

Rod Richards: Will there be a public inquiry on the foot and mouth disease crisis and/or what evaluation of the methods used during the crisis is taking place? (WAQ14064)

Carwyn Jones: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Ministers have recently confirmed that they see no reason to reconsider the UK Government's decision not to hold a public inquiry into the foot and mouth disease outbreak. The Prime Minister announced on 9 August a lessons learned inquiry which is tasked with making recommendations on the way the Government should handle future disease outbreaks in light of lessons identified from the handling of this year's crisis. The National Assembly is co-operating fully with this inquiry.

Video Conferencing Facilities

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister please list all occasions on which he has used the video conferencing facilities since 1 March 2001? (WAQ14072)

Carwyn Jones: Since 1 March 2001, I have used the video conferencing facilities on the following dates: 20 March, 23 March, 17 April, 18 April, 20 April, 23 April, 27 April, 1 May, 24 September, 26 October and 1 November.