

## Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 16 November 2004

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

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

### Questions to the First Minister

#### Regeneration of the Heads of the Valleys

**Q12 Christine Chapman:** What action is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to regenerate the Heads of the Valleys area? (OAQ39308)

**The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan):** An announcement will be made by the Minister for Economic Development and Transport on 22 November concerning the regeneration of the Heads of the Valleys, linked to the £300 million investment in the A465.

#### Post Office Services

**Q13 Peter Law:** What discussions has the First Minister had with the Post Office about its services in Wales? (OAQ39343)

**The First Minister:** I met earlier this year with Allan Leighton, chairman of Royal Mail Group plc, to highlight the position of the Assembly Government on post office issues.

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration is meeting the director of Welsh affairs for Royal Mail on 1 December to discuss postal services in Wales.

#### The Scrapping of Pay Phones in Rural Areas

**Q14 Eleanor Burnham:** Will the First Minister make a statement on the scrapping of pay phones in rural areas? (OAQ39322)

**The First Minister:** I am very concerned at the implications that this will have across Wales. Pay phones provide a valuable service, which contributes to the safety, security and confidence of many people in our more isolated and disadvantaged communities.

British Telecom has been consulting about the proposed removals, and I understand that it is now having detailed discussions with local authorities about each payphone for which a retention case has been made.

#### Farming Connect

**Q15 David Davies:** What evaluation has the First Minister made of the Farming Connect scheme? (OAQ39394)

**The First Minister:** The Welsh Assembly Government conducted a pause and review of the Farming Connect scheme last year, and identified a number of areas where the scheme could improve. The scheme has also been examined as part of the mid-term evaluations of both the Objective 1 programme and the rural development plan for Wales. It has always been the intention that the scheme would evolve to ensure best use of the resources available, and the lessons learned have already been taken into account in revising the scheme.