

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 3 July 2001

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

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

Questions to the First Minister

Open and Accountable Government

Q12 Brian Hancock: Will the First Minister make a statement on the contribution of policy announcements through written statements towards open and accountable government? (OAQ12323)
Transferred for written answer.

The First Minister: Written statements are an effective means of keeping Assembly Members informed of policy and operational matters that are important but do not warrant specific Plenary time. If an Assembly Member feels that a policy matter has been inappropriately dealt with by means of a written statement, there are several courses available to him or her to bring it to the Cabinet's or the Assembly's attention.

Question 13 was answered in Plenary.

Cost of Welsh Translations

Q14 Gwenda Thomas: What is the cost, per annum, to the National Assembly for Wales of Welsh translations? (OAQ12334)

The First Minister: In the financial year 2001-02, the Presiding Office has allocated £1.3 million to cover the cost of employing staff in the Translation Service and £0.4 million to cover translation work undertaken by other organisations.

Policy divisions meet the cost of printing and publishing official documents, but the cost of translating them is not separately identified either in budgetary or expenditure terms.

Mesurau sydd yn Araith y Frenhines

C15 Dafydd Wigley: A all Prif Weinidog Cymru wneud datganiad ynghylch y ffordd y mae'r mesurau sydd yn Araith y Frenhines yn cyfateb i'r hyn y mae ei Lywodraeth wedi gofyn amdanynt? (OAQ12338)
[W]

Prif Weinidog Cymru: Bydd fy natganiad ar Araith yr Frenhines yn y Cyfarfod Llawn ar 19 Gorffennaf yn gynhwysfawr ac yn eang ei gwmpas.

Measures Contained in the Queen's Speech

Q15 Dafydd Wigley: Can the First Minister make a statement about the way in which measures contained in the Queen's Speech correspond to what his Government has asked for? (OAQ12338) [W]

The First Minister: The statement that I will make on the Queen's Speech during the Plenary session on 19 July will be comprehensive and wide-ranging.

Enabling Minority Groups to have a Full Voice in Policy Development

Q16 Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the First Minister explain how the process and procedures of the National Assembly are enabling minority groups to have a full voice in policy development? (OAQ12317)

The First Minister: As part of our response to this longstanding gap in Welsh policy development, we are funding the All-Wales Ethnic Minority Association and have helped to establish Disability Wales. The Committee on Equality of Opportunity is driving forward the agenda on change and Ministers and officials regularly meet members of the equalities commissions.

Duties of the Assembly Cabinet

Q17 David Davies: What measures has the First Minister put in place to ensure that the exercise of duties by the Assembly Cabinet will always be fair, open and in the best interests of the people of Wales? (OAQ12311)

The First Minister: The Cabinet is accountable, by the instrument of delegated power, to this Assembly and the people of Wales as a whole. The publication of the minutes and, more recently, the papers of Cabinet and its sub-committees, enhance that accountability considerably.

Responsibility for the National Botanic Garden of Wales

Q18 Glyn Davies: Will the First Minister make a statement on whether the National Assembly has any direct responsibility for the National Botanic Garden of Wales? (OAQ12332)

The First Minister: Although the National Assembly has provided financial support to the National Botanic Garden via the Wales Tourist Board, it is an independent organisation.

The Government's Forthcoming Legislation Programme

Q19 Lorraine Barrett: Can the First Minister make a statement on the content of the Government's forthcoming legislation programme and its implications for Wales? (OAQ12320)

The First Minister: The implications for Wales of the Government's forthcoming legislation programme will be covered by my statement on 19 July.

Hyrwyddo'r Iaith Gymraeg

C20 Elin Jones: Sut y mae Prif Weinidog Cymru yn monitro'r ffordd y mae gweithrediad swyddogaethau Cabinet y Cynulliad yn cyfrannu at hyrwyddo'r iaith Gymraeg ar draws yr holl agweddau ar ddatblygiad polisi? (OAQ12326) [W]

Prif Weinidog Cymru: Mae pob Gweinidog wedi ymrwymo i amcan y Cynulliad o hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg. Er enghraifft, mae'r Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol yn datblygu strategaeth i hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg yn y gwasanaeth iechyd gwladol yng Nghymru. Sefydli'r tasglu Cymru gyfan i gefnogi'r strategaeth honno. Yr ydym yn ystyried ffyrdd o ffurfioli'n trefniadau ar gyfer ystyried y cyd-destun dwyieithog wrth lunio polisiau, fel rhan o'r gwaith o baratoi cynllun iaith Gymraeg newydd.

Promoting the Welsh Language

Q20 Elin Jones: How does the First Minister monitor the way in which the exercise of the Assembly Cabinet's functions contribute towards promoting the Welsh language across all aspects of policy development? (OAQ12326) [W]

The First Minister: All Ministers are committed to the Assembly's aim of promoting the Welsh language. For instance, the Minister for Health and Social Services is developing a strategy to promote

the use of Welsh in the national health service in Wales. This strategy will be supported by an all-Wales task group. We are considering ways of formalising our arrangements for policy-making in the bilingual context as part of the task of drafting our new Welsh language scheme.

Promoting Wales Abroad

Q21 Peter Black: Will the First Minister make a statement on how the National Assembly is promoting Wales abroad? (OAQ12327) [R]

The First Minister: Raising the international profile and influence of Wales is one of the Cabinet's key priorities. Promoting Wales internationally was discussed in Plenary during a debate on Wales in the world on 27 June, in which an account was given of what measures the Assembly has already put in place to promote Wales internationally.

These include the development of a suite of new, quality promotional material as part of our Wales World Nation initiative, a programme of events to showcase Wales overseas, attracting an increasing number of high profile visits to Wales, and developing relationships with a number of influential regions and organisations.

I was delighted that the Cabinet's commitment to raising the international profile and influence of Wales was endorsed in that debate.

Progress on Implementing 'Putting Wales First'

Q22 Nick Bourne: Further to his reply on 15 May, will the First Minister report on progress since then on implementing 'Putting Wales First: A Partnership for the People of Wales'? (OAQ12330)

The First Minister: Since 15 May, the motion to take forward the independent appeals mechanism for farmers in Wales has been accepted by the Assembly. The mechanism is due to become operational by the end of October 2001. The Assembly has also adopted guidance on communities strategies, and debated progress on the rural development plan on 14 June. Farming Connect is due to come into effect in September. On 19 and 21 June, the Assembly approved regulations giving effect to a comprehensive framework of proposals, ensuring high standards of conduct in Welsh local government.

Conference of European Affairs Committees

Q23 Phil Williams: What input will the National Assembly have into the conference of European affairs committees of national parliaments and the European Parliament? (OAQ12337)

The First Minister: The Assembly's representation on bodies involving European affairs committees is primarily a matter for our Committee on European Affairs. The Assembly is not a member of the organisation mentioned in the question. The Assembly's Committee on European Affairs is represented at meetings with other UK European committees.

Blaenraglen Ddeddfwriaethol Llywodraeth San Steffan

C24 Ieuan Wyn Jones: A wnaiff Prif Weinidog Cymru ddatganiad ar flaenraglen ddeddfwriaethol Llywodraeth San Steffan a sut y mae'n effeithio ar Gymru? (OAQ12325) [W]

Prif Weinidog Cymru: Byddaf yn gwneud datganiad ar gynlluniau deddfwriaethol Llywodraeth San Steffan a'u heffeithiau ar Gymru yn ystod y Cyfarfod Llawn ar 19 Gorffennaf.

Westminster Government's Legislative Plans

Q24 Ieuan Wyn Jones: Will the First Minister make a statement in response to the Westminster Government's legislative plans and their effects on Wales? (OAQ12325) [W]

The First Minister: I will make a statement on the Westminster Government's legislative plans and their effects on Wales during the Plenary session on 19 July.

Reorganisation of UK Government Departments

Q25 Peter Rogers: What discussions has the First Minister had with the Secretary of State for Wales on the reorganisation of UK Government departments? (OAQ12312)

The First Minister: Questions of departmental and internal organisation within the UK Government is a matter for it alone to determine, but the Secretary of State and I have discussed the new arrangements within the Prime Minister's Office for communication with the devolved administrations.

Impact of the Partnership Agreement on South Wales East

Q26 William Graham: Will the First Minister make a statement concerning the impact of the partnership agreement on South Wales East? (OAQ12310)

The First Minister: The partnership agreement has provided for a firm and virtually certain delivery for the people of South Wales East, and the other four Welsh electoral regions. A statement on the achievements so far with regard to 'Putting Wales First' was made on 20 March 2001.

Impact of the Crime Bill on Welsh Police Forces

Q27 Alison Halford: What discussions has the First Minister had with the Home Secretary with regard to the Crime Bill and its impact on Welsh police forces? (OAQ12335) *Withdrawn.*

Adolygu'r Targedau yn 'Rhoi Cymru'n Gyntaf'

C28 Janet Ryder: Pa gynlluniau sydd gan Brif Weinidog Cymru i adolygu'r targedau yn 'Rhoi Cymru'n Gyntaf'? (OAQ12324) [W]

Prif Weinidog Cymru: Gwnaethpwyd datganiad ar ddatblygiad ymrwymiad y cytundeb partneriaeth i'r Cyfarfod Llawn ar 20 Mawrth 2001. Yr wyf yn falch o ddweud, ers hynny, yr ydym wedi cyflwyno archwiliadau deintyddol a phresgripsiynau am ddim i bobl o dan 25 oed.

Yn ogystal, mae'r Cynulliad wedi mabwysiadu canllawiau ar strategaethau cymunedol. Trafodwyd datblygiad y cynllun datblygu gwledig gan y Cynulliad ar 14 Mehefin. Disgwylir i Gyswllt Ffermio ddod i rym ym Medi. Ar 19 a 21 Mehefin, cymeradwyodd y Cynulliad reoliadau a arweiniodd at fframwaith cynhwysfawr o argymhellion, gan sicrhau safonau ymddygiad uchel mewn llywodraeth leol yng Nghymru.

Yr ydym yn bwriadu cyhoeddi drafft o gynllun strategaeth i olynu 'GwellCymru.com' cyn bo hir. Bydd trafodaeth ar y cynllun yn rhoi cyfle i bobl edrych eto ar y targedau sydd yn bodoli.

Reviewing the Targets in 'Putting Wales First'

Q28 Janet Ryder: What plans does the First Minister have to review the targets in 'Putting Wales First'? (OAQ12324) [W]

The First Minister: A statement on the progress of the partnership agreement commitments was made to Plenary on 20 March 2001. I am pleased to say, since then, we have introduced free dental checks and prescriptions for people under the age of 25.

In addition, the Assembly has adopted guidance on communities strategies. The Assembly debated progress on the rural development plan on 14 June. Farming Connect is due to come into effect in September. On 19 and 21 June, the Assembly approved regulations giving effect to a comprehensive framework of proposals, thus ensuring high standards of conduct in Welsh local government.

We plan to issue a draft strategic plan to succeed 'BetterWales.com' shortly. Consultation on this plan will provide an opportunity for people to look again at the existing targets.

Managing Budgets

Q29 Helen Mary Jones: Does the First Minister have any plans to set up a review into the way in which Ministers in the Cabinet manage their budgets? (OAQ12321)

The First Minister: No. However the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities regularly meets her Cabinet colleagues to review budgets and plan future expenditure. She intends to do so again in September to review expenditure during the first five months of this financial year and to discuss likely full-year spend.