

## **Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 14 March 2000**

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

### **Questions to the First Secretary**

#### **Barnett Formula (Needs Based Revision)**

**Q7 Glyn Davies:** What research has the First Secretary commissioned into a needs based revision of the Barnett Formula? (OAQ4057)

**The First Secretary (Rhodri Morgan):** Considering the effects of revisions to the Barnett formula would require us to undertake a full study of relevant spending needs. I have no plans to commission such research at the moment but we are, of course, keeping the matter under review.

#### **Review of Business Support Services (Representations)**

**Q8 Janet Ryder:** Has the First Secretary received any representations from individuals or organisations urging a review of business support services in Wales? (OAQ4046)

**The First Secretary:** I have not received any recent representations on this matter. The Economic Development Committee is initiating a review on this subject, however which inter alia will examine the current business support delivery arrangements and consider the scope for improvement. I welcome this timely review which will help to ensure that we have the most effective systems in place to maximise the benefits of Objective 1 and related European programmes

#### **Inviting the British-Irish Council to Cardiff**

**Q9 Helen Mary Jones:** Will the First Secretary follow his predecessor's example and issue a warm invitation for the British-Irish Council to meet in Cardiff? (OAQ4052)

**The First Secretary:** The British-Irish Council is currently suspended, as are the other institutions which the Belfast Agreement established. If and when the suspension ends, though, I would strongly support a meeting of the Council in Wales.

#### **Promoting the Significance and Standing of Wales**

**Q10 William Graham:** What is the First Secretary doing to promote the significance and standing of Wales? (OAQ4055)

**The First Secretary:** One of our objectives is to promote the profile and influence of Wales and a number of measures are already in hand to achieve that objective.

We aim to promote Wales as a premier location in which to invest, manufacture, live, study and build a professional and personal life. Officials are already working with the key public sector bodies and agencies to develop a more coherent and co-ordinated strategy to raise the profile of Wales, including the development of a range of high quality and leading edge promotional material, and participation in a programme of overseas events. I hope shortly to convene a meeting of the key agencies with an interest in promoting Wales to discuss how that work can be developed further.

We have seen a number of visits by influential overseas politicians, officials and organisations since the creation of the Assembly. Such visits provide an ideal opportunity to demonstrate what Wales has to offer, and I expect to see and will continue to encourage many more such visits as interest continues to grow in what is happening in Wales.

The decision by the Assembly to join the Wales European Centre, and establish a direct presence at official level in Brussels has already attracted enormous interest and will provide Wales with an opportunity to exert influence at the heart of Europe. We will continue to explore new opportunities and exploit existing ones to promote Wales.

### **Genetically Modified Organisms**

**Q11 Peter Black:** What research has been undertaken on the impact on the image of Wales and the promotion of Welsh products of the Assembly taking a distinctive view on genetically modified organisms? (OAQ4042)

**The First Secretary:** I am aware of no such research. I am keen to promote a positive image of Wales as a home for high technology industry and to promote the quality of Welsh products in the international market place.

### **Promoting the National Assembly for Wales**

**Q12 Christine Humphreys:** What actions will the First Secretary be taking to promote the National Assembly for Wales, both in Wales and beyond? (OAQ4058) R

**The First Secretary:** The promotion of the Assembly underpins all of my activities and those of my Cabinet colleagues both here in Wales, the rest of the UK and abroad. There is a responsibility on all of us as Members to promote the Assembly at every opportunity.

### **Cultural Tourism (Welsh Economy)**

**Q13 Janet Davies:** What contribution has cultural tourism made to the Welsh economy? (OAQ4050).

**The First Secretary:** In 1998 cultural tourism was estimated to have contributed just over £100 million to the Welsh economy.

### **Fostering International Respect for Wales**

**Q14 Cynog Dafis:** How does the First Secretary intend to foster international respect for the country and Wales? (OAQ4053)

**The First Secretary:** I refer to the answer I gave earlier today to William Graham (OAQ4055).

### **Wind-up of Cardiff Bay Development Corporation**

**Q15 Alun Cairns:** Would the First Secretary make a statement on the wind up of Cardiff Bay Development Corporation in terms of its environmental and economic impact and its future contribution to the prosperity of Wales? (OAQ4054)

**The First Secretary:** The Assembly debated the winding-up of CBDC on 7 March. The succession arrangements provide the successor bodies with the opportunity to build upon the achievements of the Corporation.

### **Single Currency (Welsh Economy)**

**Q16 David Davies:** If money will be set aside, in Wales, for information extolling the benefit of the single currency to the Welsh economy? (OAQ4041)

**The First Secretary:** No money has been set aside in Wales for information promoting the benefits or otherwise of the single European currency.

A business taskforce, supported by the Assembly, was established in November 1998 to promote and advise on the threats and opportunities to businesses of the new single currency. The taskforce is not concerned with the advantages or disadvantages of the single currency nor whether or not the UK should join.

### **Promoting the Image of Wales (International Investors)**

**Q17 Ieuan Wyn Jones:** How does the First Secretary plan to promote the image of Wales to international investors? (OAQ4049)

**The First Secretary:** Wales will continue to be promoted to inward investors as a country with, among other things, a mature and robust industrial infrastructure which is further diversifying, a positive business climate, a first class workforce, excellent transportation links to domestic and international markets and an excellent component supply base.

The Welsh Development Agency will continue to take the lead on the promotion of Wales to inward investors through its extensive marketing programme and through increased representation in overseas markets, especially in North America which is the main source of high tech and e-business inward investment opportunities.

### **Policy Development (Cross-cutting Issues)**

**Q18 Dai Lloyd:** How does the First Secretary plan to ensure that cross-cutting issues play a key role in all areas of policy development? (OAQ4048)

**The First Secretary:** Each Assembly Secretary has been given lead responsibilities for ensuring that particular cross-cutting issues shape our policy approach. Specific work to deliver this includes mapping of our current performance on the themes; establishing external partnership bodies and networks to test and inform our future performance; and the provision of new training and guidance for Assembly staff.

### **Partnerships between Businesses and Schools**

**Q19 Gareth Jones:** How is the First Secretary encouraging businesses to form partnerships with schools? (OAQ4047)

**First Secretary:** Effective partnerships between employers and schools play an important role in preparing young people for the world of work. The Assembly commissions Training and Enterprise Councils to promote a range of education business links that increase young people's understanding of business and enterprise. The range of activities supported by employers is wide and includes provision of work experience, support in the delivery of the curriculum, mentoring of young people and provision of opportunities for young people to learn about business and enterprise. In the current year the Assembly has made £3.5 million available to TECs to promote education business links.

TECs are required to work with local education business partnerships to encourage employer participation. They also foster employer involvement through provision of practical support including advice in conducting health and safety assessments linked to work experience. In 1998-99 over 22,000 employers in Wales provided work experience opportunities and over 1,000 employers provided support to schools in the delivery of science and technology. Details of the range of activities supported are set

out in the annual report on the performance of TECs in 1998-99, which is available on the Assembly's intranet.

### **Implementing the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

**Q20 Alison Halford:** What meetings has the First Secretary or his predecessor held with local authorities, police authorities, or the Home Office to discuss progress in implementing the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 in the last month? (OAQ4040)

**The First Secretary:** I have had no meetings with local authorities, police authorities or the Home Office to discuss progress in implementing the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, nor did my predecessor conduct any such meetings during February. He did however meet the four Chief Constables in Wales last December, and that dialogue will be maintained. In addition, Peter Law, to whom I have given responsibility for crime reduction within the Assembly, will now be fulfilling engagements which will give him the opportunity to meet many of the key players in the field of community safety.

### **Welsh European Centre (Assembly Funding)**

**Q21 Jocelyn Davies:** Would the First Secretary make a statement of the Assembly's funding of the Welsh European Centre? (OAQ4062)

**First Secretary:** The fee for the Assembly's membership of the Wales European Centre for the next financial year—2000-01—will be £189,000. From April this year, the Assembly will also rent office space from the WEC for its representation in Brussels at an annual rental of £25,000.

### **Assisted Area Map (European Approval)**

**Q22 Elin Jones:** Will the First Secretary report on any discussions he has about progress towards getting European approval of an assisted area map? (OAQ4060)

**The First Secretary:** The UK Government submitted its proposals for new assisted areas to the European Commission last July. Since then, the UK Government has been in discussion with the Commission, and the Assembly has been involved at every stage. I met Commission officials and spoke to Stephen Byers at the Department of Trade and Industry last week to discuss the current position. I shall be meeting Mr Byers again towards the end of the month. The UK Government will announce the new map as soon as possible.

### **Assembly Policies (Impact of European Legislation)**

**Q24 Peter Rogers:** Will the First Secretary make a statement on the impact of European legislation on Assembly policies? (OAQ4077)

**The First Secretary:** Section 106 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 makes clear that the Assembly, in the exercise of its functions, must act in compliance with European Community law, and so changes in European legislation will frequently have implications for the Assembly's policies. Assembly Secretaries are undertaking reviews of the policy areas for which they have responsibility to assess how European Community developments and legislation impact upon them. Each of them has been asked to submit a report to me on the policy areas within their portfolios.