

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 12 March 2003

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

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

Questions to the Minister for Economic Development

Cynllun Adfywio Sir Benfro

Q8 Cynog Dafis: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar y datblygiadau diweddaraf yng nghynllun adfywio Sir Benfro? (OAQ23091) [W]

Y Gweinidog dros Ddatblygu Economaidd (Andrew Davies): Ar 7 Chwefror, lansiais y cynllun adfywio drafft ar gyfer Abergwaun a gogledd Sir Benfro. Yn ôl ein haddewid, yr ydym wedi ymgynghori'n eang ar y cynigion, a disgwylir y caiff y cynllun terfynol ei gwblhau yn ystod mis Mawrth.

Pembrokeshire Regeneration Scheme

Q8 Cynog Dafis: Will the Minister make a statement on the latest developments in the Pembrokeshire regeneration scheme? (OAQ23091) [W]

The Minister for Economic Development (Andrew Davies): I launched the draft regeneration plan for Fishguard and north Pembrokeshire on 7 February. As promised, we have consulted widely over the proposals and the final plan should be completed during March.

Methiant y Llywodraeth i Gyrraedd Targed Creu Swyddi

Q9 Elin Jones: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar fethiant Llywodraeth y Cynulliad i gyrraedd ei tharged o greu 34,000 o swyddi newydd yng ngorllewin Cymru a'r Cymoedd erbyn mis Mawrth 2003? (OAQ23094) [W]

Andrew Davies: Mae'n rhy gynnar dweud nad yw'r targed wedi'i gyrraedd gan nad ydym eto wedi gweld unrhyw ffigurau ar gyfer cyflogaeth yng ngorllewin Cymru a'r Cymoedd yn ystod y cyfnod rhwng mis Mawrth a mis Mai. Mae'r ffigurau mwyaf diweddar sydd ar gael, ar gyfer y flwyddyn hyd at fis Tachwedd y llynedd, yn dangos bod lefel cyflogaeth yng ngorllewin Cymru a'r Cymoedd wedi codi 22,000 ers i'r Cynulliad gael ei greu yn 1999. O gofio'r hyn a fu'n digwydd yn economi'r byd ers hynny, mae hyn yn gynnydd sylweddol.

Government Failure to Reach Job Creation Target

Q9 Elin Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the Assembly Government's failure to reach its target of creating 34,000 new jobs in west Wales and the Valleys by March 2003? (OAQ23094) [W]

Andrew Davies: It is premature to say that the target has not been met when we have not yet had any figures for the March to May quarter for employment in west Wales and the Valleys. The most recent figures available, for the year to November last year, show that, since the Assembly was created in 1999, employment in west Wales and the Valleys has risen by 22,000. Given what has been happening in the world economy since then, this represents a considerable achievement.

WalesTrade International Programmes

Q10 Val Lloyd: Will the Minister make a statement about the WalesTrade International programmes? (OAQ23113)

Andrew Davies: WalesTrade International programmes are specifically designed to help Welsh companies prepare for entry into overseas markets, to find opportunities and to conclude deals. To date, these programmes have helped to create 105 new exporters, have identified over £1 billion-worth of opportunities, and have secured close to £0.25 billion-worth of orders.

Tackling High Unemployment

C11 Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the measures that the Assembly is taking to tackle the problem of pockets of high unemployment in our most deprived communities? (OAQ23111)

Andrew Davies: 'A Winning Wales' outlines the Assembly Government's economic development policies, including those for creating strong communities. During the period 1 April 2002 to 31 January 2003, the Assembly Government provided over £10 million in grant assistance to 112 companies in north Wales. These projects will attract investment of nearly £33 million to the area, and are expected to create over 750 jobs and safeguard almost a further 130.

The most deprived communities in Wales also benefit from maximum levels of support and assistance from the Objective 1 and Communities First programmes. In January 2003, claimant count unemployment in the Vale of Clwyd was 36 per cent lower than in January 1999.

Question 12 (OAQ23121) withdrawn.

Digital Terrestrial Television

Q13 Janice Gregory: Will the Minister make a statement on the availability and coverage of digital terrestrial television in the south Wales Valleys? (OAQ23117) *Transferred for written answer.*

Andrew Davies: This is not a devolved matter, but the Assembly Government is in active dialogue with the UK Government on this issue. In particular, the Assembly Government takes a close interest in the actions being taken by the UK Government through its digital television action plan, especially those aspects which look to evaluate the needs of, and problems faced by, the people of Wales in the delivery of digital television.

Private Sector Investment to the Swansea Area

Q14 Peter Black: What additional private sector investment has the Welsh Development Agency attracted to the Swansea area since 1999? (OAQ23126)

Andrew Davies: Since 1 April 1999, the WDA has attracted a total of £79.8 million of private sector investment to the Swansea area. The figure represents support for 13 projects, including major investments by Pure Wafer Ltd and International Rectifier.

New Roads for North Wales

Q15 Alison Halford: What action is the Minister taking to ensure that new roads for north Wales are an essential part of any economic development plans for that area? (OAQ23122)

Andrew Davies: The strategic objectives of the trunk road programme are clearly set out in the transport framework and the trunk road forward programme. These include maintaining and improving the network to meet the economic needs of Wales. The widening of the A494/A550 between Deeside Park and Drome Corner, and of the A494 between Drome Corner and Ewloe, will both proceed in the short term as part of the trunk road programme. This will increase capacity on the east-west strategic corridor, as set out in the transport framework. This corridor provides the main economic artery for the whole of north Wales and also forms an important part of the trans-European road network, linking Ireland with the UK and mainland Europe.