

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

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

### **Questions to the First Minister**

#### **The Role and Duties of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister**

**Q9 Phil Williams:** Will the First Minister explain the distinction between the role and duties of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister? (OAQ7722)

**The First Minister:** There is no scope for confusion. I clearly set out the role of the Deputy First Minister in Plenary on 17 October, and have nothing to add to that.

#### **Assembly Cabinet**

**Q10 Pauline Jarman:** How will the First Minister ensure that the exercise of all functions of the Assembly Cabinet can be held to account following the recent reshuffle? (OAQ7726)

**The First Minister:** All members of the Cabinet are accountable within the terms of the Government of Wales Act and Standing Orders for the exercise all of their functions.

#### **Coalition with Liberal Democrats**

**Q11 Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Will the First Minister make a statement on any discussion he had with the Secretary of State for Wales on the coalition with the Liberal Democrats? (OAQ7728)

**The First Minister:** No.

#### **Wales's International Profile**

**Q12 John Griffiths:** Will the First Minister make a brief statement on the main benefits for Wales's international profile to date, arising from devolution? (OAQ7711)

**The First Minister:** The establishment of the National Assembly and the devolution of Government to the people of Wales has generated considerable interest on the international stage, and has already given rise to a range of opportunities to raise the profile of Wales internationally. These include invitations to Wales to be represented at international conferences, visits to Wales by influential and high profile personalities from overseas, and invitations for reciprocal visits from Wales. The ability to establish our own office in Brussels has provided a significant opportunity for Wales to be seen and heard at the heart of Europe and there have been approaches from a number of regions and countries overseas to establish bilateral relationships with Wales, which would build on those we already have. Working with our partner organisations in Wales, these opportunities, and a range of other initiatives already being pursued, provide the Assembly with a sound platform from which to work in meeting one of its key priorities, to raise the international profile and influence of Wales and to establish it as a first class place to live, study, visit and do business.

#### **Teitl y Gweinidog dros Ddiwylliant, y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon**

**C13 Owen John Thomas:** A ydyw'r Prif Weinidog wedi ail-ystyried cynnwys yr iaith Gymraeg yn rhan o deitl y Gweinidog dros Ddiwylliant, y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon? (OAQ7730)

**Y Prif Weinidog:** Ydw. Y Gweinidog dros Ddiwylliant, Chwaraeon a'r Gymraeg fydd teitl y Gweinidog o hyn ymlaen.

### **Title of the Minister for Culture, the Arts and Sport**

**Q13 Owen John Thomas:** Has the First Minister reconsidered including the Welsh language as part of the title of the Minister for Culture, the Arts and Sport? (OAQ7730)

**The First Minister:** Yes. The Minister will now be known as the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language.

### **National Assembly's Relationship with the Wales European Centre**

**Q14 William Graham:** Will the First Minister make a statement on the National Assembly's relationship with the Wales European Centre? (OAQ7733)

**The First Minister:** The National Assembly is a subscribing member of the Wales European Centre and we have a positive relationship. We hope shortly to formalise that in a protocol on Assembly/WEC relations, which I recently circulated in draft to party leaders for comment. Our membership of WEC is an important pillar of our Team Wales approach to Europe, and we benefit from WEC serving in accordance with a service level agreement.

### **UK Government Bills (Views of the National Assembly)**

**Q15 David Lloyd:** Has the First Minister discussed with the Secretary of State for Wales how the views of the National Assembly could be better represented in published UK Government Bills? (OAQ7721)

**The First Minister:** Yes.

### **The National Assembly's European Policy**

**Q16 Elin Jones:** Will the First Minister make a brief statement on his involvement with the development of the National Assembly's European policy? (OAQ7716)

**The First Minister:** I refer you to the answer to an identical question I gave to Phil Williams's OAQ7581 on 7 November.

### **Promoting Partnership with Business in North Wales**

**Q17 Dafydd Wigley:** What is the First Minister doing to promote the Partnership with Business in north Wales? (OAQ7724)

**The First Minister:** Both the Deputy First Minister and I frequently visit businesses in north Wales to continue to promote the principles of partnership. These visits coupled with the work of the Business Partnership Council and the Regional Economic Fora ensure that we are accessible and hear the concerns of business. Also, early in the New Year, I will have the pleasure of launching Business North Wales.

### **Operation of Collective Responsibility in the Assembly Executive**

**Q18 David Melding:** Will the First Minister make a statement on the operation of collective responsibility in the Assembly Executive? (OAQ7708) *Withdrawn*

### **Westminster Legislative Programme for the Parliamentary Year 2000-01**

**Q19 Jocelyn Davies:** What discussions has the First Minister had with the Secretary of State for Wales regarding the needs of Wales within the Westminster legislative programme for the parliamentary year 2000-01? (OAQ7727)

**The First Minister:** I have nothing to add to the answer I gave to Dai Lloyd's OAQ7395 in Plenary on 31 October.

### **Assembly Policies on Youth Issues, Community Safety, Substance Misuse and Community Development**

**Q20 Peter Black:** How is the First Minister co-ordinating the Assembly's policies on youth issues, community safety, substance misuse and community development so as to ensure a cross-cutting approach to such issues? (OAQ7710)

**The First Minister:** At Ministerial level Jane Hutt has overarching responsibility for the coherence of Assembly strategy for children and young people, although Edwina Hart and Jane Davidson lead on some specific issues within this broad area. The three Ministers will confer regularly on matters of joint interest.

The Assembly will shortly be consulting on its strategy for all services affecting children and young people, including the co-ordination of youth issues which was the subject of the recently published report 'Extending Entitlement'. The strategy for children and young people, together with community safety, substance misuse and community development, are all subjects dealt with by officials of the Assembly's social policy group, who work closely together, linking with work on education, health and social care to ensure a cross-cutting approach.

### **Cross-cutting Issues in North Wales**

**Q21 Janet Davies:** Will the First Minister make a brief statement on meeting the needs of cross-cutting issues in north Wales? (OAQ7718)

**The First Minister:** I refer Ms Davies to my response given to the question tabled by Rhodri Glyn Thomas in Plenary this afternoon. Cross-cutting issues affect all the regions of Wales. I will make sure that the needs of all the regions of Wales are taken into account when policy decisions are made by the Assembly, and in my capacity as Minister with responsibility for north Wales, I will ensure that the north is at no disadvantage when it comes to cross-cutting issues and sustainable development .

### **The National Assembly for Wales and the Wales European Centre**

**Q22 Christine Gwyther:** Will the First Minister give a progress report on the working relationship between the National Assembly for Wales and the Wales European Centre? (OAQ7705) *Withdrawn*

### **Link between Whitehall and Civil Servants in Wales**

**Q23 Alison Halford:** What actions has the First Minister taken to ensure that the weaknesses in the link between Whitehall and civil servants in Wales, as highlighted in the Phillips report, do not occur in the future? (OAQ7729)

**The First Minister:** The National Assembly brings a new political dimension to the working of Government within the UK. The option of ignoring or dismissing Welsh concerns is no longer available. The Minister for Rural Affairs meets the UK Agriculture Ministers on a regular basis.

The creation of the independent UK Food Standards Agency, with specific arrangements to advise and account to the National Assembly, means that in food safety matters we in Wales are not dependent on a Whitehall link. In addition, the National Assembly is now fully informed on the deliberations of SEAC,

the expert committee advising the UK Government on BSE and new variant CJD matters. As with the other devolved administrations, the National Assembly sends an observer to the SEAC meetings.

Following devolution, the concordats with Whitehall departments formalise their commitment to keeping the National Assembly informed on, and involved with, matters of common concern. The action that is underway by the UK Government to respond to the Phillips report involves the National Assembly and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### **Co-ordination of Policy for North Wales**

**Q24 Janet Ryder:** Will the First Minister give a brief statement on the co-ordination of policy for north Wales? (OAQ7719)

**The First Minister:** I refer Ms Ryder to my response to the question she tabled in Plenary on 31 October (OAQ7387). As the Minister responsible for the co-ordination of Government policy in north Wales I will work to ensure the north is represented in the policies of the Assembly.

### **Appointment of the Deputy First Minister**

**Q25 Glyn Davies:** By what statutory authority was the appointment of the Deputy First Minister made? (OAQ7734)

**The First Minister:** Section 53(2) of the Government of Wales Act, which requires me to appoint a Cabinet. The title of Deputy First Minister is, like the equivalents in the UK Government and Scottish Executive, non-statutory and attracts no extra salary. It merely describes part of Mike German's role.

### **Partnership with Business (Policy Development in the Assembly)**

**Q26 Geraint Davies:** How will the First Minister ensure that Partnership with Business is involved in policy development in the Assembly? (OAQ7731)

**The First Minister:** This issue will be discussed at the next meeting of the Business Partnership Council, due to be held on 1 December.

### **Ymrwymiad i Fuddsoddi yn ein Dyfodol**

**C27 Gareth Jones:** Sut y datblygir polisi i sicrhau bod ymrwymiad i fuddsoddi yn ein dyfodol, fel ag yr amlinellir yn 'Gwellcymru.com', yn cael ei gyflawni? (OAQ7717)

**Y Prif Weinidog:** Fel y dywedais yn fy ymateb i gwestiwn Jocelyn Davies ar y 7 Tachwedd, mae buddsoddi yn ein dyfodol yn rhan ganolog o'r Agenda Gwnaed yng Nghymru, a gafodd ei fabwysiadu gan y Cynulliad mewn Cyfarfod Llawn. Efen allweddol o hyn yw cefnogi ein pobl ifanc, ond mae hefyd yn golygu gwrandio arnynt. Mae'r rhaglen Llais Ifanc ac Asiantaeth Ieuentid Cymru wedi rhoi cyfle i bobl ifanc gyflwyno eu barn a'u dyheadau.

Efen allweddol arall o fuddsoddi yn y dyfodol yw mynd i'r afael â iechyd y bobl. Mae polisiau clir ac ymarferol wrthi'n cael eu datblygu ar hyn o bryd, gyda Strategaeth NHS Cymru i gael ei lansio yn y Flwyddyn Newydd, a strategaethau pellach ar y gweill, gan gynnwys Gofal Sylfaenol. Caiff yr ychwanegiadau sylweddol mewn cyllid a gynigiwyd yn y gyllideb eu targedu at wasanaethau rheng flaen, ond clustnodir peth o'r arian hefyd i fynd i'r afael â'r hyn sydd wrth wraidd afiechyd.

Comisiynwyd ACCAC i gynhyrchu papur ar sut y gellid datblygu bagloriaeth i Gymru, a'i gyfosod yn rhan o'r fframwaith ar gyfer cymwysterau. Dylai'r papur hwn fod yn barod cyn bo hir, a bydd yn darparu deunydd i ni ei ystyried wrth benderfynu ar sut orau i ddatblygu ein hymrwymiad i dreialu bagloriaeth i

Gymru. Rydym hefyd yn buddsoddi yn y dyfodol drwy ddatblygiad economaidd a strategaethau amaethyddol.

### **Commitment to Investing in our Future**

**Q27 Gareth Jones:** How is policy being developed to ensure that commitment to investing in our future, as outlined in 'Betterwales.com' is fulfilled? (OAQ7717)

**The First Minister:** As I said in my response to Jocelyn Davies's question on the 7 November, investment in our future is a central part of the Made in Wales Agenda that was adopted by the Assembly in Plenary. Key to this is supporting our young people, but also listening to them. The Llais Ifanc-Young Voice programme and Wales Youth Agency has given young people the opportunity to put forward their views and aspirations.

Addressing the health of the people is another key element. Clear and practical policies are being developed, with a Wales NHS Strategy to be launched in the New Year and further strategies including Primary Care in the pipeline. Substantial increases in funding proposed in the budget will be targeted on front-line services but also go towards tackling the underlying causes of ill-health.

ACCAC was commissioned to produce a paper on how a Welsh baccalaureate can be developed and aligned with the overall framework for qualifications. The paper should be ready shortly and will provide material for us to consider in deciding how best to take forward our commitment to pilot a Welsh baccalaureate. We are also investing in the future through economic development and agricultural strategies.