

Answers issued to Members on 2 March 2009

[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 Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in the last 12 months to reduce the carbon footprint in relation to Welsh Assembly Government activity in Economic Development & Transport? (WAQ53477)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport (Ieuan Wyn Jones): Amongst the initiatives taken by my department are:

1. Working with the Minister for the Environment, Sustainability and Housing on the One Wales commitment of reducing CO2 emissions by 3% per year by 2011.
2. Launching the Wales Transport Strategy which has climate change and policies to achieve this at its heart.
3. Conducting a consultation on the Green Jobs Strategy.

A new support mechanism will soon be launched to maximise efficiency gains across all businesses and we are selecting and progressing sites as 'pathfinders' for the 'towards zero carbon' development approach.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in reducing the carbon footprint of office staff employed in Economic Development & Transport? (WAQ53478)

The Deputy First Minister: The Department for Environment, Sustainability and Housing leads on the development of the Assembly Government's Climate Change Strategy and works closely with all Departments to identify opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of Assembly Government activity.

As set out in One Wales, the Assembly Government is committed to annual 3% reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in areas of devolved competence and to developing sector targets for transport, residential and the public sector.

The first stage of our Climate Change Strategy will set out the broad approach to achieving these commitments and the statutory targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008. The second stage of the consultation, which is currently being developed, will focus on the specific actions we intend to take across the Assembly Government to deliver our objectives in relation to climate change. The work underway is requiring all Departments, including the Department for the Economy and Transport, to look closely at respective policies, programmes and operations and to identify opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The carbon footprint of the Welsh Assembly Government's core estate is being reduced through an Environmental Management System certificated to Green Dragon Level 5 being rolled out during 2009. Sixteen buildings have met this standard so far. Some examples of our achievements include 100% of our publications being produced on recycled paper and reduction in emissions through greater use of videoconferencing.

Lynne Neagle (Torfaen): Will the Minister outline what support is available for the automotive industry in Torfaen? (WAQ53511)

The Deputy First Minister: Flexible Support for Business (FS4B), the Welsh Assembly Government's new integrated support service for existing and prospective businesses of every size, offers access to

information, advice and financial support via the Single Investment Fund. A 'Weathering the Storm' pack will soon be available both in hardcopy and online, outlining the support available through FS4B. Welsh based businesses can apply for this practical support by calling the FS4B number 03000 6 03000 or by visiting the website www.business-support-wales.co.uk.

In addition, the ProAct scheme is an All Wales initiative which provides assistance for businesses experiencing difficulties. The automotive sector has been the main focus for the pilot stage and businesses within the automotive sector in Torfaen have been contacted to ensure that they are aware of the scheme.

Human Resource Development Advisor support and discretionary grants are also available under the Workforce Development Programme.

We also deliver leadership and management development support through the provision of a workshop programme aligned to the national occupational standards for leadership and management.

Lynne Neagle (Torfaen): Will the Minister provide a breakdown of support already provided for the automotive industry in Torfaen? (WAQ53512)

The Deputy First Minister: We are currently working with a Torfaen based company through the ProAct scheme and are currently awaiting their training plans. Until the plans have been submitted we are unable to give an indication of the funding level requested.

Three Torfaen based automotive companies are all on the Workforce Development Programme. Total level of support through the Workforce Development programme over the last 12 months is £36,000.

One of these companies has also accessed the leadership and management workshop programme.

Questions to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in the last 12 months to reduce the carbon footprint in relation to Welsh Assembly Government activity in Education? (WAQ53481)

The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Hutt): My Department leads the work in Education Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC). The ESDGC action plan aims to raise awareness and stimulate action in all education sectors. As part of delivering the ESDGC work in the higher education sector the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales issued a circular requiring all Higher Education Institutions to join an Environmental Management System (EMS) and get accreditation within 3 years. All colleges have now submitted their action plans and work has been undertaken to reduce carbon footprints.

In Further Education, as part of their strategic planning, colleges were requested to submit a report on ESDGC. These were analysed and good practice fed back to the sector. The colleges were encouraged to look to improve their institutional management. As a result several colleges have included commitments to joining EMS such as Green Dragon.

New documents for schools, youth work, Work Based Learning and Adult Community Learning also encourage all to reduce carbon emissions by looking at institutional management and promoting environmental management. A commitment in the ESDGC action plan is that all new build has to achieve BREEAM excellent standard. Among other things this looks to reduce carbon emissions and includes sustainability initiatives as part of their scope.

We work closely with DESH and their climate change team to ensure that DCELLS developments dovetails and supports other initiatives such as Eco Schools.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in reducing the carbon footprint of office staff employed in Education? (WAQ53482)

Jane Hutt: The carbon footprint of the Welsh Assembly Government's core estate is being reduced through an Environmental Management System certificated to Green Dragon Level 5 being rolled out during 2009. 16 buildings have met this standard so far. Example achievements include 100% of our publications are produced on recycled paper and reduction in emissions through greater use of videoconferencing. Members of staff take simple steps such as remembering to turn computer monitors off at the end of the day.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in the last 12 months to reduce the carbon footprint in relation to Welsh Assembly Government activity in Sustainability & Housing? (WAQ53485)

The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing (Jane Davidson): The Department for Environment, Sustainability and Housing leads on the development of the Assembly Government's Climate Change Strategy and works closely with all Departments to identify opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of Assembly Government activity.

Specific examples of action to reduce the carbon footprint of our activity include:

- I included specific targets for emission reduction in the remit letters of key delivery partners in 2008/09, for example the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) were required to establish an action plan that would ensure reduction in CCW's carbon emissions by more than 12% by 2012
- Making much greater use of phone and video conferencing facilities and making more sustainable travel choices where travel to meeting is unavoidable
- Introducing microgeneration as an alternative to oil heating systems through the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme
- Within the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) development programme the funding of 22 schemes, up to 400 dwellings, to be built to level 4 and 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in reducing the carbon footprint of office staff employed in Sustainability and Housing? (WAQ53486)

Jane Davidson: The carbon footprint of the Welsh Assembly Government's core estate is being reduced through an Environmental Management System certificated to Green Dragon Level 5 being rolled out during 2009. 16 buildings have met this standard so far. Example achievements include 100% of our publications are produced on recycled paper and reduction in emissions through greater use of videoconferencing.

Staff in the Department for Environment, Sustainability and Housing have been proactive in identifying opportunities to reduce their carbon footprint.

The Department makes extensive use of phone and video conferencing facilities for meetings.

As far as possible, air travel is avoided and if it is necessary to drive staff look for opportunities to car-share. Staff use public transport to attend meetings, including to get to the Climate Change Conference in Poznan, Poland and recent meetings in Brussels and Edinburgh.

Many staff are based in the Assembly Government's Merthyr office or in recently refurbished parts of Cathays Park, both of which benefit from energy saving features such as motion activated lighting so electricity waste is minimised.

Members of staff also take simple steps such as remembering to turn computer monitors off at the end of the day.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in reducing the carbon footprint of office staff employed in Health & Social Services? (WAQ53476)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart): The carbon footprint of the Welsh Assembly Government's core estate is being reduced through EMS (Environmental Management System) certificated to Green Dragon Level 5.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in the last 12 months to reduce the carbon footprint in relation to Welsh Assembly Government activity in Health & Social Services? (WAQ53492)

Edwina Hart: The key action taken by my Departments (DHSS and DPH&HP) has been working jointly with the health sector and health professionals to embed sustainable development principles into policy and practice: this includes carbon reduction as part of the approach to tackling climate change.

One specific example of carbon reduction activity is that the 57 largest NHS sites in Wales using zero carbon rated green tariffs to supply their grid electricity, which represents a saving of 73,705 tonnes of CO2 emissions annually over the equivalent figure for conventional tariffs.

My officials will be presenting evidence to the Sustainability Committee on 19 March on the actions taken by my Departments towards mainstreaming sustainability into my portfolio; this includes meeting the challenge of carbon reduction.

Questions to the Minister for Heritage

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in the last 12 months to reduce the carbon footprint in relation to Welsh Assembly Government activity in Heritage? (WAQ53487)

The Minister for Heritage (Alun Ffred Jones): The Department for Heritage plays a key part in supporting and sustaining Wales' heritage and its rich and diverse culture.

Specific examples of action to reduce carbon footprint include:

- Cadw monitoring energy consumption and carbon emissions at each of its monuments, including trialling low energy floodlighting;

- Cadw carrying out a conservation programme employing locally sourced labour and materials and continuing to give grants for the repair and restoration of historic buildings which contain embodied energy;
- AC-NMW presenting environmental issues to the public via its 'House of the Future' at St Fagans, as well as 'Climate Change—What's Occurring?' at the National Museum Cardiff;
- NLW working to provide an increasing amount of material available online;
- Visit Wales developing a Sustainable Tourism Action Plan which contains measures to promote the need for, and assist the industry to reduce its footprint and develop more sustainable practices;
- Producing Best Practice Guidance Leaflets for tourism businesses which highlight key tips in achieving the highest quality whilst improving environmental performance; and
- Producing a 'Greening your Business' toolkit which showcases some of the best examples of sustainable tourism businesses in Wales and highlights the key stages to implementing sustainable business practices within a tourism business.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in reducing the carbon footprint of office staff employed in Heritage? (WAQ53488)

Alun Ffred Jones: The carbon footprint of the Welsh Assembly Government's core estate is being reduced through an Environmental Management System certificated to Green Dragon Level 5 being rolled out during 2009. 16 buildings have met this standard so far. Example achievements include 100% of our publications produced on recycled paper and reduction in emissions through greater use of video conferencing.

Within the Department for Heritage a number of measures are implemented to reduce the carbon footprint of its staff:

- Maximising the use of video-conferencing//telephone conferencing for internal/external meetings;
- Arranging meetings at venues/time that enable participants to use public transport;
- Encouraging car-sharing where travelling between offices for meetings or training is unavoidable;
- Staff use double sided printing & copying wherever possible;
- Recycling toner cartridges with the ActionAid charity and fluorescent tubes and furniture are recycled by WAG contractors;
- ICT kit is recycled to meet the WEEE Directive and documents/paper are collected in Datashred bins, shredded and recycled;
- Installed energy efficient gas boilers where possible;
- Installed timers for external lighting;
- Fitted timers to the water boilers so they are only on during working hours in some offices; and
- Electrical office equipment is switched off at night.

Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in the last 12 months to reduce the carbon footprint in relation to Welsh Assembly Government activity in Rural Affairs? (WAQ53483)

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Elin Jones): The Department for Rural Affairs plays a key part in tackling Wales' and global environmental challenges, in caring for our environment and in placing the family farm at the heart of our strategy for sustainable food production and rural development.

Specific examples of action to reduce carbon footprint include:

- Development of a Local Sourcing Action Plan (to be launched in the Spring) to develop and promote local food production. Local sourcing supports local farmers and reduces food miles;
- Reviewing our agri-environment schemes to ensure that they deliver environmental benefits effectively. The Review includes examination of the role that biomass and renewable energy crops can play;
- Revising the Woodlands for Wales Strategy to ensure Welsh woodlands are being actively and sustainably managed;
- Introducing the Wales Fisheries Strategy to considers obligations and objectives of government and industry for the sustainable development of fisheries and the move toward an ecosystem approach for fisheries management;
- Encouraging livestock producers in Wales to consider the environmental impact of livestock production—research is being funded to consider these issues for the future; and
- Establishing a Wales Land Use Climate Change Group to consider how agriculture and land use can adapt to climate change.

Nick Bourne (Mid & West Wales): What action has been taken in reducing the carbon footprint of office staff employed in Rural Affairs? (WAQ53484)

Elin Jones: The carbon footprint of the Welsh Assembly Government's core estate is being reduced through an Environmental Management System certificated to Green Dragon Level 5 being rolled out during 2009. 16 buildings have met this standard so far. Example achievements include 100% of our publications produced on recycled paper and reduction in emissions through greater use of video conferencing.

Within the Department for Rural Affairs a number of measures are implemented to reduce the carbon footprint of its staff:

- Maximising the use of video-conferencing//telephone conferencing for internal/external meetings;
- Arranging meetings at venues/time that enable participants to use public transport;
- Encouraging car-sharing where travelling between offices for meetings or training is unavoidable;
- Bicycles are available to staff in some offices to enable them to make short journeys without a car;
- Staff use double sided printing & copying wherever possible;
- Encouraging staff to only print out hard copies where necessary or `share` documents;
- Purchasing only recycled paper;
- Installing energy efficient gas boilers where possible;
- Installing timers for external lighting;
- Fitting timers to the water boilers so they are only on during working hours in some offices;
- Ensuring electrical office equipment is switched off at night; and
- Arranging awareness training for staff.

Darren Millar (Clwyd West): How many doses of the BTV8 Vaccine have expired without being used and what is the total cost of the unused expired vaccine? (WAQ53503)

Elin Jones: The Welsh Assembly Government has underwritten the cost of the 7.5 million doses of vaccine available for use in Wales. Costs will be incurred for any vaccine not sold by the manufacturers on the expiry of its shelf-life. The expiry dates vary depending upon the dates of production of the batches delivered. There is no vaccine held by the manufacturer which has expired and no costs have been incurred. The shelf life of BTV 8 vaccine expires during the spring and summer. Intervet is working with Veterinary Medicines Directorate to assess vaccine data to ascertain if shelf lives for the earliest batches can be safely extended.

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in the last 12 months to reduce the carbon footprint in relation to Welsh Assembly Government activity in Social Justice and Local Government? (WAQ53479)

The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government (Brian Gibbons): The Department for Social Justice and Local Government looks for opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of Assembly Government activity.

Greater use is made of Information and Communication Technology such as video and teleconferencing to reduce its carbon footprint and we are continually looking at ways of using this medium to optimum effect.

The department is participating fully in the Assembly Government One Wales commitment to reduce emissions by 3% annually. For example, Local Government Finance includes emissions reduction criteria in the standard terms and conditions for grant funding.

We ensure that strategy documents and consultation exercises are available online rather than in hard copy only. The Department issued a consultation on the All Wales Community Cohesion Strategy in January 2009. The consultation was distributed electronically and made available on the website in both PDF and Word formats. A new online response form is also being piloted during this consultation. The new Social Enterprise Action Plan has been published electronically on the website and the hard copy has been printed on 75% recycled paper.

As part of the bid for funding for the two Gypsy Traveller capital grants, local authorities had to demonstrate the sustainability of the sites in terms of the use of eco-friendly materials and the impact of the sites and work involved to improve them, on the surrounding environment.

The Communities 2.0 digital inclusion project has been established over the last 12 months, and will operate from 1 April 2009. The project encourages members of community groups, voluntary sector organisations and social enterprises to use ICT and other technologies. Electronic communication, including Skype and video conferencing, should reduce the need for travel, so reducing emissions. It would also reduce the need for paper based activity. However, the increased use of technologies could increase greenhouse gasses. This would be offset by promoting applications of ICT that improve energy efficiency and reduced carbon emissions. Where new equipment is funded, the most energy efficient that is able to undertake the role will be purchased. The project will also support the reusing, recycling and recovering of equipment, where appropriate, in accordance with the EU's Waste Disposal of Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive. Groups and enterprises will also be advised to switch off computers and peripherals.

Communities First Partnerships play a part in tackling climate change. Many have already been involved in Community Change events staged across Wales by WAGs Climate Change Division—providing opportunities to network, exchange ideas and obtain DVD highlighting successful community based climate change projects in Wales.

The National Performance Measurement Framework administered by Local Government Policy includes indicators that require information from local authorities on their energy usage.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What action has been taken in reducing the carbon footprint of office staff employed in Social Justice and Local Government? (WAQ53480)

Brian Gibbons: The carbon footprint of the Welsh Assembly Government's core estate is being reduced through an Environmental Management System certificated to Green Dragon Level 5 being rolled out during 2009. 16 buildings have met this standard so far. Example achievements include 100% of our publications are produced on recycled paper and reduction in emissions through greater use of videoconferencing.

Many staff in the Department for Social Justice and Local Government are based in the Assembly Government's Merthyr office which was awarded a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) score of 'Excellent' for sustainable development. Staff in Local Government Finance and Local Government Policy who are currently based in Cathays Park will shortly be moving to refurbished parts of the office and will benefit from motion activated lighting so electricity waste is minimised.

Staff have been proactive in identifying opportunities to reduce their carbon footprint. Opportunities to reduce travel time and energy consumption (including for internal Departmental meetings) are exploited through the increased use of video-conferencing and conferencing phone facilities.

Greater selectivity is exercised over the need to attend meetings (i.e. gauging the extent to which attendance adds value or is primarily representational).

Greater forward planning and grouping of meetings is applied to ensure optimal travel and energy resource implications (for instance the October 2008 Consultative Forum on Finance was held in Llandudno during the Welsh Local Government Association Conference).

As far as possible, air travel is avoided and if it is necessary to drive staff look for opportunities to car-share.

To save energy members of staff are advised to turn off computer monitors, printers and photocopiers each evening and on weekends. Should staff need to print documents then double sided printing is recommended. Staff are also encouraged to use the stairs rather than the lift.

Staff are encouraged to recycle as much waste as possible. Recycling facilities available include recycling bins for paper, plastic and aluminium. Staff based in the Merthyr office recycle food waste in the recently installed wormery, and the compost from this will be used in the office grounds.