

## Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 8 October 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 Finance Minister

#### Allocating Finance to the Subject Portfolios

**Q8 William Graham:** In allocating finance to the subject portfolios, does the Minister take account of any targets proposed by subject Ministers? (OAQ28516)

**The Finance Minister (Sue Essex):** It is a normal requirement of each budget planning round that targets set by individual spending Ministers are taken into account when deciding future allocations. 'Wales: A Better Country' sets out the Assembly Government's strategic plan, which will be crucial in deciding how the Assembly Government allocates its resources in future.

#### The Environment, Planning and Countryside Portfolio

**Q9 Mick Bates:** Will the Minister make a statement on the financial resources allocated to the environment, planning and countryside portfolio? (OAQ28521)

**Sue Essex:** The resources allocated to the environment, planning and countryside portfolio for the financial year 2003-04 stand at £381.255 million. Provision for the next three years will be included in my draft budget.

#### Priorities for the Next Budget

**Q10 Michael German:** What are the Minister's priorities for the next budget? (OAQ28480)

**Sue Essex:** Allocations for next year, and indicative allocations for subsequent years, will be made in the draft budget, which I will publish later this month. The budget will reflect the Government's priorities set out in 'Wales: A Better Country'.

#### The Social Justice Portfolio

**Q11 Val Lloyd:** Can the Minister state whether there will be an increase in funding to the social justice portfolio in the forthcoming budget round? (OAQ28478)

**Sue Essex:** The draft budget that will be published on 14 October will provide details of the levels of funding being made available to each portfolio for future years.

#### Traffic-calming Measures

**Q12 Jeff Cuthbert:** Will the Minister consider providing separate and additional funds for traffic-calming measures? (OAQ28519)

**Sue Essex:** Since 2000, the Welsh Assembly Government has allocated additional funding—£18 million to date—to local authorities to help them in their work to address road-safety issues in their areas. Many local authorities are using this additional funding to implement traffic-calming measures.

### **Block Grant Funding**

**Q13 Helen Mary Jones:** Is the Minister currently considering alternative methods of block grant funding other than the discredited Barnett formula? (OAQ28482)

**Sue Essex:** No. The Barnett formula has provided fair settlements for Wales in previous spending review settlements. There is no firm evidence to suggest that Wales would benefit from any alternative funding mechanism being implemented. Any alternatives to Barnett could even provide Wales with worse settlements.

### **Fire Authorities**

**Q14 William Graham:** Will the Minister outline the discussions she has held with the UK Treasury on the increased expenditure required by fire authorities in Wales? (OAQ28488)

**Sue Essex:** My discussions on the subject of funding fire authorities in Wales are ongoing. The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration and officials are also engaged in ongoing and detailed discussions over proposals to devolve the fire service to the Assembly, including the financial implications.

### **The Education and Lifelong Learning Portfolio**

**Q15 Janet Davies:** Will the Minister make a statement on the budget provision allocated to the education and lifelong learning portfolio? (OAQ28524)

**Sue Essex:** The funding available to the education and lifelong learning portfolio for 2003-04 stands at £1.18 billion. Allocations for next year, and indicative allocations for subsequent years, will be made in the draft budget, which I will publish later this month.

## **Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside**

### **Farming Connect-funded Tourism Projects**

**Q8 Kirsty Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on Farming Connect-funded tourism projects? (OAQ28456)

**The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones):** I refer you to my letter of 6 October 2003 in response to the points raised about Farming Connect and tourism grants in the Plenary debate on 30 September.

### **Y Cynllun Anifeiliaid Trig**

**C9 Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** A wnaiff y Gweinidog adrodd ar unrhyw gynnydd parthed gweithredu'r cynllun anifeiliaid trig? (OAQ28532) [W]

**Carwyn Jones:** Ddiwedd Gorffennaf 2003, yn dilyn trafodaethau gyda rhanddeiliaid allweddol yn adrannau amaeth y DU, cyhoeddodd Llywodraeth y Cynulliad fod cynllun anifeiliaid trig ar gyfer y Deyrnas Unedig gyfan wedi'i gytuno mewn egwyddor. Cynhaliwyd trafodaethau gyda phartneriaid ar weinyddu'r cynllun a chytunwyd mewn egwyddor ar fanylion aelodaeth a chyfansoddiad bwrdd y cwmni. Y gobaith yw y bydd y cynllun ar waith yn gynnar yn 2004.

### **The Fallen Stock Scheme**

**Q9 Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Will the Minister report on any progress made in respect of the implementation of the fallen stock scheme? (OAQ28532) [W]

**Carwyn Jones:** Following discussions with key stakeholders and the UK agriculture departments, at the end of July, the Assembly announced that a UK-wide fallen stock scheme had been agreed in principle. Negotiations with the partners on the administration of the scheme, membership details and the composition of the company board have now been agreed in principle, and it is hoped that the scheme can be in place by early 2004.

### **The Technical Advice Note on Coal**

**Q10 Huw Lewis:** Will the Minister make a statement on the technical advice note on coal? (OAQ28458)

**Carwyn Jones:** Work on the preparation of the coal technical advice note is due to commence in December 2003, and it is expected that the TAN will be completed by August 2005. 'Minerals Planning Policy Wales', published in December 2000, sets out the policies for open-cast and deep-mine coal development, and indicates that TANs for aggregates and coal would issue as soon as possible. Until now, priority has been given to finalising the aggregates TAN and the marine aggregates dredging policy, but consideration of the shape and content of the draft coal TAN is due to start by the end of the year.

### **Report on Common Land**

**Q11 Mick Bates:** Can the Minister make a statement on the recently published joint report by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Welsh Assembly Government concerning common land? (OAQ28551)

**Carwyn Jones:** The consultation paper issued on 22 August 2003 seeks views on the Government's proposals for legislation regarding the agricultural use and management of common land in England and Wales. Views should be submitted by 14 November 2003, and I hope that all those with an interest in this subject take the opportunity to comment on the issues discussed in the consultation paper.

### **Late CAP Payments**

**Q12 Janet Ryder:** When will the late common agricultural policy payments be paid in full? (OAQ28531)

**Carwyn Jones:** As at 29 September, around 92 per cent of 2002 subsidy payments had been paid. We hope to make the majority of the remaining payments shortly. There will, however, be some claims that cannot readily be paid, for example, the death of the farmer or change of business. These will take longer to resolve.

### **The Welsh Wine Industry**

**Q13 David Melding:** Will the Minister make a statement on the work undertaken to examine the feasibility of expanding the Welsh wine industry? (OAQ28543)

**Carwyn Jones:** The feasibility of expanding the wine industry in Wales is one of the areas for possible future consideration by the agri-food partnership's newly established horticulture strategy group. Wine is included in our agri-food strategy as an added-value product of fruit. The horticulture strategy group's action plan (launched in March 2003) is currently looking at generic support for the horticulture sector, for which wine growers would be eligible. Wine producers in Wales are also eligible for assistance under the Welsh Development Agency food directorate's trade development activity.

### **The Disposal of Compost**

**Q14 Brian Gibbons:** What is the timescale for updating regulations on the disposal of compost derived from household refuse? (OAQ28547)

**Carwyn Jones:** The Animal By-products (Wales) Regulations 2003, which govern the disposal of animal by-products, including the composting of household waste, are expected to come into force on 31 October.

### **The Recycling Strategy for Wales**

**Q15 Peter Black:** Can the Minister make a statement on the recycling strategy for Wales? (OAQ28474)

**Carwyn Jones:** The Assembly Government's national waste strategy, 'Wise About Waste', set local authorities a target of recycling and composting 15 per cent of municipal waste by 2003-04, and a target of 40 per cent by 2010. Seven authorities have stated that they have already achieved the 2003-04 recycling/composting target, and I understand that most of the remainder expect to do so in 2003-04.