

## Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 30 May 2002

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

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

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### Questions to the Minister for Economic Development

#### Dadneilltuo Cronfeydd Strwythurol Ewropeaidd

**C4 Cynog Dafis:** Pa gamau sy'n cael eu cymryd i sicrhau na fydd unrhyw arian cronfeydd strwythurol Ewropeaidd yn cael ei ddadneilltuo dros y tair blynedd nesaf? (OAQ18122) [W] *Trosglwyddwyd ar gyfer ateb ysgrifenedig.*

**Y Gweinidog dros Ddatblygu Economaidd (Andrew Davies):** Bydd Swyddfa Cyllid Ewropeaidd Cymru yn sicrhau y cyrhaeddir yr holl dargedau y cytunwyd arnynt gyda'r Comisiwn Ewropeaidd ar gyfer cronfeydd strwythurol Ewrop drwy:

- weithio mewn partneriaeth i annog ceisiadau o safon;
- monitro'n agos geisiadau oddi wrth noddwyr, a monitro hefyd a yw eu gwariant yn unol â'r proffil;
- gweithio gyda noddwyr i sicrhau bod ceisiadau'n cael eu cyflwyno a bod eu gwariant yn unol â'r proffil.

#### Decommissioning of European Structural Funds

**Q4 Cynog Dafis:** What action is being taken to ensure that no money from European structural funds will be decommissioned in the next three years? (OAQ18122) [W] *Transferred for written answer.*

**The Minister for Economic Development (Andrew Davies):** The Welsh European Funding Office will ensure that all targets, agreed with the European Commission, are met for European structural funds by:

- working in partnership to encourage quality applications to come forward;
- closely monitoring claims from sponsors and their spend to profile;
- working with sponsors to ensure that claims are submitted and that they spend to profile.

#### Media Technium Project

**Q5 Christine Gwyther:** Will the Minister please give an update on the Media Technium project in Carmarthenshire? (OAQ18045) *Transferred for written answer.*

**Andrew Davies:** The Media Technium project at Gelli Aur is an important part of the rollout of the Technium concept across Wales and will offer incubator units for start-up and established businesses in the media industry. In line with the Technium principles, it will facilitate the creation of a high quality environment to assist with creating and supporting knowledge-based businesses.

The developer, Hartham Park Ltd, has reached agreement with Carmarthenshire College for the purchase of the building, and is about to appoint contractors to undertake the first phase of the refurbishment

works. The company is working closely with the Welsh Development Agency and the Welsh European Funding Office to ensure the first phase of the project is completed at the end of the summer.

*Questions 6 to 10 answered in Plenary.*

### **Match Funding for EU Structural Funds**

**Q11 Janet Ryder:** What steps is the Minister taking to obtain full match funding for EU structural funds allocated to Wales in the next comprehensive spending review? (OAQ18076)

**Andrew Davies:** Both the First Minister and the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities have had discussions with the Secretary of State for Wales about the need for the continued provision of additional resources, over and above the Barnett formula arrangements, to cover the estimated EU grant receipts over the period of the next spending review.

### **Economic Benefits of Tourism**

**Q12 Kirsty Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on the benefits to the Welsh economy of the tourist industry? (OAQ18085)

**Andrew Davies:** Tourism plays a central role in the Welsh economy. This is reflected in 'A Winning Wales', which sets clear objectives to increase tourism spend and to promote and further develop tourism in Wales.

The Wales Tourist Board estimates that an annual income of over £2.7 billion is generated by tourism related activities, including day visits, and that the industry directly or indirectly employs up to 100,000 people in Wales.

Methods for estimating the overall economic impact of tourism are being considered as part of the ongoing quinquennial review of the Wales Tourist Board. The outcome of that review and recent changes made to the UK Tourism Survey methodology will contribute to a more complete picture of tourism's overall contribution to the Welsh economy.

### **Economic Development Strategy Progress**

**Q13 Jonathan Morgan:** Will the Minister make a statement on what progress has been made on the economic development strategy for Wales? (OAQ18048)

**Andrew Davies:** Since the launch of 'A Winning Wales' in January 2002, we have made very positive progress on a number of fronts, including the introduction of a new Assembly investment grant, more support for innovation and the commercialisation of technology, revamping our business support services, and rolling out the Technium concept across Wales. We have also announced plans to improve our transport and communication infrastructure, to streamline planning arrangements and to develop the higher education sector. I will report on progress to the Economic Development Committee this autumn, and will publish an annual report next year.

*Questions 14 (OAQ18078) and 15 (OAQ18046) withdrawn.*

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

### **Extra Funding for Local Government and Communities**

**Q13 Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Does the Minister have any plans to provide extra funding to the local government and communities portfolio? (OAQ18054)

**The Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities (Edwina Hart):** This is a matter for discussion in the budget planning round. Decisions will be taken in the light of the views of Committees, our partners and other Assembly priorities.

#### **Estimates of the 2001-02 Underspend**

**Q14 Phil Williams:** What are the Minister's latest estimates of the 2001-02 underspend? (OAQ18062)

**Edwina Hart:** About £77 million: around £41 million on the Assembly's departmental expenditure limit and around £36 million of annually managed expenditure.

#### **Agriculture Budget**

**Q15 Glyn Davies:** What plans does the Minister have to increase the budget available for agriculture in Wales? (OAQ18089)

**Edwina Hart:** This is a matter for discussion in the budget planning round. Decisions will be taken in light of the views of Committee members, our partners and other Assembly priorities.