

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 22 November 2001

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

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

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Questions on Economic Development to the First Minister

The National Economic Development Strategy

Q8 Glyn Davies: When will the First Minister next discuss the national economic development strategy with the mid Wales manufacturing group? (OAQ14143)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): As part of the consultation process on 'A Winning Wales', the mid Wales manufacturing group has been invited to comment on the draft by 28 November. Its views will be considered alongside those of other consultees before publication of the final strategy in December. A separate discussion with the group is not planned before the launch of the strategy.

Enterprise Support (Tier 3)

Q9 Eleanor Burnham: When will the conclusions of the task and finish group on enterprise support (tier 3) be announced and actioned? (OAQ14151)

The First Minister: I have received the group's report. I shall be presenting it, together with an action plan, to a meeting of the Economic Development Committee in the near future.

The Confederation of British Industry Wales

Q10 Phil Williams: When was the last time the First Minister met with the Confederation of British Industry Wales to discuss the national economic development strategy? (OAQ14129)

The First Minister: My officials and I have met CBI Wales on several occasions throughout the development of 'A Winning Wales'. I met CBI Wales yesterday as part of the strategy's project task and finish group and will meet it again tomorrow at the Business Partnership Council meeting.

Enterprise Support (Tier 3)

Q11 Mick Bates: Will the First Minister make a statement on when the conclusions of the task and finish group on enterprise support (tier 3) will be announced and actioned? (OAQ14152)

The First Minister: I refer you to the answer I gave to Eleanor Burnham today (OAQ14151).

Cyflogaeth yn Ardal Canol De Cymru

C12 Owen John Thomas: Faint o swyddi gafodd eu creu a'u colli yn y sector gweithgynhyrchu yn ardal Canol De Cymru yn ystod y flwyddyn hyd at ddiwedd Medi 2001? (OAQ14101) [W]

Prif Weinidog Cymru: Dengys data'r gofrestr Gymreig o gyflogaeth weithgynhyrchu yr enillwyd 1,700 swydd a cholwyd 4,000 swydd yn etholaeth Canol De Cymru yn y flwyddyn hyd at fis Hydref. Cyflogir tua 39,600 o bobl yn y diwydiant gweithgynhyrchu yng Nghanol De Cymru, sy'n cynrychioli ychydig yn llai na 20 y cant o gyfanswm Cymru.

Employment in South Wales Central

Q12 Owen John Thomas: How many jobs were created and lost in the manufacturing sector in the South Wales Central area during the year up to and including September 2001? (OAQ14101) [W]

The First Minister: Data from the Welsh register of manufacturing employment shows that in the constituency of South Wales Central in the year to October 2001 there were 1,700 job gains and 4,000 job losses. The number of people employed in manufacturing in South Wales Central is some 39,600, which represents just under 20 per cent of the Welsh total.

Finance Wales

Q13 Alun Pugh: Will the First Minister make a statement on the launch of Finance Wales? (OAQ14161)

The First Minister: I had great pleasure in announcing on 5 November new Objective 1 funds in a double hit for Wales totalling £45 million. This unprecedented support for Finance Wales's activities provided jointly by the EU and Barclays bank will greatly assist the ongoing economic development of Wales and the regeneration of the Objective 1 areas in particular. This will reinforce the existing £35 million at Finance Wales's disposal.

Already, since it began operating last year, Finance Wales's products and services have assisted over 300 businesses and created or safeguarded nearly 1,900 jobs.

Over the next five years, as a result of this significant extra funding, their targets are set to increase; helping 4,000 small firms with growth potential and creating 10,000 new jobs.

Foreign Businesses

Q14 Brian Gibbons: What is the survival rate of foreign direct investment businesses that have been set up in Wales in the last five years? (OAQ14095)

The First Minister: The Welsh register of manufacturing shows that 23 foreign owned manufacturing plants set up in Wales during the period November 1996 to November 2001. Of these three closed, giving a survival rate of around 87 per cent. These figures only cover foreign direct investment businesses that are concerned with manufacturing.

The Objective 1 Programme in Wales

Q15 Helen Mary Jones: Will the First Minister make a statement on the implementation structures of the Objective 1 programme in Wales? (OAQ14130)

The First Minister: The structures that have been implemented with the range of partners in European structural funds provide an effective and integrated approach to supporting projects under Objective 1. Partnerships offer support and advice to potential applicants and the process is more transparent than any previous programme.

Questions on Finance to the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities

Private Finance Initiatives and Public-Private Partnership Projects

Q10 Alun Cairns: When will local authorities in Wales be able to bid for private finance initiatives and public-private partnership projects? (OAQ14141) *Transferred for written answer.*

The Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities (Edwina Hart): I will be making a statement on the outcome of the consultation exercise I undertook on the development of public-private partnerships and private finance initiatives in Wales in the next few weeks.

Questions 11 to 14 were answered in Plenary.

Adeilad Newydd y Cynulliad

C15 Owen John Thomas: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar y sefyllfa ddiweddaraf mewn perthynas ag adeilad newydd y Cynulliad? (OAQ14112) [W]

Edwina Hart: Yr wyf yn falch iawn o fedru dweud bod nifer sylweddol o gwmnïau dibynadwy wedi datgan diddordeb mewn cwblhau'r prosiect. Nid yw'n bosibl i mi gyhoeddi enwau a nifer yr ymatebwyr oherwydd y gallai hynny weithredu yn erbyn buddiannau masnachol y Cynulliad. Mae hyn yn unol â gweithdrefnau caffael arferol y Cynulliad.

The New Assembly Building

Q15 Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the latest situation with regard to the new Assembly building? (OAQ14112) [W]

Edwina Hart: I am pleased to say that a significant number of highly reputable firms have expressed an interest in completing the project. I cannot release the number and names of the respondents since that could act against the commercial interests of the Assembly. This is in accordance with the Assembly's standard procurement procedures.