

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 8 January 2002

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

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

Questions to the First Minister

Profile of Wales in Europe

Q12 Jonathan Morgan: Will the First Minister make a statement on how he is raising the profile of Wales in Europe? (OAQ14852)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): Raising the profile of Wales is a key priority for the Cabinet. The Assembly's office in Brussels and our membership of the Wales European Centre provide us with an opportunity to raise Wales's profile in Europe. Assembly Ministers regularly attend meetings in Brussels and we are participating in numerous regional organisations and conferences. We will continue to explore new opportunities and exploit existing ones to promote Wales.

Role of Subject Committees in Formulating Assembly Policies

Q13 Geraint Davies: Will the First Minister make a statement on the role of Subject Committees in formulating Assembly policies? (OAQ14844)

The First Minister: The Subject Committees do an important job of looking at issues in detail and reporting back to the Assembly. That is to be welcomed and we have made good use of their recommendations in developing and implementing policy.

Assembly Accommodation in North Wales

Q14 Alun Pugh: Will the First Minister make a statement on Assembly accommodation in north Wales? (OAQ14860)

The First Minister: As I answered a similar question on 27 November 2001, you will be aware that the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities made a written statement to Assembly Members on 19 October 2001, announcing the Cabinet's intention to carry out a long-term review of the location of Assembly offices. This review has the objective of increasing the proportion of Assembly staff located outside Cardiff. It is too early to give specific numbers in specific regions, but the scope for increasing the Assembly's presence in north Wales will be a factor in the review. As a result of this review, my officials have a series of meetings planned with the local authorities throughout Wales to seek their views and comments.

In the meantime, we are in the process of locating new Assembly staff jobs outside Cardiff by establishing the new Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales, which will have regional offices across Wales by next year. In north Wales, this means that we expect to increase our presence in our existing buildings in Colwyn Bay and Caernarfon and take new leased accommodation in Mold. In total, some 75 CSIW staff will be located at these north Wales offices by April 2002.

Promotion of Wales and the Achievements of the National Assembly for Wales

Q15 Peter Black: What discussions has the First Minister had with the Secretary of State for Wales on the promotion of Wales and the achievements of the National Assembly for Wales? (OAQ14857)

The First Minister: I have regular discussions with the Secretary of State for Wales on a wide range of issues. I have discussed these issues in general terms, but not at a specific meeting. The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to work with the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales to exploit the opportunities to promote Wales and to continue to deliver for the people of Wales.