

## Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 29 January 2003

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

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

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### Questions on Local Government to the Finance Minister

#### Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

**Q10 Helen Mary Jones:** What discussions has the Minister had with the Home Office regarding the future of crime and disorder reduction partnerships in Wales? (OAQ22008) *Transferred for written answer.*

**The Finance Minister (Edwina Hart):** I have regular discussions with the crime reduction director for Wales about the progress of community safety partnerships across Wales. The director monitors and evaluates the work of the partnerships, and offers support, training and development opportunities. His team also administers UK Government funding to the partnerships. This work is covered by a service level agreement between the Welsh Assembly Government and the Home Office. The director is a joint appointment between the Assembly and the Home Office.

*Questions 11 (OAQ22009) and 12 (OAQ22025) were answered in Plenary.*

*Question 13 (OAQ22021) withdrawn.*

#### Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

**Q14 Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** How do crime and disorder reduction partnerships monitor and evaluate their work? (OAQ22013)

**Edwina Hart:** Partnerships have a responsibility to carry out evaluation and monitoring activity, although it is for the individual partnerships to determine the precise mechanisms for doing this in their area. The community safety strategies that are now in place for each unitary authority are outcome-orientated and include measurable targets.

The partnerships are also subject to the Best Value regime and to scrutiny from the Audit Commission. In addition, the Assembly's community safety unit is also engaged in monitoring individual projects and partnerships.

#### Verification Framework

**Q15 William Graham:** Will the Minister make a statement concerning the number of local authorities that have adopted the verification framework? (OAQ21999) [R]

**Edwina Hart:** The Department for Work and Pensions advises that, currently, nine local authorities in Wales are fully compliant with the housing benefit verification framework, and four others are partially compliant.

## Questions to the Minister for Environment

### Rail Fare Increases (Valley Lines)

**Q7 Owen John Thomas:** What discussions has the Minister had with the Secretary of State for Wales regarding the recent rail fare increases on Valley Lines? (OAQ22057)

**The Minister for Environment (Sue Essex):** I have had no discussions with the Secretary of State for Wales regarding the recent rail fare increases on Valley Lines. This is a matter for the train operating company in liaison with the Strategic Rail Authority. The company's new zonal fare structure came into effect on 5 January and greatly reduces the number of fares. Valley Line staff can issue tickets quickly, ensuring fewer queues at stations. There will be price increases on some journeys, but more than 70 per cent of fares have actually been reduced as a result of the new system.

### Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

**Q8 Pauline Jarman:** Can the Minister make a statement on the recent visit to Nantygwyddon made by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry? (OAQ22051)

**Sue Essex:** The purpose of the visit made by the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry was to provide advice to the Chief Medical Officer and the Assembly on how to take forward the health recommendations in the Nantygwyddon investigator's report. The Wales Centre for Health arranged and managed the visit, which included consultations and discussions between ATSDR and the local community, and it will shortly publish the agency's preliminary report on the visit.

### Recycled Waste (Selling Products)

**Q9 Phil Williams:** Can the Minister make a statement on progress in creating markets for products made from recycled waste? (OAQ22055)

**Sue Essex:** The development of new markets and products from recyclates in Wales is being promoted by the Waste and Resources Action Programme and by the Wales Environment Trust. For example, glass can be recycled into water filtration particles and shot-blasting grit, and incorporated into concrete products. Plastics can be used in railway sleepers and wood waste in boarding. The metals market is also well developed.

### Recycling Motor Vehicles

**Q10 Peter Rogers:** Will the Minister make a statement on the new EU directive on the recycling of motor vehicles as it applies to farm machinery? (OAQ22068)

**Sue Essex:** The end-of-life vehicles directive does not apply to farm machinery. However, we would still look to owners of such machinery to ensure that, when it reaches the end of its useful service, it is treated and disposed of in an environmentally responsible manner.

### Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill

**Q11 Ann Jones:** Will the Minister make a statement on how the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill will improve the planning process in Wales? (OAQ21969)

**Sue Essex:** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill will result in an improved development plan process in Wales through a new system based on local development plans. This will improve decision-making and will facilitate a clearer, more transparent system. The Bill will also make policies and plans,

including the Wales spatial plan, more integrated, strategic and inclusive. Changes to the compulsory purchase process will also lead to a fairer and more efficient system.

#### **Remediation of Landfill Sites**

**Q12 Geraint Davies:** Can the Minister make a statement on the remediation of landfill sites? (OAQ22050)

**Sue Essex:** Once a landfill site has ceased to operate, the operator must agree a remediation plan with the Environment Agency to avoid risk to human health and the environment. The remediation plan will include both short-term work and a long-term management programme for the period necessary to ensure the safety of the site.

#### **Coach Service between North and South Wales**

**Q13 Dafydd Wigley:** Can the Minister make a statement on any plans to support improvement of the coach service between north and south Wales? (OAQ22054)

**Sue Essex:** I am providing up to £18,000 in the current financial year to safeguard the Traws Cambria service that runs between north and south Wales. The All-Wales Transport Forum has established a group to investigate the future provision of long-distance bus and coach services, including between north and south Wales. The group will be reporting to me in the spring, and I will discuss its recommendations with the industry, local authorities and other interested organisations before taking decisions.

#### **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill**

**Q14 Karen Sinclair:** How will the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill affect planning in Wales? (OAQ22063)

**Sue Essex:** I refer you to my answer to Ann Jones's OAQ21969 above.

*Question 15 (OAQ21973) withdrawn.*