

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 15 October 2002

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

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

Questions to the First Minister

Business Failures in Wales

Q12 Elin Jones: Will the First Minister make a statement on the increasing rate of business failures in Wales? (OAQ19365)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): Recently-published surveys of business failures in Wales contradict each other. One shows increasing numbers of business failures but the other, from Dun & Bradstreet, shows that Wales has bucked the UK trend with two successive quarterly falls. The quarter 3 data from Dun & Bradstreet show failures at their lowest q3 level since 1998.

Electricity Pylons

Q13 Alison Halford: What discussions has the First Minister had with the UK Government over the potential for electricity pylons situated near homes to increase the risk of humans developing cancer? (OAQ19370)

The First Minister: I have had no such discussions. The National Radiological Protection Board advises the UK Government and the National Assembly for Wales on possible health implications of exposures to electromagnetic fields. The NRPB is currently updating its advice to Government on guidelines limiting public exposure to electric and magnetic fields.

Wales European Centre

Q14 Ieuan Wyn Jones: What discussions has the First Minister had with colleagues regarding the future of the Wales European Centre? (OAQ19368)

The First Minister: I have had a number of discussions with colleagues over the last few months about future Welsh representation in Brussels, as has Mike German. The Deputy First Minister and the Deputy Presiding Officer have discussed arrangements for representation in Brussels of non-governmental National Assembly interests.

Broadband Provision

Q15 Huw Lewis: Will the First Minister make a statement about how he is co-ordinating the development of broadband provision in Wales? (OAQ19332)

The First Minister: The Broadband Wales action plan launched by Andrew Davies, the Minister for Economic Development, in July announced the creation of a Broadband Wales Unit to be established within the Welsh Assembly Government. That unit has responsibility for implementing both the Broadband Wales action plan and for co-ordinating broadband provision across Wales generally. The unit cannot, of course, control private sector investments but can seek to encourage them.