

Written Questions answered between 11 and 18 December 2003

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

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

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Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

Ardaloedd Gweithredu Ieithyddol

Eleanor Burnham: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar ardaloedd gweithredu ieithyddol? (WAQ30629) [W]

Y Gweinidog dros Ddiwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chwaraeon (Alun Pugh): Mae cynlluniau gweithredu iaith yn fentrau arloesol sy'n defnyddio strwythurau lleol i gynyddu ac annog ymwybyddiaeth o'r iaith Gymraeg, ei hamlygrwydd a'r defnydd ohoni mewn sefyllfaoedd economaidd, cymdeithasol a diwylliannol yn lleol. Maent yn benodol yn targedu cymunedau lle mae'r defnydd o'r iaith yn newid yn sylweddol a phobl ifanc yn ei defnyddio lai a llai. Mae cynlluniau gweithredu iaith eisoes wedi eu sefydlu yn Abergwaun, Rhydaman, Corwen, Rhuthun, Pwllheli a Phen Llŷn ac mae tri chynllun arall yn y broses o gael eu sefydlu yn Aberteifi, Llanrwst a Chasnewydd yn y flwyddyn ariannol bresennol.

Language Action Areas

Eleanor Burnham: Will the Minister make a statement on language action areas? (WAQ30629) [W]

The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh): Language action plans are innovative projects that use local structures to increase and encourage awareness, visibility and use of the Welsh language in economic, social and cultural situations at a local level. They are particularly focused on communities undergoing substantial language shift and where the language is used less and less by young people. Language action plans have been established in Fishguard, Ammanford, Corwen, Ruthin, Pwllheli, and Pen Llŷn and an additional three plans are being set up in Cardigan, Llanrwst and Newport in the current financial year.

Cyfrifiad 2001

Eleanor Burnham: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar ganlyniadau cyfrifiad 2001 o safbwynt yr iaith Gymraeg, a'u heffaith ar bolisïau 'Iaith Pawb'? (WAQ30642) [W]

Alun Pugh: Mae canlyniadau cyfrifiad 2001 yn rhoi peth sail inni fod yn weddol optimistaidd am ragolygon y Gymraeg. Er hynny, dylid pwysleisio bod y cyfrifiad ond yn darparu gwybodaeth ynglŷn â gallu ieithyddol, ac, fel y nodwn yn 'Iaith Pawb', mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad wedi'i hymrwymo i ddatblygu amrediad o ddangosyddion ystadegol yn ymwneud â'r Gymraeg, yn arbennig o ran ystyried defnydd iaith. Mae'r dangosyddion amrywiol hyn o gymorth wrth lywio a mireinio ein polisïau ar y Gymraeg.

Policies of 'Iaith Pawb'

Eleanor Burnham: Will the Minister make a statement on the results of the 2001 census in respect of the Welsh language and their effect on the policies of 'Iaith Pawb'? (WAQ30642) [W]

Alun Pugh: The 2001 census results provide us with some grounds for cautious optimism in relation to the language. However, the census only provides information on language ability and, as we note in 'Iaith Pawb', the Assembly Government is committed to developing the range of statistical indicators on the Welsh language, particularly in relation to language use. These various indicators help to inform and refine our policies in relation to the language.

Y Celfyddydau y tu allan i Gaerdydd

Eleanor Burnham: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar yr oedi o roi'r £2 miliwn llawn y flwyddyn i'r celfyddydau y tu allan i Gaerdydd tan 2006-07 yn hytrach nag yn y flwyddyn nesaf? (WAQ30662) [W]

Alun Pugh: Y bwriad o'r cychwyn oedd cynyddu'r gwariant yn raddol, ac na fyddai'r £2 filiwn llawn ar gael yn y flwyddyn gyntaf. Byddwn yn talu blaendaliad cyntaf sylweddol o £0.25 miliwn yn 2004-05, gan gynyddu'n raddol i'r £2 miliwn llawn yn 2006-07.

The Arts Outside Cardiff

Eleanor Burnham: Will the Minister make a statement on delaying the full £2 million a year payment for the arts outside Cardiff until 2006-07 rather than next year? (WAQ30662) [W]

Alun Pugh: It was always intended that the funding would be ramped up, and that the full £2 million would not be available in the first year. We are making available a substantial first downpayment of £0.25 million in 2004-05, building up to the full £2 million in 2006-07.

English-language Theatre

Jenny Randerson: Following the answer to OAQ28728, what progress is being made with the Arts Council of Wales's feasibility study on developing better national approaches to English-language theatre? (WAQ30664)

Alun Pugh: The Arts Council of Wales is finalising the membership of the steering group that is charged with the task of devising a strategic approach to the provision of English-language theatre production in Wales. The steering group will be chaired by Geraint Talfan Davies, and the other members will be announced very shortly. The steering group will work alongside a suitably qualified consultant to produce an action plan that will have been formulated in close consultation with the producers and presenters of drama in Wales. The findings of the steering group will be available for consideration next year.

An English-language National Theatre for Wales

Jenny Randerson: What proposals does the Minister have for an English-language national theatre for Wales? (WAQ30665)

Alun Pugh: The steering group established by the Arts Council of Wales to devise a strategic approach to the provision of English-language theatre production in Wales will report next year (I refer to my reply to WAQ30664). I will consider the conclusions of the group's report, which will inform the development of our policy for English-language theatre in Wales.

The Graham Sutherland Collection

Jenny Randerson: What proposals are there for the development of a gallery to house the Graham Sutherland collection at St Davids? (WAQ30676)

Alun Pugh: The National Museums and Galleries of Wales and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority are in discussions with other interested parties, including St Davids City Council and the Friends of the Graham Sutherland Collection, about the development of a gallery adjacent to the tourist information centre at St Davids.

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority has agreed in principle to donate the site, to project-manage the capital development, and to maintain and manage the site subsequently. The National Museums and Galleries of Wales has agreed to work in partnership with PCNPA in providing curatorial expertise and access to collections. This will not only be through the Graham Sutherland collection in

NMGW's care, but also material from other disciplines, such as archaeology and geology, which will relate to the intention of using the centre to introduce and interpret the landscape of Pembrokeshire in a wide variety of contexts.

Consultants are drawing up a business plan for consideration by the various partners in the new year. The plan will include careful consideration of the nature of any extension of the existing tourist information centre aimed at providing the appropriate facilities. The subsequent development will be dependent upon agreement on the proposals and the availability of capital and revenue funding.

Cynlluniau Iaith Gymraeg

Owen John Thomas: Pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi eu cymryd i sicrhau mwy o fonitro ar gynlluniau iaith Gymraeg presennol a helpu i ddatblygu a gweithredu rhai newydd? (WAQ30723) [W]

Alun Pugh: Yn unol â 'Iaith Pawb', mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad wedi neilltuo £16 miliwn ychwanegol ar gyfer Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg dros y tair blynedd nesaf. O ganlyniad, mae'r bwrdd wedi gallu adeiladu ar y gwaith llwyddiannus y mae wedi'i gyflawni yn y gorffennol, mewn nifer o ffyrdd amrywiol. Mae hynny'n cynnwys ei waith o fonitro cynlluniau iaith sydd eisoes yn bodoli, a llunio a gweithredu cynlluniau newydd. Mae nifer y staff sy'n gweithio yn ei dîm cynlluniau iaith Gymraeg wedi dyblu ers dechrau'r flwyddyn ariannol hon.

Welsh Language Schemes

Owen John Thomas: What action has the Minister taken to ensure that current Welsh language schemes are monitored to a greater extent, and to assist in the development and implementation of new schemes? (WAQ30723) [W]

Alun Pugh: In line with 'Iaith Pawb', the Assembly Government has allocated an additional £16 million to the Welsh Language Board over the next three years. This enables the board to build on the success of its past work in a number of important areas. That includes its work in monitoring existing schemes, and drawing up and implementing new ones. The staffing complement of its Welsh language schemes team has doubled since the beginning of the current financial year.

Yr Iaith Gymraeg

Owen John Thomas: Sawl gwaith y mae'r Gweinidog wedi cysylltu â Llywodraeth San Steffan i sicrhau bod cynigion deddfwriaethol yn cymryd materion yn ymwneud â'r Gymraeg i ystyriaeth? (WAQ30724) [W]

Alun Pugh: Mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn pwysleisio'r angen i Lywodraeth y DU ystyried y Gymraeg wrth iddi baratoi cynigion deddfwriaethol a gweithredu polisi yn rheolaidd.

The Welsh Language

Owen John Thomas: How many times has the Minister made representations to the Westminster Government to ensure that legislative proposals take Welsh-language matters into consideration? (WAQ30724) [W]

Alun Pugh: The Assembly Government regularly emphasises the need to ensure that Welsh-language matters are taken into consideration by the UK Government, in terms of legislative proposals and policy implementation.

Arweiniad ar Brif-Ffrydio

Owen John Thomas: Pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi eu cymryd i grynhoi a chyhoeddi arweiniad ar brif-ffrydio? (WAQ30725) [W]

Alun Pugh: Mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad newydd gynnal cyfres o gyfarfodydd ymgynghorol gyda chyrff cyhoeddus a noddir gan y Cynulliad a swyddogion Llywodraeth y Cynulliad i drafod canllawiau drafft ar brif-ffrydio. Caiff y fersiynau terfynol o'r canllawiau eu cylchredeg yn y dyfodol agos.

Guidance on Mainstreaming

Owen John Thomas: What action has the Minister taken to compile and publish guidance on mainstreaming? (WAQ30725) [W]

Alun Pugh: The Assembly Government has recently held consultation meetings with Assembly sponsored public bodies and Assembly Government officials to discuss draft guidance on mainstreaming. The finalised versions of the guidance will be made available shortly.

Yr Iaith Gymraeg a'r Diwylliant

Owen John Thomas: Pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi eu cymryd i roi gwybodaeth am y gymuned a diwylliant i bobl sy'n symud i fyw yng Nghymru a'u hannog i barchu'r iaith Gymraeg a'r diwylliant a mynd ati i ddysgu'r iaith? (WAQ30760) [W]

Alun Pugh: Mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn ymwybodol iawn o bwysigrwydd integreiddio newydd-ddyfodiaid i gymunedau Cymraeg eu hiaith ac i ddiwylliant ein gwlad. Un o brif elfennau 'Iaith Pawb' yw'r pwyslais a roddir ar y Gymraeg a'r gymuned, ac mae nifer o gynlluniau ar y gweill gan Fwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg yn y maes pwysig hwn.

Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys dosbarthu pecynnau croeso i bob un sy'n symud i mewn i gymunedau Cymraeg eu hiaith er mwyn eu cyflwyno i broffil ieithyddol a threftadaeth yr ardal. Mae'r bwrdd hefyd yn bwrw ymlaen â gwefan newydd, yn seiliedig ar y pecynnau croeso, i godi ymwybyddiaeth o'r Gymraeg i'r sawl sy'n symud i mewn i Gymru. Bydd hon yn gysylltiedig ag arwerthwyr tai, a bydd ar gael yn y flwyddyn newydd.

Mae'r bwrdd, law yn llaw â Chyngor Gwynedd, hefyd wedi cynnal prosiect ymchwil ansoddol ar integreiddio newydd-ddyfodiaid ym mhen Llŷn. Mae'r gwaith ymchwil hwn wedi llywio prosiect peilot sydd ar y gweill ar hyn o bryd gan y bwrdd, fel rhan o'i gynllun gweithredu iaith yn Llŷn, sy'n cynnwys ystod eang o fentrau gyda'r nod o gymathu newydd-ddyfodiaid.

Mae gwaith y mentrau iaith, cynlluniau gweithredu iaith, prosiect Twf, athrawon bro a chanolfannau hwyrddyfodiaid hefyd yn cyfrannu at y broses o annog unigolion i ddysgu'r iaith a pharchu diwylliant Cymru.

The Welsh Language and Culture

Owen John Thomas: What action has the Minister taken to provide information on communities and their culture to those moving to Wales to live, and to encourage them to respect the Welsh language and culture, and to learn the Welsh language? (WAQ30760) [W]

Alun Pugh: The Assembly Government is well aware of the importance of integrating newcomers into Welsh-speaking communities and culture. One of the key strands of 'Iaith Pawb' focuses on the community and the language, and there are a number of initiatives at work in this important area under the auspices of the Welsh Language Board.

These include the distribution of welcome packs for people moving into predominantly Welsh-speaking communities in Wales to provide an introduction to the linguistic profile and heritage of the area. The board is also pressing ahead with a new website, based on the welcome packs, to promote awareness of the Welsh language to those moving into Wales, which will be linked with estate agents. This is expected to come on-line in the new year.

The board, in conjunction with Gwynedd Council, has also instigated a qualitative research project into the integration of newcomers on the Llŷn peninsula. This research has informed a pilot project currently under way by the board, as part of its language action plan in Llŷn, which includes a wide range of initiatives with the aim of assimilating newcomers.

The work of the mentrau iaith, language action plans, the Twf project, athrawon bro and latecomers' centres also contribute to the process of encouraging individuals to learn the language and respect the culture of Wales.

Questions to the Minister for Economic Development and Transport

Economic Development Policies

Nick Bourne: In view of his response to WAQ30324, could the Minister say how his economic development policies are benefiting the Llanarthne area of Carmarthenshire? (WAQ30635)

The Minister for Economic Development and Transport (Andrew Davies): I am aware of the problems at the national botanic garden but believe my policies are working well in Carmarthenshire, including the Llanarthne area. For example, claimant count unemployment has fallen in Carmarthenshire by 35.4 per cent since 1999, a fall significantly greater than for Wales as a whole.

Bancio Cymunedol

Eleanor Burnham: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar gymorth Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru dros fancio cymunedol? (WAQ30643) [W] *Trosghwyddwyd i'w ateb gan y Gweinidog dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol ac Adfywio.*

Y Gweinidog dros Cyfiawnder Cymdeithasol ac Adfywio (Edwina Hart): Mae sicrhau ei bod yn haws i bobl fanteisio ar y gwasanaethau ariannol sydd ar gael yn hanfodol ar gyfer cyflawni ein nodau ehangach o fynd i'r afael ag allgáu cymdeithasol. Mae'r gwaith yn parhau ar ddwy lefel. Yn gyntaf, yr ydym yn ymrwymedig i ddatblygu undebau credyd yng Nghymru. Darparodd y Cynulliad bron i £1.5 miliwn ar gyfer strategaeth undebau credyd Cymru, a alluogodd Canolfan Gydweithredol Cymru i fanteisio ar gyfanswm o dros £4 miliwn o gronfeydd strwythurol Ewropeaidd. Rhagwelir y bydd y prosiect yn sicrhau cynnydd triphlyg o ran nifer aelodau undebau credyd a chynnydd o 150 y cant o ran y symiau a adneuir erbyn mis Rhagfyr. Mae cynnig i ariannu ail gyfnod strategaeth undebau credyd Cymru wrthi'n cael ei ystyried. Yn ail, mae cronfa'r Cynulliad ar gyfer datblygu swyddfeydd post wedi hwyluso dulliau arloesol o alluogi swyddfeydd post i amrywio eu gwasanaethau er lles y gymuned. Cyhoeddais gyllid ar 12 Tachwedd ar gyfer prosiect peilot i brofi posibilrwydd datblygu cysylltiadau undebau credyd â dwy is-swyddfa bost leol yn Llanelli.

Community Banking

Eleanor Burnham: Will the Minister make a statement on Welsh Assembly Government assistance to community banking? (WAQ30643) [W] *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration.*

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart): Ensuring greater access to financial services is essential to achieving our wider aims of tackling social exclusion. Work is continuing on two

fronts. First there is our commitment to the development of credit unions in Wales. This is underlined by nearly £1.5 million of Assembly funding for the Welsh credit union strategy, which enabled the Wales Co-operative Centre to access European structural funds exceeding £4 million in total. The project is on target to deliver a three-fold increase in credit union members and 150 per cent increase in deposits by December. A bid to fund phase 2 of the Welsh credit union strategy is currently under consideration. Second, the Assembly's development fund for post office has supported innovative ways in which post offices can diversify their services for the benefit of the community. On 12 November, I announced funding for a pilot project to test the potential for enhancing credit union relationships with two local sub-post offices in Llanelli.

Tourism in Mid Wales

Nick Bourne: What is being done to promote tourism in mid Wales? (WAQ30644)

Andrew Davies: The Wales Tourist Board has delegated £600,000 to Tourism Partnership Mid Wales for 2003-04 to support the region's tourism industry. The partnership has developed its regional tourism strategy, 'Tourism for Mid Wales—Naturally Different', and this has identified clear aims and objectives for growing the value of tourism in the region. The WTB has also designated five tourism growth areas in mid Wales and earmarked £3 million over 2002-08 for the development of tourism in those areas.

Broadband

Nick Bourne: What is being done to promote the switchover of Broadband in Wales? (WAQ30645)

Andrew Davies: The implementation of the five-year, £115 million Broadband Wales programme is continuing to deliver a range of complementing projects. These involve tackling market failure, addressing demand and supply deficiencies and widening both the scope of affordable access to broadband and the range of technologies being used to deliver it.

In respect of the promotion of broadband in Wales, the Broadband Wales programme includes a demand stimulation project. This is an all-Wales integrated marketing, communication and research activity, designed to raise awareness among business and consumers of the benefits of broadband. Its aim is to increase the uptake of broadband and encourage more effective use of the technology for both business and leisure users. The project will be achieved through market research, advertising and direct marketing, e-marketing and media relations. It will target identified groups across Wales, including all businesses and homes within each local authority area. Partners from across the public, private and voluntary sectors will be encouraged to undertake additional and complementary marketing campaigns. The project will begin in earnest early in 2004.

Jobs in Knighton and Presteigne

Nick Bourne: What action is being taken to create jobs in Knighton and Presteigne? (WAQ30646)

Andrew Davies: The economic policies set out in 'A Winning Wales' and 'Wales: A Better Country' are creating the right climate for business throughout Wales and are supporting job creation and development of a prosperous and diverse economy.

The Job Situation in Ystradgynlais

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the jobs situation in Ystradgynlais? (WAQ30647)

Andrew Davies: Between 1999 and the year to August 2003, employment in mid and west Wales rose by 11,000 or 5.6 per cent while, in the four years since October 1999, the claimant count has fallen by 36 per cent in the Brecon and Radnorshire constituency.

Job Opportunities in Brecon

Nick Bourne: How does the Minister propose to improve job opportunities in Brecon? (WAQ30648)

Andrew Davies: The economic policies set out in ‘A Winning Wales’ and ‘Wales: A Better Country’ are improving job opportunities. Between 1999 and the year to August 2003, employment in mid and west Wales rose by 11,000 or 5.6 per cent, while, in the four years since October 1999, the claimant count has fallen by 36 per cent in the Brecon and Radnorshire constituency.

Road Signs in Rhayader

Nick Bourne: Are there any plans to improve road signs for which the Minister is responsible in the centre of Rhayader? (WAQ30650)

Andrew Davies: We have no immediate plans for improvements to road signs in Rhayader. We are however aware that a partnership of local organisations is carrying out a consultation into the wider subject of signing in the town. We will take due account of its findings once the results of this consultation are reported to us.

Remploy Management

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the decision of Remploy management to close owned factories in Wales and move to leased units? (WAQ30672)

Andrew Davies: No, that is a matter for Remploy.

European Structural Funding Available to Remploy

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the sources of possible European structural funding available to Remploy for investment at their Brynaman site? (WAQ30673)

Andrew Davies: Brynaman comes under the local partnership area of Carmarthenshire, which is eligible for Objective 1 support. The Objective 1 programme is a diverse programme and can help support a broad range of activities. In terms of helping new businesses and business growth, Objective 1 activities include, for example, the provision of business advice, financial support and skills training, encouraging innovation, information technology and research and development, and promoting area-based investment, supported by key infrastructure developments.

Details on how project sponsors can access European structural funds are available on the Wales European Funding Office website at www.wefo.wales.gov.uk or by phoning WEFO general enquires on (01443) 471100.

Remploy Factories

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: How much subsidy has been awarded to Remploy factories in Wales for each of the last four years? (WAQ30674)

Andrew Davies: None from the budgets for which I am responsible.

Relief Road for Llandeilo

Nick Bourne: Further to his answer to WAQ30466, will the Welsh Assembly Government instruct its consultants to hold a public meeting to ensure local residents are fully informed and able to make representations regarding a relief road for Llandeilo? (WAQ30675)

Andrew Davies: The consultants will, in the first instance, liaise with officials from Carmarthenshire County Council to ensure that local interests are taken into account when identifying options. When viable options are sufficiently developed and a choice has to be made, our practice is to present them for public consultation. This would include a local exhibition where details of the proposals are displayed and representatives from the Assembly Government and the consultants are available to answer any questions. I recognise the importance of obtaining the benefit of local knowledge and views before a preferred option is chosen.

Tetra Masts

Kirsty Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on the decision to roll-out Tetra while the research into possible hazardous effects is being conducted? (WAQ30710)

Kirsty Williams: What consideration was given to the effects on the cognitive function when the decision to accept the safety regulations of the Tetra system was made? (WAQ30753)

Andrew Davies: The responsibility to roll-out Tetra to the police service is one for the Home Office and is therefore not a devolved matter.

Strategaeth Twristiaeth Ddiwylliannol

Owen John Thomas: Pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi eu cymryd i greu strategaeth twristiaeth ddiwylliannol i ddefnyddio'r iaith Gymraeg a diwylliant dwyieithog i helpu hyrwyddo Cymru fel cynnyrch twristiaeth unigryw yn y Deyrnas Unedig? (WAQ30726) [W]

Andrew Davies: Cymeradwyais strategaeth dwristiaeth ddiwylliannol Bwrdd Croeso Cymru ddiwedd y llynedd. Mae partneriaeth genedlaethol yn datblygu'r cynllun gweithredu.

Cultural Tourism Strategy

Owen John Thomas: What action has the Minister taken to create a cultural tourism strategy for using the Welsh language and bilingual culture in helping to promote Wales as a unique tourism product in the United Kingdom? (WAQ30726) [W]

Andrew Davies: I approved the Wales Tourist Board's cultural tourism strategy at the end of last year. A national partnership is taking forward the action plan.

Conwy Valley Line

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister outline what protective measures are in place to secure the Conwy valley passenger service to and from Snowdonia? (WAQ30732)

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister provide details on what Welsh Assembly Government funding has been given to Alfred McAlpine and company in their proposals to use Conwy valley line to transport slate waste to England? (WAQ30733)

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister outline the adverse effects of freight traffic on the existing Conwy valley line to rail passenger traffic to and from Snowdonia? (WAQ30729)

Andrew Davies: Passenger services are secured through the passenger service requirement, a component of the train operator's franchise agreement with the Strategic Rail Authority. No funding has been given to Alfred McAlpine Slate Ltd. The company has submitted an application for freight facilities grant towards the cost of a rail terminal at Blaenau Ffestiniog and no decision has yet been made. There is no freight traffic on the existing Conwy valley line. The proposed slate waste traffic would not adversely affect rail passenger services.

Knowledge Exploitation Fund

Jenny Randerson: Will the Minister outline his plans for the future development of the knowledge exploitation fund? (WAQ30743)

Andrew Davies: I have asked the Welsh Development Agency to review knowledge exploitation fund to ensure 'best fit' with its innovation and entrepreneurship services and identify opportunities for greater strategic focus.

The National Botanic Garden of Wales

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the present and future situation of the Biotechnium centre at the botanic garden of Wales? (WAQ30791)

Andrew Davies: The future of the Biotechnium building is linked to the outcome for the botanic garden. The Welsh Development Agency will seek to engage any future stakeholders in the garden in considering the next steps.

Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

The Free School Breakfast Policy

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the cost of implementing the free school breakfast policy in Wales? (WAQ30651)

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson): Provision during 2004-05 of £1.5 million has already been secured from end-year flexibility. Costs for 2005-06 and for 2006-07 will be fed into the spending review.

The Coalfields Communities Campaign

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: What discussions has the Minister, or her officials had with the Coalfields Communities Campaign with regards to low levels of educational attainment in coalfield communities? (WAQ30659)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the low levels of educational attainment in the Welsh coalfields and on Government action to redress the problem? (WAQ30660)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: What discussions has the Minister had with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills and the education Minister at the Scottish Parliament with regard to low educational attainment in coalfield communities? (WAQ30661)

Jane Davidson: Our policies are intended to ensure that all children receive a first-class education irrespective of where they live, and I am keen to dispel the notion that pupils and schools cannot be successful simply because of where they are located. In addition to the range of policies that will have a beneficial impact on attainment, such as reduced junior class sizes, better transition between primary and secondary school, the aiming for excellence programme targeted at pupils in key stage 3, and 'Learning Pathways 14-19', the Assembly Government is committed to narrowing the gap between our best and least well performing schools. The 'Narrowing the Gap' report on secondary schools published last year demonstrated that though there is a strong link between deprivation and low performance schools can break that link. The report described the key features of schools operating successfully in difficult circumstances. A similar study is being carried out in relation to primary schools and will be completed next year.

Over the past three years, the Assembly Government has provided £170 million through the grants for education support and training programme to local authorities in Wales. Allocation is by reference to a formula which includes a factor for deprivation. Special grant of £3 million has also been provided this financial year to enable local authorities to support low-performing schools.

The Mathematics Department at the University of Wales, Bangor

Brynle Williams: What assistance has the Minister offered to the maths department at Bangor University to resolve its financial problems and to prevent the closure of the department? (WAQ30669)

Jane Davidson: I provide all funding for higher education institutions in Wales via the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. Institutions receive block allocations and are free to determine their funding priorities within the resources made available.

The Mathematics Department at the University of Wales, Bangor

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister provide an assurance that she will provide support to the maths department at Bangor University in its aim to keep the department open? (WAQ30670)

Jane Davidson: Higher education institutions are autonomous bodies and, as such, are responsible for their own academic matters. I am certainly keen to see a competitive and inclusive higher education sector in Wales and this is supported by my strategy for higher education 'Reaching Higher'.

I understand that the council of the University of Wales, Bangor is considering a development plan for mathematics, which is designed to secure the future of the subject.

The Mathematics Department at the University of Wales, Bangor

Brynle Williams: What discussions has the Minister had with the maths department at Bangor University about its financial problems? (WAQ30671)

Jane Davidson: I have not had any discussions with the maths department at Bangor University about its financial problems. This is entirely a matter for the University of Wales, Bangor, as an autonomous institution.

Free School Breakfasts

William Graham: Will the Minister confirm the position regarding free school breakfasts, together with details where and when the pilot trials will begin? (WAQ30684)

Jane Davidson: I outlined my proposals in the Plenary debate of 11 November 2003 when I stated that free breakfasts should be made available in every primary school in Wales that wished to provide them. I also noted the potential educational, social and economic benefits that this policy would provide, and explained that we would work in partnership with a wide range of interests to implement the first phase from September 2004. As I proposed, I intend to start this policy within Communities First areas, with a phased programme of implementation. The precise details of the phasing will be a matter for the project team, working in collaboration with stakeholders.

School Closures

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister detail all the proposals that have been put to her and her predecessor as Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning in the Assembly for school closures, and the decisions reached, together with dates? (WAQ30685)

Jane Davidson: I attach a list of the school organisation proposals which have been referred to the National Assembly for decision which involve the closure of a school or schools. The list includes both nursery, primary and secondary school closure proposals and amalgamations of infant and junior schools, which may or may not involve the closure of school buildings. You will see that closure proposals may also incorporate the establishment of a new school.

Decisions made by the Assembly - July 1999 - Dec 2003				
School Closures				
Nursery school closures				
	LEA	School	Date	Decision
1	RCT	Glynhafod Nursery School	Nov 2002	Approved
2	Bridgend	Ogmore Vale Nursery School	Jan 2003	Approved
Primary School Closures				
	LEA	School	Date	Decision
1	Carms	Bethlehem Primary	Jul 1999	Approved
2	Pembs	Manordeifi VCP School	Apr 2000	Approved
3	Pembs	Bwlchgyroes Primary and redeveloped school at Tegryn	Jun 2000	Approved
	<i>Caerphilly</i>	<i>Fleur de Lys</i>	<i>Jul 2000</i>	<i>Rejected</i>
4	BL Gwent	Rassau Primary School	Nov 2000	Approved
5	Torfaen	Park Terrace Primary School and expansion at George St and Pontymoile schools	Dec 2000	Approved
6	<u>Carms</u>	Myddfai VC Primary School	Mar 2001	Approved
7	Caerphilly	Cwmysflog and Tirphil and new school at Elliottown	Jul 2001	Approved
8	Merthyr T	Pentrebach Infants and new school at Abercanaid	Jul 2001	Approved
9	Bl. Gwent	Areal primary, Abertillery	Apr 2002	Approved
10	Pembs	Moylegrove Primary and rebuilt school at St Dogmaels	Jul 2002	Approved
11	Pembs	Dinas Primary school	Jul 2002	Approved
12	Carms	Alltwalis, Llanfihangel ar Arth and Cae'r Felin and new school at Cae'r Felin	Jan 2003	Approved
13	Carms	Cwmbach, Henllan Amgoed, Llangynin, Llanboidy and new school at Llanboidy	Mar 2003	Approved
14	Mons	Llwynu, Croesonnen, St Davids and new school at Llwynu	Sep 2003	Approved
15	Torfaen	Upper Cwmbran Primary and Nursery school and new nursery unit at Pontnewydd	Nov 2003	Approved
Secondary school closures				
	LEA	School	Date	Decision
1	Swansea	Dynevor Secondary School and establishment of new school at Dillwyn Llewellyn	Sep 2000	Approved
	<i>Swansea</i>	<i>Penlan Boys Comprehensive</i>	<i>Oct 2000</i>	<i>Rejected</i>
2	Swansea	Penlan Boys Comprehensive and establishment of co-ed school at Mynyddbach	Apr 2001	Approved
3	Wrexham	Groves, St Davids and Bryn Offa and new schools at Bryn Offa and St Davids	Oct 2002	Approved
Amalgamations of infant and junior schools				
	LEA	School	Date	Decision
1	Caerphilly	Cefn Fforest Infants and Junior	Apr 2000	Approved
2	Vale of Glam	Eagleswell Infants and Junior	Jun 2000	Approved
3	Caer	Gelligaer Infants and Junior	Jul 2000	Approved

4	Swansea	Gors Infants and Junior	Aug 2000	Approved
5	Cardiff	Glan yr Afon Infants and Junior	Sep 2000	Approved
6	Merthyr T	Gellideg Infants and Juniors	Mar 2001	Approved
7	Bridgend	Nantymoel Nursery and Primary	Apr 2001	Approved
8	Caerphilly	Aberbargoed Infants and Juniors	May 2002	Approved
9	Merthyr T	Twynyrodyn Infants and Juniors	Aug 2002	Approved
10	RCT	Hendreforgan Infant and Junior	Aug 2002	Approved
11	RCT	Penywaun Infants and Juniors	Sep 2002	Approved
12	Cardiff	Grangetown Infants and Juniors	May 2003	Approved
13	Mons	Harold Road Juniors and Park Street Infants	Sep 2003	Minded to approve

Sports Facilities

Alun Cairns: What funding is available to schools seeking to develop sports facilities? (WAQ30738)

Jane Davidson: Works to develop sports facilities fall within the criteria for the Assembly Government's school buildings improvement grant. Local education authorities are free to decide which schools should benefit and the nature of projects to be undertaken in light of local needs and priorities.

The £48 million new opportunities fund programme in Wales for physical education and school sport will support, over the next four years, projects to refurbish existing indoor and outdoor sports facilities and new facilities for school and wider community use.

The programme promotes PE and sport within the school curriculum and through extra curricular activities. NOF is working in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government, local authorities, the Sports Council for Wales and Estyn, to ensure that the projects that it supports complement and enhance local plans.

The Educational Performance of Ethnic Minority and Black Pupils

Lorraine Barrett: What action is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to increase the educational performance of pupils from black and minority ethnic communities? (WAQ30748)

Jane Davidson: Many factors impact on the achievement of black and minority ethnic pupils in Wales. The most significant factor for pupils for whom English or Welsh is an additional language is their level of proficiency in those languages. Since 1999, the Assembly has funded authorities in Wales under the ethnic minority achievement grant scheme. The current focus of the grant is language support provision and the level of funding support distributed through the GEST scheme for 2003-04 is £3.85 million.

Proficiency of language aside, I am aware of, and very concerned by, the wide variation in attainment between minority ethnic groups generally. A research report carried out for the Assembly by the English as an Additional Language Association of Wales during 2002-03 showed Indian pupils in Wales have the highest attainment overall, with Yemeni and Somali pupils showing the lowest level of attainment. Chinese, mixed race and eastern European pupils tend to achieve well, but their attainment varies between key stages. Bangladeshi pupils have higher attainment than Pakistani pupils, but are still well below national averages. Overall, minority ethnic pupils in Wales have lower attainment at key stages 1 to 4 compared to national figures by margins ranging from minus 6 per cent to minus 21 per cent. Of most concern however, is the attainment of Black Caribbean pupils who, despite achieving higher than the national average at key stage 1, go on to decline 28 per cent below the national average for five or more A to C grades at key stage 4.

Early in 2004, the ethnic minority achievement grant working group will reconvene to look specifically at the attainment issue and how the focus of the current EMAG funding mechanism might be widened to

target specific groups with particularly significant achievement issues. As a starting point, the working group will draw heavily on the recommendations contained in the EALAW report specifically, the monitoring of attainment via the national pupil database, and teacher training issues.

The Educational Performance of Ethnic Minority and Black Pupils

Lorraine Barrett: Will the Minister make a statement on the educational achievement of black and minority ethnic pupils in Cardiff at key stage 1 level between 1999 and 2002? (WAQ30752)

Lorraine Barrett: Will the Minister make a statement on the educational achievement of black and minority ethnic pupils in Cardiff at key stage 2 level between 1999 and 2002? (WAQ30751)

Lorraine Barrett: Will the Minister make a statement on the educational achievement of black and minority ethnic pupils in Cardiff at key stage 3 level between 1999 and 2002? (WAQ30750)

Lorraine Barrett: Will the Minister make a statement on the educational achievement of black and minority ethnic pupils in Cardiff at GCSE level between 1999 and 2002? (WAQ30749)

Jane Davidson: Information on the educational achievement of black and minority ethnic pupils is not currently collected centrally. One of the aims of the individual pupil data project is to address such data gaps, and the planned national pupil database will hold attainment and ethnic background data and will facilitate such analysis. It is currently planned that the first data set will be available in the national pupil database towards the end of 2004.

This information is collected locally by Cardiff County Council. Where available, figures supplied by it are in the tables below:

Key Stage 1: Percentage of pupils at level 2 or above in teacher assessments

		1999	2000	2001	2002
English					
	Black and ethnic minority pupils in Cardiff	67	68	74	75
	All pupils in Cardiff	80	82	84	84
	Wales	81	82	83	83
Mathematics					
	Black and ethnic minority pupils in Cardiff	..	82	82	83
	All pupils in Cardiff	84	87	89	88
	Wales	86	88	89	88
Science					
	Black and ethnic minority pupils in Cardiff	..	..	79	80
	All pupils in Cardiff	84	88	89	89
	Wales	86	87	88	88

Sources: School Service, Cardiff County Council, and National Assembly for Wales.

Key Stage 2: Percentage of pupils at level 4 or above in task/tests

		1999	2000	2001	2002
English					
	Black and ethnic minority pupils in Cardiff	58	65	66	75
	All pupils in Cardiff	68	73	78	80
	Wales	68	74	77	79
Mathematics					

	Black and ethnic minority pupils in Cardiff	..	..	63	64
	All pupils in Cardiff	64	67	72	70
	Wales	67	69	74	73
Science					
	Black and ethnic minority pupils in Cardiff	..	..	74	81
	All pupils in Cardiff	75	80	82	86
	Wales	77	81	82	86

Sources: School Service, Cardiff County Council, and National Assembly for Wales.

Key Stage 3: Percentage of pupils at level 5 or above in task/tests

		1999	2000	2001	2002
English					
	Black and ethnic minority pupils in Cardiff	53	42	57	52
	All pupils in Cardiff	62	58	62	61
	Wales	61	59	62	61
Mathematics					
	Black and ethnic minority pupils in Cardiff	..	..	..	50
	All pupils in Cardiff	57	58	60	62
	Wales	60	61	62	62
Science					
	Black and ethnic minority pupils in Cardiff	..	..	..	53
	All pupils in Cardiff	52	57	61	66
	Wales	55	58	63	67

Sources: School Service, Cardiff County Council, and National Assembly for Wales

Key Stage 4: Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE level

		1999	2000	2001	2002
	Black and ethnic minority pupils in Cardiff	..	29	34	36
	All pupils in Cardiff	44	45	45	46
	Wales	48	49	50	50

Sources: School Service, Cardiff County Council and National Assembly for Wales.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside

Carthu Tywod

David Lloyd: Pa gynlluniau sydd ar y gweill parthed carthu tywod ar dir yng Nghymru? (WAQ30652)
[W]

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynllunio a Chefn Gwlad (Carwyn Jones): Mae'r polisi cynllunio ar gyfer mwynau wedi ei nodi yn 'Polisi Cynllunio Mwynau Cymru' (Rhagfyr 2000). Dylai'r awdurdodau cynllunio lleol ystyried y polisi hwn wrth baratoi eu cynlluniau datblygu unedol a gall fod yn berthnasol i benderfyniadau ar geisiadau cynllunio unigol. Ar hyn o bryd, mae'r mwyafrif o'r agrediadau mân y mae eu hangen ar gyfer y diwydiant adeiladu yn ne Cymru yn cael eu carthu o'r môr. Mae carthu o'r môr yn arbennig o bwysig yn ne ddwyrain Cymru lle na chloddir tywod a graean o'r tir. Nid oes sicrwydd o gwbl y bydd y sefyllfa hon yn parhau yn amhenodol. Felly, mae'r Cynulliad am ofyn i'r awdurdodau cynllunio lleol yn ne ddwyrain Cymru gynnwys polisiau yn eu cynlluniau datblygu unedol i

ddiogelu'r safleoedd posibl ar y tir, er mwyn osgoi unrhyw sterileiddio drwy ddatblygu. Mae digon o adnoddau tywod a graean â chaniatâd cynllunio yn ne orllewin Cymru.

Sand Dredging

David Lloyd: What plans are in hand for on-land sand dredging in Wales? (WAQ30652) [W]

The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones): Planning policy for minerals is set out in 'Minerals Planning Policy Wales' (December 2000), which should be taken into account by local planning authorities in the preparation of their unitary development plans and may be material to decisions on individual planning applications. Currently, the majority of the fine aggregates needed for the construction industry in south Wales is dredged from marine sources. Marine dredging is particularly important in south-east Wales where there is currently no land-based extraction of sand and gravel. It is by no means certain that this situation will remain indefinitely. The Assembly is therefore requiring local planning authorities in south-east Wales to include policies in their unitary development plans to safeguard the potential land-based sites, to prevent their sterilisation by development. There are adequate sand and gravel reserves with planning permission in south-west Wales.

The Tree Disease Phytophthora Ramorum

Brynle Williams: What measures have the Welsh Assembly Government put in place to safeguard Wales's beech, sweet chestnut, sitka spruce and Douglas fir trees against the disease phytophthora ramorum? (WAQ30727)

Carwyn Jones: Forestry Commission Wales manages publicly owned woodlands on behalf of the National Assembly. In partnership with the National Assembly's plant health and biotechnology branch and the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate, we are taking the following measures to safeguard all tree species against this potential threat.

- Assessment is being made of the possible threat to woodlands based on climatic conditions and the presence of rhododendron, to which the disease is closely linked.
- A survey protocol has been developed and teams of surveyors have been established to survey potentially susceptible sites. This work begins next week. These teams will contact private woodland owners to arrange the inspection of the woodlands that are considered to be at risk. The survey will be completed by April 2004.
- The Forestry Commission's plant health service and the Forest Research Agency held a training day on 2 December, where Forestry Commission's staff in Wales were shown how to identify the disease.
- Information on the disease, and a short questionnaire for completion in response to inquiries from the public, is now in all Forestry Commission Wales offices. Our forest research office in Talybont-on-Usk is co-ordinating this work.
- Detailed information about the status of the disease, and how to identify it, has been published on the Forestry Commission's website.

The Tree Disease Phytophthora Ramorum

Brynle Williams: How many cases of the tree disease phytophthora ramorum have been found in Wales? (WAQ30728)

Carwyn Jones: Phytophthora ramorum has been found in 10 locations in Wales. These are all either plant nurseries, garden centres or public gardens. A total of 1,582 infected plants have been destroyed. All but four of these were species of rhododendron or viburnum. The remaining four were hamamelis virginia (witch-hazel).

Increase in Planning Fees

Glyn Davies: Further to WAQ30581, what was the percentage increase in planning fees under statutory instruments 2002/2258, 2002/1876, 1997/37, 1993/3170 and 1992/3052? (WAQ30736)

Carwyn Jones: Statutory instrument 2002/2258—approximately 15 per cent; SI 1997/37—two stage increases of approximately 10 per cent and 5 per cent; SI 1993/3170—two stage increases, each of approximately 15 per cent; and SI 1992/3052—approximately 10 per cent. SI 2002/1876 provided for an increase in the fee payable for an application for a determination as to whether prior approval would be required for proposed telecommunications development. The fee was increased from £35 to £190 (approximately 540 per cent).

The Brecon Beacons National Park

Nick Bourne: What action is proposed to speed up decision-making and improve accountability in planning decisions made by the Brecon Beacons National Park? (WAQ30746)

Carwyn Jones: The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority continues to process increasing numbers of planning applications. A range of measures has been introduced to improve performance. In particular, new committee structures are in place, training is provided for members and officers, members of the public are able to address planning committee meetings, work is in hand on a planning code of conduct, and the unitary development plan will be placed on deposit early in 2004. My officials will continue to work with the national park to secure continued improvements to the planning service, stemming from the reforms set out in 'Planning: Delivering for Wales'.

Llanfair Quarry in Crickhowell

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on Llanfair quarry in Crickhowell? (WAQ30747).

Carwyn Jones: I refer you to my previous answers to Assembly Questions (OAQ26726 and WAQ23047). I understand that the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority requested additional environmental information several months ago from the prospective operator, but the authority has still not received that information. I further understand that the authority has been informed by the operator that he intends to start work on the site on 6 January. The authority is currently considering legal advice on this matter.

Cefn Gwlad Cymru

Owen John Thomas: Pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi eu cymryd i sicrhau cydbwysedd o ran oedran mewn cymunedau, drwy ymchwil yn arwain at gynllun gweithredu, i greu cyfleoedd i bobl ifanc aros yng nghefn gwlad Cymru neu i ddychwelyd yno? (WAQ30762) [W]

Carwyn Jones: Mae cydbwysedd o ran oedran yn elfen bwysig o ran hybu cymunedau cadarn a chynaliadwy, a hynny mewn ardaloedd trefol ac ardaloedd gwledig. Er mwyn helpu cymunedau gwledig, mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad, gyda chymorth y bartneriaeth wledig, wedi comisiynu ymchwil i'r ffactorau sy'n golygu bod pobl ifanc yn gadael ardaloedd gwledig ac sy'n eu rhwystro rhag dod yn ôl. Ar hyn o bryd, yr ydym wrthi'n rhoi'r contract ar ei wedd derfynol, a bydd yr adroddiad terfynol yn cael ei ystyried gan y bartneriaeth wledig yn ei chyfarfod nesaf.

Rural Wales

Owen John Thomas: What action has the Minister taken to ensure a balance in terms of age in communities, by means of research leading to an action plan, to create opportunities for young people to stay in, or return to rural Wales? (WAQ30762) [W]

Carwyn Jones: Age balance is an important element in promoting strong and sustainable communities, both urban and rural. To help rural communities, the Assembly Government, with the support of the rural partnership, has commissioned research into the factors that cause young people to leave rural areas or act as barriers to their returning. We are currently finalising the contract and the final report will be considered by the rural partnership at its next meeting.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Nick Bourne: What action is the Minister taking to tackle bovine tuberculosis? (WAQ30786)

Carwyn Jones: A policy review has been undertaken by the Welsh Assembly Government, in co-operation with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. As a result, a consultation document seeking views on a GB-wide strategy for dealing with bovine tuberculosis will be issued for wide consultation early in the new year.

Questions to the Finance Minister

Adroddiadau 'Teithiau Gwella' gan y Comisiwn Archwilio

Alun Ffred Jones: A wnaiff y Gweinidog sylwadau ar yr adroddiadau 'Teithiau Gwella' ar awdurdodau lleol sy'n cael eu paratoi gan y Comisiwn Archwilio? (WAQ30655) [W]

Y Gweinidog Cyllid (Sue Essex): Nid yw'r adroddiadau hyn yn bodoli ar hyn o bryd. Yr wyf wedi cael ar ddeall bod y Comisiwn Archwilio yng Nghymru yn ystyried y modd y bydd yn monitro'r gwelliannau a wneir gan awdurdodau lleol yng Nghymru yn ogystal â'r heriau sy'n dal i'w hwynebu.

Audit Commission's 'Improvement Journey' Reports

Alun Ffred Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the Audit Commission's 'Improvement Journey' reports on local authorities? (WAQ30655) [W]

The Finance Minister (Sue Essex): These reports do not currently exist. I understand that the Audit Commission in Wales is developing its thinking on how it will chart the improvements being achieved by local authorities in Wales as well as the challenges that they still face.

Cap Council Tax Increases for Pensioners

Owen John Thomas: Does the Minister have the power under the Local Government Act 2000 to cap council tax increases for pensioners? (WAQ30656)

Sue Essex: No, I do not have the power under the Local Government Act 2000 to cap council tax increases for pensioners or any other group of local authority residents. The powers I have are to cap local authority budget requirements under the Local Government Finance Act 1999.

Local Government Elections

Nick Bourne: How much money is earmarked by the Assembly Government for the local government elections next year? (WAQ30689)

Sue Essex: The Assembly is not responsible for funding local elections in Wales. That is a matter for local authorities and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The Past Service Awards Scheme

Nick Bourne: What is the projected cost of the past service awards scheme for retiring councillors? (WAQ30691)

Sue Essex: We do not know the exact cost, but £1.3 million was included in the budget.

Promoting Efficiency and Cost-cutting

Nick Bourne: What action is the Minister taking to promote efficiency and cost-cutting in local government? (WAQ30692)

Sue Essex: Local authorities are already acting on the areas for improvement where the greatest benefits can be achieved, as a result of the Wales programme for improvement. These benefits will be in terms of the fundamental effectiveness of local government in serving the public and tackling priorities.

Officials Employed by the Assembly Government

Nick Bourne: How much has been spent on employing officials by the Assembly Government during each of the last three years, (a) in pounds, and (b) as a percentage of the total amount spent by the Assembly during each of those years? (WAQ30693)

Sue Essex: The table below provides the information requested.

Years	Amount spent on officials(1) £k	Percentage of total spend by Assembly
2000-01	67,202	0.85
2001-02	78,031	0.88
2002-03	90,062	0.85

(1) These figures are gross payroll costs including salaries, national insurance and pension costs, allowances and overtime. They do not include staff related costs such as travel and subsistence, training, stationery and so on, nor do they include the costs of accommodation or information technology.

Advertising Costs

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister list the amount spent on advertising by each department between 1 May and 1 November 2003, (a) in pounds, and (b) as a percentage of the overall Assembly budget between those dates? (WAQ30694)

Sue Essex: The table below provides the information requested.

Department	£	Percentage of total Assembly budget for period 1 May to 1 Nov 2003 calculated to 4 decimal places
Health and Social Services	231,000	0.0041
Education and Lifelong Learning	16,000	0.0003
Transport	3,000	0.0001
Countryside	350	0.0000
Economic Development	42,000	0.0007
Corporate	7,000	0.0001

These figures do not include recruitment advertising or public notices. The total Assembly budget of £5,605 million for the period 1 May to 1 November 2003 has been calculated on a pro rata basis.

Advertising Spend

Nick Bourne: How much did the Assembly spend on advertising between 1 May and 1 November 2003, (a) in pounds, and (b) as a percentage of the overall Assembly budget between those dates? (WAQ30695)

Sue Essex: The table below provides the information requested.

Total advertising spend 1 May to 1 November 2003	Percentage of total Assembly budget for period 1 May to 1 Nov 2003 calculated to 3 decimal places
£299,350	0.005 per cent

This figure does not include recruitment advertising or public notices. The total Assembly budget of £5,605 million for the period 1 May to 1 November 2003 has been calculated on a pro rata basis.

Ministerial Departments

Nick Bourne: What action is the Minister taking to see that costs are kept down in each ministerial department? (WAQ30696)

Sue Essex: There are a range of innovative measures in place across the Assembly that generate efficiency gains and demonstrate value for money. Examples include a major drive to get better value in public sector procurement (including the Assembly) in Wales, putting asset management plans in place, our innovative new contract for office systems and business development (Merlin) and the regular evaluations of our policies, programmes and grant schemes.

Cutting Costs within the Minister's Department

Nick Bourne: What action is the Minister taking to cut costs within her department? (WAQ30697)

Sue Essex: Innovative measures to generate efficiency gains and demonstrate value for money impact directly on my department as well as others within the Assembly. Examples include the Welsh procurement initiative team, which is part of my portfolio, as is the Assembly spending review. Our innovative new contract for office systems and business development (Merlin) will bring a range of efficiency gains and business change initiatives that will provide cost benefits as well as improving the way we do business.

The Cost of the New Assembly Building

Nick Bourne: To date, how much has the new Assembly building cost? (WAQ30703)

Sue Essex: I refer the Member to my answer to WAQ30580.

The Projected Cost of the New Assembly Building

Nick Bourne: What is the projected cost of the new Assembly building upon completion? (WAQ30704)

Sue Essex: The current projected construction cost is the agreed lump sum contract with Taylor Woodrow of £40.997 million, excluding VAT, art, the client's supplied fixtures, fittings, furniture, information and communications technology equipment, professional fees and further value engineering opportunities. I am unable to reveal the full estimated outturn costs with the Taylor Woodrow contract for reasons set out in my answer to OAQ28476.

The Projected Running Costs of the New Assembly Building

Nick Bourne: What are the projected running costs of the new Assembly building during its first year of operation? (WAQ30705)

Sue Essex: The engineering consultants are currently assessing the running costs model. This assessment will, however, only be indicative and the actual running costs will not be known until the building has become operational. Early indications are that the use of these passive and natural ventilation systems has provided a building that will reduce running costs by 30 to 50 per cent over the 100-year life of the building compared to a standard office building.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Local Diabetes Service Advisory Groups

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister detail the funding available to ensure that local diabetes service advisory groups are supported after March 2004? (WAQ30614)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): Local diabetes service advisory groups are already well established in many areas across Wales. I have already made it clear that local health boards must take responsibility for these groups, but, in order to encourage patient involvement, to establish local diabetes service advisory groups where they did not exist, and to strengthen and support them, £3,000 was awarded to each local health board from the diabetes national service framework funding.

Funding for a National Service Framework Diabetes Officer

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: What measures has the Minister put in place to secure continued funding for a national service framework diabetes officer after March 2004? (WAQ30615)

Jane Hutt: As I announced at a public meeting in November, the post of national service framework diabetes officer ends in March 2004 when funding specific to national service framework development ceases. The officer's main role was to establish local diabetes service advisory groups and patient reference groups, which local health boards will take responsibility for. A clinical nurse specialist in diabetes will continue to be seconded to the Welsh Assembly Government until March 2005 for work related to the framework.

Liquid Oxygen Therapy

Leighton Andrews: What assessment has the Minister made of the value of liquid oxygen therapy for those suffering from lung diseases, and will she make a statement? (WAQ30619)

Jane Hutt: An oxygen therapy reference group has been set up, and it is anticipated that a consultation document will be ready for consultation by the end of December, with a proposed three-month consultation period. Following consultation, the group will provide recommendations for the management of the oxygen therapy contract for Wales, within the resources and constraints, which will come to me for approval. The contract will be awarded following an *Official Journal of the European Union* tender.

Consultants, Surgeons and Doctors

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the number of consultants, surgeons and doctors that are currently, or have been, suspended from work for every year since 1999? (WAQ30654)

Jane Hutt: This information is not held centrally. Trusts are only required to submit details of doctors who have been suspended for six months on the grounds of professional misconduct: they are not

required to inform the Assembly if the suspension is on the grounds of personal misconduct. There are currently two reported cases in Wales.

The Harvey Jones Adolescent Unit

Jenny Randerson: What plans does the Minister have to centrally fund the Harvey Jones adolescent unit as a regional resource by Health Commission Wales? (WAQ30663)

Jane Hutt: Health Commission Wales funds and commissions the Harvey Jones adolescent unit.

Epilepsy

Glyn Davies: What financial support has the Assembly Government given to raise awareness of epilepsy over the last four years, and what plans does the Minister have for the future? (WAQ30666)

Jane Hutt: Raising awareness and the development of public education material are key areas to be addressed through the ongoing development of the policy and action plan for epilepsy in Wales. However, over the past four years, it would have been the responsibility of health authorities to invest in services and promotional material regarding epilepsy awareness. Responsibility for this passed to local health boards on 1 April.

An All-Wales Epilepsy Strategy

Glyn Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on her plans to establish an all-Wales epilepsy strategy, and how does she plan to strengthen the strategy? (WAQ30667)

Jane Hutt: I announced in July this year the development of an epilepsy strategy unique to Wales. Work is ongoing, with the voluntary sector and key stakeholders being brought together for the development of an effective epilepsy strategy for Wales.

In addition, the delivery of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance on the diagnosis and management of epilepsy in children and adults, together with a technology appraisal of drugs in epilepsy, is expected to be published in May 2004. This will contribute to the work being undertaken here in Wales.

The All-Wales Epilepsy Strategy

Glyn Davies: What discussion has the Minister had with Epilepsy Bereaved regarding the all-Wales epilepsy strategy? (WAQ30668)

Jane Hutt: Officials responsible for the development of strategies for chronic diseases in Wales ensure all key stakeholders, including relevant statutory and voluntary sector organisations, are included in the process.

I recognise that developing a policy and action plan for epilepsy in Wales will require a wide-ranging approach that focuses on clinical and broader lifestyle issues. Epilepsy Bereaved has been included in discussions over the development of the policy and action plan, which have taken place between the voluntary sector and Welsh Assembly officials.

Work in this area is ongoing, and I am keen to ensure the continued representation of all relevant stakeholders, including Epilepsy Bereaved, throughout the development process.

Free Home Care for Disabled People

Jonathan Morgan: What legal advice has the Minister received over her manifesto commitment to introduce free home care for disabled people? (WAQ30677)

Jonathan Morgan: Did the Minister receive legal advice over her manifesto commitment to introduce free home care for disabled people, prior to the 2003 Assembly election? (WAQ30678)

Jonathan Morgan: Will the Minister publish the legal advice over her manifesto commitment to introduce free home care for disabled people? (WAQ30679)

Jonathan Morgan: What cost assessment has been made by the Minister on her manifesto commitment to introduce free home care for disabled people? (WAQ30680)

Jonathan Morgan: What consultation has the Minister had with the Welsh Local Government Association over her manifesto commitment to introduce free home care for disabled people, and when did this consultation take place? (WAQ30681)

Jonathan Morgan: What representations has the Minister received over her manifesto commitment to introduce free home care for disabled people? (WAQ30682)

Jane Hutt: It is not normal practice to disclose the legal advice received by Ministers, and I do not intend to make an exception on this occasion. My working assumption is that the policy will account for a substantial part of the £16.6 million that local authorities currently collect in non-residential social services charges. This is broadly consistent with the Welsh Local Government Association's own estimate in its most recent expenditure sub-group report. The actual costs will depend on the definitions adopted.

I have given a commitment to work closely on all of this with key stakeholders and to consult on my detailed proposals. In the new year, I shall be reconvening the advisory group that helped to produce the 'Fairer Charging' guidance to work on the details and options for implementing the policy. The group includes all of the key stakeholders.

I will determine the implementation timetable in the light of the practical implementation issues and the costs.

Officials and I are in regular contact with a number of the key stakeholders, including the WLGA and Disability Wales, on a range of issues, including this one. I last met representatives of Disability Wales on 4 December.

My officials have had discussions with the WLGA on free home care for the disabled in the context of the expenditure sub group report.

In the course of a year, I receive many letters from individuals and organisations about various aspects of the care charging arrangements. In addition, officials received a briefing paper from members of the Coalition on Charging on 8 August this year, and I, and other members of the Health and Social Services Committee, received a briefing paper from the coalition on 4 November.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Jonathan Morgan: What is the current incidence of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in Wales, and how has this figure changed in the last 10 years? (WAQ30683)

Jane Hutt: The figures for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease were not collected centrally prior to 1998. It is believed that COPD is seriously underdiagnosed and often misdiagnosed, and experts have suggested that only 25 per cent of patients are properly diagnosed.

COPD consists of a number of different conditions, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema, but excludes asthma. Recent figures published by the Lung and Asthma Information Agency suggest that age-adjusted admission rates for COPD (excluding asthma) in England have risen by more than 50 per cent between 1991 and 2000. Equivalent figures for Wales are not available.

The Welsh Health Survey 1998 estimated that 6 per cent of the population of Wales is being treated for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. This was estimated by the percentage of respondents who reported being treated for emphysema and/or spells of bronchitis. An alternative source, which estimates the percentage of the population being treated for COPD, was from general practitioners' records of the percentage of registered patients consulting with a GP due to COPD. The conditions included as COPD are not specified. From this source it was estimated that 6.25 per cent of patients were treated for COPD between 1996 and 2000.

Emergency medical admissions are rising year on year. Of the 325,877 admissions to hospital in Wales for the year ending March 2001, there were 60,000 admissions, or 18.5 per cent, for respiratory disease, with 17,500 admissions, or 5.4 per cent, of those patients admitted for COPD.

The Prevention and Control of Respiratory Diseases

Jonathan Morgan: Does the Minister have any plans to introduce a strategy for the prevention and control of respiratory diseases on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government? (WAQ30707)

Jane Hutt: The Chief Medical Officer for Wales, through the joint professional forum health and wellbeing group, organised a respiratory medicine symposium at Newport on 25 June this year, where she announced the intention to develop a strategy for respiratory disease. A follow-up meeting with senior professionals in respiratory medicine was held on 26 November, with the aim of outlining a way forward in order to develop a respiratory strategy for Wales.

It is intended to set up a multi-professional group in the new year to take this work forward. A secondee from the NHS has been appointed and is in post to facilitate this.

Critical Care and Intensive Care Beds

Brynle Williams: Further to WAQ30598, WAQ30599, WAQ30600 and WAQ30601, will the Minister outline why the figures are not available for critical care and intensive care beds for Ysbyty Glan Clwyd from 1999? (WAQ30708)

Jane Hutt: Prior to 2000, trusts reported intensive care and other critical care bed numbers inconsistently or not at all. We therefore cannot be certain of the accuracy of figures prior to 2000, when guidance was issued through Health Solutions Wales.

Tetra Masts (Monitoring Public and Police Health)

Kirsty Williams: What systems for monitoring public and police health have been put into place in areas where Tetra is already operational? (WAQ30712)

Jane Hutt: The Home Office is responsible for the police airwave service in England and Wales, and it is funding a £5 million national health monitoring study of police airwave users to provide reassurance to users about long-term safety.

The National Radiological Protection Board advises the Welsh Assembly Government on the possible health implications of exposure to electromagnetic fields, including radiowaves associated with telecommunications. The NRPB was asked to look at the health and safety aspects of Tetra technology, and a report prepared by the NRPB's independent advisory group on non-ionising radiation was published in July 2001.

The report noted that the signals from Tetra base stations are not pulsed, whereas those from the mobile terminals (handsets) and repeaters are. The NRPB therefore consider that there is no reason to believe that signals from Tetra base stations should be treated differently from other base stations. Health advice on mobile phone base stations concludes that:

'The balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to health of people living near base stations on the basis that exposures are expected to be small fractions of guidelines.'

The report found that exposures to the public from Tetra base stations are small fractions of international guidelines.

The report also concluded that:

'Although areas of uncertainty remain about the biological effects of low level radio frequency radiation in general, including modulated signals, current evidence suggests that it is unlikely that the special features of the signals from TETRA mobile terminals and repeaters pose a hazard to health.'

The NRPB made a number of recommendations for further research, which are being taken forward by the UK Government. Welsh Assembly Government officials are in close contact with the NRPB regarding developments coming from research in this area.

Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus in Hospitals

Nick Bourne: What action is the Minister taking to deal with the growing problem of methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus in hospitals? (WAQ30721)

Jane Hutt: The Welsh Assembly Government takes healthcare-associated infections very seriously. The Welsh healthcare acquired infection sub-group has finalised its strategy to support the achievement of a reduction in healthcare-associated infections. The major focus of the recommendations is the development of an infection control infrastructure that places strong emphasis on the need for all healthcare workers to understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities in relation to infection control within a clinical-governance and risk-management approach. The draft strategy has now been issued for consultation by the healthcare profession, which is due to finish on 15 January 2003. The document will thereafter be published sometime in the new year.

The plan for the control and management of healthcare acquired infections outlines four principle areas:

- the organisation and infrastructure of infection control
- training requirements and their delivery
- the adoption and implementation of surveillance systems
- interventions that demonstrably reduce infection

As part of the Assembly commitment to the whole of the patient and hospital environment, national cleaning standards have been produced. Additionally, we have commenced a process to look at the hospital environment from a patient perspective, which involved independent assessments by community health councils.

Combating MRSA

Nick Bourne: Will the same infection prevention being used to combat MRSA in England be implemented in Wales? (WAQ30722)

Jane Hutt: The recent strategy from the Chief Medical Officer for England emphasises the case that we in Wales have been advocating for a long time: healthcare associated infection is more than just about MRSA. The report highlights that some 23 per cent of such infections are urinary, 22 per cent are respiratory and 6 per cent blood. Only 9 per cent are wound infections, where MRSA forms a small subset of the infecting organisms.

The strategy for England suggests that a director of infection control should be established in each trust. In Wales, where management teams see the creation of a director's post as appropriate, they are currently allowed to do so, and this is already happening, with some trusts having that post established.

The Welsh strategy, which is currently under consultation, proposes to re-adjust infection control structures and management to reflect our belief that effective control can only be achieved if all healthcare workers play their part. We already have infection control doctors and teams in each trust, but what we seek to do is extend accountabilities to the clinical teams and directorates themselves right across the trusts. This, in regard to accountability and responsibilities, takes action in Wales beyond that proposed in England.

All-Wales Review Panel

Kirsty Williams: Further to the answer to WAQ30331, will the Minister make a statement on whether an all-Wales review panel has been established and, if so, what is its composition? (WAQ30755)

Jane Hutt: The composition, terms of reference and procedures for the all-Wales review panel are currently being finalised prior to establishing the panel in the new year.

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

Empty Property in Llandrindod Wells

Nick Bourne: What action is the Minister taking to promote the regeneration of Llandrindod Wells and to tackle the problem of empty property blighting the town? (WAQ30744)

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart): Through the local authorities non-match local regeneration fund, I am supporting the Powys built heritage fund, which is benefiting Llandrindod Wells and other centres. Over the last three years, the Welsh Development Agency has co-funded Powys County Council in regeneration projects, including the town centre buildings facelift scheme, traffic management and environmental improvement to the main shopping area, and a new footbridge linking the town centre to the main industrial, commercial and educational sites. The agency is also working with Powys County Council and other stakeholders to develop a regeneration strategy for Llandrindod Wells, which will run in parallel with the townscape heritage initiative from April 2004. The WDA will continue to support Llandrindod Wells action team as a community-based development group through its community regeneration toolkit.

Poverty in Ystradgynlais and the Surrounding Area

Nick Bourne: What measures are being taken to address poverty in Ystradgynlais and the surrounding area? (WAQ30745)

Edwina Hart: One of the key Assembly programmes for tackling poverty in Wales is Communities First. Under this programme, £157,287.78 has been awarded to Ystradgynlais for various preparatory activities to benefit the area.

Ystradgynlais has also received £40,342.00 from the Communities First trust fund. Under the east Wales Objective 2 and transitional programme complement, which includes Ystradgynlais, £2,002,998 has been committed under Objective 2 priority 1 and £3,513,766 under Objective 2 priority 2.

Yr Hawl i Gaffael a'r Hawl i Brynu

Owen John Thomas: Pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi eu cymryd i gynyddu nifer yr ardaloedd gwledig lle ceir cyfyngiadau ar werthiant o dan yr hawl i gaffael ac ail-werthu o dan yr hawl i brynu? (WAQ30757) [W]

Edwina Hart: Yn gynharach eleni, cymeradwyodd y Cynulliad Orchymyn Tai (Hawl i Gaffael a Hawl i Brynu) (Ardaloedd Gwledig Dynodedig a Rhanbarthau Dynodedig) (Cymru) 2003 [offeryn statudol 2003/54 (W.5)]. Yr oedd y Gorchymyn yn ymestyn nifer yr ardaloedd gwledig lle y gellir rhoi cyfyngiadau ar werthiant o dan yr hawl i gaffael ac ailwerthu eiddo hawl i brynu blaenorol er mwyn helpu pobl leol i gael tai fforddiadwy. Paratowyd y Gorchymyn yn dilyn ymgynghori gyda'r cyrff a'r sefydliadau a oedd â diddordeb, ac fe'i cymeradwywyd yn dilyn dadl yn y Cyfarfod Llawn ar 14 Ionawr 2003.

The Right to Acquire and the Right to Buy Scheme

Owen John Thomas: What action has the Minister taken to increase the number of rural areas where restrictions exist on right-to-acquire sales and re-selling under the right to buy scheme? (WAQ30757) [W]

Edwina Hart: Earlier this year, the Assembly approved the Housing (Right to Acquire and Right to Buy) (Designated Rural Areas and Designated Regions) (Wales) Order 2003 [statutory instrument 2003/54 (W.5)]. The Order extended the number of rural areas where restrictions can apply to sales under the right to acquire and re-sales of former right-to-buy properties to help local people in accessing affordable housing. The Order was prepared after consultation with interested organisations, and was approved following a debate in Plenary on 14 January 2003.

Strategaethau Tai Lleol

Owen John Thomas: Pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi eu cymryd i lunio atebion effeithiol i broblemau tai lleol drwy gynnwys pob rhan o'r gymuned yn y gwaith o gytuno ar strategaeth dai lleol? (WAQ30758) [W]

Edwina Hart: Yr oedd ein canllawiau i awdurdodau lleol ('Paratoi Strategaethau Tai Lleol', Mehefin 2002), yn nodi bod yn rhaid iddynt ymgynghori'n eang ar y strategaeth dai leol ddrafft. Gofynnwyd i'r awdurdodau sicrhau bod pob rhan o'r gymuned leol yn cael y cyfle i fynegi eu safbwyntiau. Mae fy swyddogion wrthi'n rhoi adborth i'r awdurdodau lleol ar eu strategaethau drafft. Mae'r adborth yn nodi'n glir a oes angen gwella'r ymgynghori ac ymestyn perchnogaeth leol o'r strategaethau hyn.

Local Housing Strategies

Owen John Thomas: What action has the Minister taken to find effective answers to local housing problems, by including all parts of the community, in the work of agreeing a local housing strategy? (WAQ30758) [W]

Edwina Hart: Our guidance to local authorities ('Preparing Local Housing Strategies', June 2002) stipulated that wide-ranging consultation should be undertaken on the draft local housing strategy.

Authorities were asked to ensure that all sections of the local community have the opportunity to communicate their views. My officials are in the process of providing feedback to local authorities on their draft strategies. That feedback has made clear any need to improve the level of consultation and wider local ownership of these strategies.