

## Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 3 November 2004

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

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

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### Questions on Finance to the Finance Minister

#### Budget Expenditure Lines

**Q9 Mick Bates:** Will the Minister make a statement on what considerations she gave while drawing up the budget on which BEL will receive the same cash funding in 2005-06 as in 2004-05? (OAQ38901)

**The Finance Minister (Sue Essex):** Our internal spending review enabled us to ensure that we aligned the budget with our strategic policy aims and provided an opportunity to consider how to spend our money effectively. Increases in spending have been concentrated in areas where they will have most effect.

#### Increase in the Education and Lifelong Learning Budget

**Q10 Peter Black:** What representations has the Minister received from the Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning regarding the percentage increase in her budget compared to that allocated to the education portfolio in England? (OAQ38913)

**Sue Essex:** I have received no such representations from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. The draft budget reflects the Assembly Government's strategic policy aims. It would not reflect the needs of Wales if it merely attempted to copy UK Government decisions.

#### A National Archive for Wales

**Q11 Owen John Thomas:** Has the Minister received a request for additional and one-off funding from the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport to set up a national archive for Wales? (OAQ38902)

**Sue Essex:** There has been no such request from the Minister with responsibility for culture. The First Minister explained the reasons yesterday in his answer to your oral question about a national archive for Wales.

#### The Budget for Social Justice and Regeneration Portfolio

**Q12 Mark Isherwood:** Will the Minister make a statement on the budget provision for social justice and regeneration portfolio? (OAQ38921)

**Sue Essex:** When setting the draft budget, we ensured that allocations were aligned with the Assembly Government's strategic policy aims. The draft budget increased the social justice and regeneration portfolio provision by over 17 per cent between 2004-05 and 2007-08. This reflects our commitment to tackling poverty and supporting communities.

## **The Assembly Government's Cross-cutting Responsibility**

**Q13 John Griffiths:** Will the Minister make a statement on budget strategy to address the Assembly Government's cross cutting responsibility? (OAQ38894)

**Sue Essex:** The spending review used our cross-cutting responsibilities, such as sustainable development and equal opportunities as criteria, in its evaluation of each spending programme. These cross-cutting priorities also underpin the delivery of each programme.

### **Delivering the Aims of 'Wales: A Better Country'**

**Q14 Lynne Neagle:** Will the Minister make a statement on how the draft budget delivers the aims of 'Wales: A Better Country'? (OAQ38888)

**Sue Essex:** As well as delivering the 'Wales: A Better Country' top 10 commitments, the draft budget provides funding for a step change in the level of our capital investment, developing the talents of our young people, supporting children in their early years, and taking the Wanless agenda forward.

### **The Delivery of Manifesto Pledges**

**Q15 Ann Jones:** Will the Minister make a statement on the way the draft budget will deliver the governing party's 10 manifesto pledges to the people of Wales? (OAQ38914)

**Sue Essex:** The draft budget contains sufficient financial provision to deliver the top 10 commitments in 'Wales: A Better Country' either in specific budget expenditure lines or as part of our reserves.

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

### **Increasing Levels of Recycling**

**Q13 Sandy Mewies:** Will the Minister make a statement on action that he is undertaking to increase levels of recycling in Wales? (OAQ38863)

**The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones):** The Assembly Government published its national waste management strategy 'Wise About Waste: The National Waste Strategy for Wales' in 2002, which sets local authority recycling targets. The Assembly Government is providing £21 million in 2004-05 to assist in achieving these targets.

### **The Use of Off-road Vehicles on Rights of Way**

**Q14 Lynne Neagle:** Will the Minister make a statement on the use of off road vehicles on rights of way? (OAQ38886)

**Carwyn Jones:** Motorised vehicles can use certain rights of way, in particular byways open to all traffic—BOATs. However, illegal use of rights of way by off-road vehicles is problematic, and to help tackle this, new guidance is being prepared for highway and police authorities and new legislation is also being considered. A new group of interested parties in Wales is also looking at issues such as site provision.

### **High Hedge Legislation**

**Q15 Rosemary Butler:** Will the Minister make a statement on high hedge legislation for Wales? (OAQ38882)

**Carwyn Jones:** Regulations in relation to complaints about high hedges will be put to the Assembly shortly, and should be made by the end of December. The regulations will cover the maximum fee chargeable by local authorities for handling complaints and procedures for appeals to the Assembly on these decisions.