

Plenary

Meeting date:
Wednesday, 4 December 2013

Meeting time:
13:30

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Votes and Proceedings

(168)

1 Questions to the Minister for Education and Skills

The item started at 13.30

The first 11 questions were asked. Question 2 and 6 were grouped together for answer. Questions 4, 7 and 10 were answered by the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technonlogy.

2 Questions to the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport

The item started at 14.16

All 15 questions were asked.

3 Statement by the First Minister: Operation Jasmine

The item started at 14.56

4 Debate by Individual Members under Standing Order 11.21(iv)

The item started at 15.10

NDM5358

Joyce Watson (Mid and West Wales)

Mark Isherwood (North Wales)

Suzy Davies (South Wales West)

Jenny Rathbone (Cardiff Central)

Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes with grave concern:

- a) the targeting of vulnerable children for sexual exploitation by criminals;
- b) that children missing from care are at particular risk of sexual exploitation;
- c) evidence that local authorities in Wales are not yet fully implementing Welsh Government guidelines to protect children who go missing from care;
- d) that the practice of out of area placements can put looked after children at greater risk of abuse and exploitation.

2. Commends the work of the Gwent Missing Children Project and notes the need for comparable, consistent and reliable data on cases of looked after children who go missing from children's homes and foster care.

The motion was agreed in accordance with Standing Order 12.36.

5 Welsh Conservatives Debate

The item started at 15.54

Voting on the motion and amendments under this item was deferred until Voting Time.

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

NDM5380 William Graham (South Wales East)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Recognises:

- a) the importance of the BBC, in Welsh life as part of a pluralistic media;
- b) the need for charter renewal which reflects the current and developing devolution settlement; and
- c) the innovative contribution that the BBC and other public service broadcasters make to Welsh culture, the Welsh

For	Abstain	Against	Total
41	0	15	56

The motion without amendment was agreed.

6 Plaid Cymru Debate

The item started at 16.49

Voting on the motion and amendments under this item was deferred until Voting Time.

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

NDM5379 Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes:

- a) that the estimated funding gap between the demand for finance from Welsh businesses and the current supply from the banking sector is £500 million;
- b) that non-domestic rates account for a significant proportion of operating costs for micro and small businesses;
- c) that a 1% increase in the rate of public sector procurement contracts that go to Welsh businesses creates 2,000 new jobs; and
- d) that Wales' natural resources offer significant potential for economic benefit.

2. Regrets:

- a) that Welsh GVA per capita is the lowest of all UK nations at 75.2% of the UK;
- b) that macro-economic levers remain in the hands of MPs in the UK Parliament but recognises that the Welsh Government has a significant role to play in growing the Welsh economy;
- c) the absence of up-to-date economic indicators for Wales;
- d) the failure of Welsh Government to tackle unemployment and underemployment; and
- e) the failure of public sector bodies to implement Welsh Government policy on procurement.

3. Calls on the Welsh Government:

- a) to publish a comprehensive and long-term plan for growing the Welsh economy;

b) to impress upon the Office for National Statistics the need to provide regular and frequent economic indicators for Wales;

c) to adopt the Party of Wales' policy to extend small business rate relief to all businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or less; and

d) to explore the benefits of establishing a publicly-owned, arm's length, not-for-distributable-profit business development bank.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
10	0	46	56

The motion without amendment was not agreed.

The following amendments were tabled:

Amendment 1 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Insert as new sub-point 1 a) and renumber accordingly:

the growth in the UK's Gross Domestic Product in 2013;

A vote was taken on Amendment 1:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
46	0	10	56

Amendment 1 was agreed.

Amendment 2 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Insert as new sub-point 1 a) and renumber accordingly:

that 29.8% of people in Wales are employed in the public sector, above the 23.5% average for the UK;

A vote was taken on Amendment 2:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
28	0	29	57

As required by Standing Order 6.20 the Deputy Presiding Officer exercised his casting vote by voting against the amendment. Therefore, the amendment was not agreed.

Amendment 3 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Insert as new sub-point at the end of point 1:

that the UK economy experienced 0.8% growth in the third quarter of 2013, highlighting the success of the UK Government's economic policy.

A vote was taken on Amendment 3:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
18	0	37	55

Amendment 3 was not agreed.

Amendment 4 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Insert as new sub-point 2a) and renumber accordingly:

that around 200,000 SMEs in Wales are struggling to get funding, according to the Stage 1 report of the 'Access to Finance Review' by Professor Dylan Jones-Evans.

The 'Access to Finance Review' can be accessed at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/businessandconomy/publications/accesstofinance/?lang=en>

A vote was taken on Amendment 4:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
56	0	0	56

Amendment 4 was agreed.

Amendment 5 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Delete sub-point 2b) replace with:

the failure of the Welsh Government to use the significant economic levers at its disposal to stimulate growth in the Welsh economy;A vote was taken on Amendment 5:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
13	0	43	56

Amendment 5 was not agreed.

Amendment 6 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Delete sub-point 2e).

A vote was taken on Amendment 6:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
46	0	10	56

Amendment 6 was agreed.

Amendment 7 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Delete sub-point 3c) and replace with:

to adopt the Welsh Conservative policy to extend small business rate relief to all businesses with a rateable value of up to £12,000, and provide tapered relief for those up to £15,000;

A vote was taken on Amendment 7:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
13	0	43	56

Amendment 7 was not agreed.

Amendment 8 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Delete sub-point 3c) and replace with:

to extend business rate relief to all businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or less and more community facilities such as post offices, pubs and independent shops; and

A vote was taken on Amendment 8:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
18	0	38	56

Amendment 8 was not agreed.

Amendment 9 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Insert as new sub-point 3d) and renumber accordingly:

to enable local authorities to retain a proportion of the business rates they collect, in order to incentivise local economic growth;A vote was taken on Amendment 9:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
28	0	29	57

As required by Standing Order 6.20 the Deputy Presiding Officer exercised his casting vote by voting against the amendment. Therefore, the amendment was not agreed.

Amendment 10 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Delete sub-point 3d) and replace with:

to respond as soon as possible to the Access to Finance Review Stage 2 report and examine the case for the development of regional business banks as outlined in ‘Invest Wales’.

The ‘Access to Finance Review Stage 2’ report can be accessed at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/det/publications/131121accesstofund2en.pdf>

‘Invest Wales’ can be accessed at:

http://www.welshconservatives.com/sites/www.welshconservatives.com/files/invest_wales.pdf

A vote was taken on Amendment 10:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
41	0	15	56

Amendment 10 was agreed.

Amendment 11 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 3:

to explore the possibility of splitting the Welsh multiplier into small and large businesses which would ensure fairness in the business rates system and bring Wales in line with England and Scotland.

A vote was taken on Amendment 11:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
56	0	0	56

Amendment 11 was agreed.

Amendment 12 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 3:

to ensure that government policy simplifies our public sector procurement processes and regulations.

A vote was taken on Amendment 12:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
56	0	0	56

Amendment 12 was agreed.

Amendment 13 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 3:

to support smaller businesses and social enterprises and enable them to grow by unbundling public sector contracts into more manageable parts, making it easier for these businesses to bid and compete.

A vote was taken on Amendment 13:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
56	0	0	56

Amendment 13 was agreed.

Amendment 14 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 3:

to work to increase awareness amongst businesses of existing opportunities for finance, and listen to the business community on ways to improve support.

A vote was taken on Amendment 14:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
56	0	0	56

Amendment 14 was agreed.

A vote was taken on the motion as amended:

NDM5379 Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes:

- a) the growth in the UK's Gross Domestic Product in 2013;
- b) that the estimated funding gap between the demand for finance from Welsh businesses and the current supply from the banking sector is £500 million;

- c) that non-domestic rates account for a significant proportion of operating costs for micro and small businesses;
- d) that a 1% increase in the rate of public sector procurement contracts that go to Welsh businesses creates 2,000 new jobs; and
- e) that Wales' natural resources offer significant potential for economic benefit.

2. Regrets:

- a) that around 200,000 SMEs in Wales are struggling to get funding, according to the Stage 1 report of the 'Access to Finance Review' by Professor Dylan Jones-Evans;
 - b) that Welsh GVA per capita is the lowest of all UK nations at 75.2% of the UK;
 - c) that macro-economic levers remain in the hands of MPs in the UK Parliament but recognises that the Welsh Government has a significant role to play in growing the Welsh economy;
 - d) the absence of up-to-date economic indicators for Wales;
 - e) the failure of Welsh Government to tackle unemployment and underemployment;
- and

3. Calls on the Welsh Government:

- a) to publish a comprehensive and long-term plan for growing the Welsh economy;
- b) to impress upon the Office for National Statistics the need to provide regular and frequent economic indicators for Wales;
- c) to adopt the Party of Wales' policy to extend small business rate relief to all businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or less; and
- d) to respond as soon as possible to the Access to Finance Review Stage 2 report and examine the case for the development of regional business banks as outlined in 'Invest Wales';
- e) to explore the possibility of splitting the Welsh multiplier into small and large businesses which would ensure fairness in the business rates system and bring Wales in line with England and Scotland;
- f) to ensure that government policy simplifies our public sector procurement processes and regulations;
- g) to support smaller businesses and social enterprises and enable them to grow by unbundling public sector contracts into more manageable parts, making it easier for these businesses to bid and compete;

h) to work to increase awareness amongst businesses of existing opportunities for finance, and listen to the business community on ways to improve support.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
10	0	46	56

The motion as amended was not agreed.

Voting Time

The item started at 17.47

7 Short Debate

The item started at 17.55

NDM5378 Simon Thomas (Mid and West Wales): The national “selfie”: why a national Welsh dictionary helps define the nation

The meeting concluded at 18:17

The Assembly will sit again in Plenary at 13:30, Tuesday, 10 December 2013