

Answers issued to Members on 19 November 2008

[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

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): How much money (a) is required over the next ten years to complete the Barry Regeneration Programme and (b), has the Welsh Assembly Government committed to provide? (WAQ52732)

The Deputy Minister for Regeneration (Leighton Andrews): As clarified at Enterprise and Learning Committee on 5th November, the Assembly Government and the Vale of Glamorgan Council together have committed to provide £1.9 million over the next two years, split into three projects:

Thompson Street Footbridge	£600k
Innovation Quarter Infrastructure Works	£300k
Pumphouse Envelope Works	£1m
Total	£1.9m

The Assembly Government is committed to working with the Vale of Glamorgan Council to masterplan the Greater Barry area. Until this work is completed, the costs and potential funding sources are difficult to estimate.

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

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister make a statement on any plans to upgrade school buildings in Wales? (WAQ52741)

The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Hutt): ‘One Wales’ commits the Assembly Government to continue a major capital investment programme to upgrade schools buildings, exceeding the sums provided previous years.

The Assembly Government is committed to working in partnership with the Local Authorities to not only ensuring that schools are now fit for purpose but create 21st Century learning environments that engage and inspire young learners, teachers and the wider community.

A clear definition of 21st century schools will enable Local Authorities a standard to work towards which will allow for effective strategic planning by local Authorities and improved asset management planning.

The investment programme under the banner of 21st Century schools will encompass reformation of capital funding processes which will assist Local Authorities to develop capital investment programmes that not only address the well recognised and long standing problem in relation to the condition and suitability of schools in Wales but assist Local Authorities in their plans for school re-organisation.

It is equally important that Authorities also develop robust plans for capital investment in schools which take account of the sharp decline in pupil numbers, and the need to focus investment in schools which are viable, have a secure future and can deliver high quality education as well as providing facilities for community use.

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): How much funding is available to upgrade school buildings over the next three years? (WAQ52742)

Jane Hutt: ‘One Wales’ commits us to providing more funding during the lifetime of this Assembly than previous administrations.

The total amount of investment supported by the Welsh Assembly Government in the period 2008-09 to 2011-12 is £706million (including the capital value of PFI schemes).

In addition each Authority can decide, in the light of local priorities, to fund projects from within their existing resources. This could be via their own general capital funding, access to prudential borrowing and/or capital receipts.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Chris Franks (South Wales Central): Will the Minister give assurances that (a) procedures are in place and are being followed to avoid a repeat of the Baby P scandal in Wales? (WAQ52755)

Chris Franks (South Wales Central): Will the Minister confirm whether all the recommendations of the Climbie inquiry have been implemented in all Welsh local authorities? (WAQ52756)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart): The Deputy Minister for Social Services made a detailed statement on 18 November outlining action in hand.

Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

Brynle Williams (North Wales): What steps has the Welsh Assembly Government taken to fulfil its 'One Wales' commitment to develop a support programme to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy production on-farm? (WAQ52748)

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Elin Jones): Farmers are able to access mentoring support on Alternative Energy under the Whole Farm Plan element of the Farming Connect Programme. Sector specific advice is also available through the four Farming Connect sector specific development programmes, Red Meat, Organic, Land Management and Dairy. Farming Connect will also shortly be tendering for a new climate change development programme which aims to help land-managers to address climate change by demonstrating best practice and disseminating information to the farming industry.

Brynle Williams (North Wales): What steps has the Welsh Assembly Government taken to fulfil its One Wales commitment to explore the introduction of a grant scheme to convert to energy crops? (WAQ52749)

Elin Jones: The current consultation on land management actions under Axis 2 of the Wales Rural Development Plan 'Sustaining the Land', includes a section examining the pros and cons of developing an establishment grant for energy crops in Wales. Comments are invited from interested parties as part of the consultation process. A decision on whether or not to proceed with such a grant will be included in my response to the consultation early next year.

Brynle Williams (North Wales): What steps has the Welsh Assembly Government taken to fulfil its 'One Wales' commitment to set in motion a major initiative on local food production? (WAQ52750)

Elin Jones: The first draft of a Local Sourcing Strategic Action Plan will be produced before the end of the year. Meanwhile, a number of activities are being taken forward at regional level to increase the

amount of local sourcing and arrangements are being taken forward to provide support for the development of direct selling outlets, including Farmers' Markets.