

Plenary

Meeting date:
Wednesday, 11 December 2013

Meeting time:
13:30

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Agenda

(170)v3

1 Questions to the Minister for Natural Resources and Food (45 mins)

[View Questions](#)

2 Questions to the Minister for Housing and Regeneration (45 mins)

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Presiding Officer Statement

The Presiding Officer announced that Kirsty Williams had won the Members' ballot to submit a proposal for legislation. In accordance with Standing Order 26.91, Kirsty Williams may now seek the Assembly's agreement to introduce a Member proposed Minimum Nurse Staffing Levels Bill.

Urgent Question

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Following the suspension of a consultant from the University Hospital of Wales, will the Health Minister make a statement on avoidable deaths in the NHS?

3 Welsh Conservatives Debate (60 mins)

NDM5385 William Graham (South Wales East)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Regrets the Welsh Government's failure to hold a debate on the arts during this Assembly.

2. Notes:

- a) the intrinsic importance of the arts and culture to the identity of Wales and the personal well-being of its citizens;
- b) the Arts Council Wales report “An independent report for the Welsh Government into Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales” on the role of the arts in developing literacy and numeracy; and
- c) that VisitBritain research identifies that more overseas visitors go to the theatre, musicals, the opera or ballet, than to a live sporting event, when visiting in Britain.

3. Calls on Welsh Government to explain how funding for the arts will be protected within the education and local government budgets.

The Arts Council Wales report is available at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130920-arts-in-education-en.pdf>

The following amendments have been tabled:

Amendment 1 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

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

the importance of the Arts in promoting the use of the Welsh language;

Amendment 2 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

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

that the Arts Council of Wales report recommends that the Welsh Government should explore funding options aimed at ensuring that equitable provision is available to young people in all art forms, and that exceptionally talented young people are able to pursue and develop their talent;

Amendment 3 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Calls on the Welsh Government to work with museums, galleries and other collections of art and heritage in Wales to ensure that items which are not on display can be loaned to other facilities in Wales.

Amendment 4 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Calls on the Welsh Government to give strategic direction to the Arts Council to invest in smaller festivals and up-and-coming artists, musicians and writers and ensure that arts and cultural events move towards sustainable business plans.

4 Plaid Cymru Debate (60 mins)

NDM5386 Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes the recent rises in energy prices and regrets the impact that this will have on all households in Wales, especially the fuel poor and those who cannot access preferential dual fuel energy deals.
2. Regrets that food bank use has almost tripled over the past year, with the majority of those turning to food banks being working age families, some because of low paid employment.
3. Notes that the recent Community Housing Cymru report on the impact of the bedroom tax found that arrears as a result of the bedroom tax are predicted to be over £2 million by next April.
4. Notes that there are still over 41,000 more people unemployed now than before the economic crisis began.
5. Calls on the Welsh Government to review and revise its anti-poverty strategy in light of the growing crisis faced by people as a result of austerity, changes to benefits and rises in the cost of living.

The Community Housing Cymru report is available at:

<http://chcymru.org.uk/en/news/latest-news/chc-news/bedroom-tax-will-mean-1000-fewer-homes-in-wales>

The following amendments have been tabled:

Amendment 1 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Insert as new point at start of motion and renumber accordingly:

Welcomes that the UK economy grew by 0.8% in the third quarter of 2013 and the forecast for UK GDP growth in 2013 has been revised up from 0.6% to 1.4%.

Amendment 2 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Insert at the end of point 1:

‘, and the need to address the impact of this with a clear understanding of the consequences for prices, investment, consumer and industry behaviour’

Amendment 3 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Insert as new point 2 and renumber accordingly:

Welcomes the UK Government’s announcement of reforms to save households an average of £50 per year on their energy bills and to freeze fuel duty for the rest of this Parliament.

Amendment 4 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Delete point 2 and replace with:

Notes that newly opened food banks across Wales are helping to meet the need of the hidden hungry and acknowledges the important work of food banks and their contribution to the lives of people in crisis.

Amendment 5 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Insert as new point 3 and renumber accordingly:

Welcomes the Liberal Democrat policy to raise the income tax threshold to £10,000, implemented by the UK Government, which means that from April 2014 over 1.1 million people in Wales will have received a tax cut of over £700 and that 106,000 Welsh low-income workers will be taken out of paying income tax altogether.

Amendment 6 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Delete point 3 and replace with:

Calls on the Welsh Government to take urgent action to deliver a whole market solution to the post devolution housing supply crisis.

Amendment 7 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Insert as new point 4 and renumber accordingly:

Regrets the failure of housing associations and the Welsh Government to prepare for changes in the benefit system, despite two years' notice, and the failure of previous Labour and Conservative governments to build sufficient homes, resulting in a loss of 1.5 million homes.

Amendment 8 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Delete point 4 and replace with:

Welcomes the fall in the number of people not in employment in Wales since 2010, but recognises that Wales still has a long way to go compared to the rest of the UK.

[If amendment 8 is agreed, amendment 9 will be de-selected]

Amendment 9 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Insert at the end of point 4:

‘and regrets that Wales continues to lag behind the rest of the UK with an unemployment rate of 7.8% compared to a UK average of 7.1%’.

Amendment 10 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Delete point 5 and replace with:

Calls on the Welsh Government to review and revise its anti-poverty strategy on the basis of co-production in order to tackle the deep rooted causes of poverty in Wales, the widening poverty gap and stalled social mobility since devolution.

[If amendment 10 is agreed, amendment 11 will be de-selected]

Amendment 11 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

In point 5, delete ‘in light of the growing crisis faced by people as a result of austerity, changes to benefits and rises in the cost of living’ and replace with ‘to tackle deep-rooted and growing poverty in Welsh communities’.

5 Welsh Liberal Democrats Debate (60 mins)

NDM5387 Aled Roberts (North Wales)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Recognises the important role of the Wales Audit Office in:
 - a) providing high quality, independent and comprehensive scrutiny of government activities and expenditure;
 - b) supporting effective and accountable public services;
 - c) sharing good practice and identifying improvements to public service delivery; and
 - d) helping to ensure the best value for money for the people of Wales.
2. Notes the findings of successive reports published by the Wales Audit Office, which highlight significant failings in the governance arrangements and delivery of key public services, including AWEMA; the Caldicot and Wentlooge Levels Internal Drainage Board; the River Lodge Hotel, Unscheduled Care; Higher Education Finances and NHS Finances.

3. Notes the on-going investigation into the Regeneration Investment Fund For Wales, the decision by the Minister to disband this body and to return European funding to WEFO, and the subsequent impact on a number of regeneration projects seeking funding from RIFW.

4. Calls on the Welsh Government to:

a) conduct a thorough review of all external funding to restore public and investor confidence in the ability of the Welsh Government to monitor and regulate Welsh Government funding;

b) publish the monitoring regime in place in respect of its grant management policy and report annually to the National Assembly on its outcomes; and

c) develop a robust and transparent procedure to more effectively address the substantial and specific failings in Welsh Government policy highlighted by Wales Audit Office reports.

The following amendments have been tabled:

Amendment 1 – William Graham (South Wales East)

In sub-point 1c) after ‘delivery’ insert ‘including via the work of its Good Practice Exchange’.

Amendment 2 – William Graham (South Wales East)

In point 2, delete all after ‘key public services’.

Amendment 3 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Delete sub-point 4a) and replace with:

review the funding it provides to Welsh public bodies and other organisations to ensure that the public can be confident that it is being effectively managed, monitored and evaluated;

Amendment 4 – William Graham (South Wales East)

In sub-point 4c) delete 'in Welsh Government policy'.

Amendment 5 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Add new point at the end of the motion:

Welcomes the joint working between the Wales Audit Office and other inspectorates and notes that this has the ability to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their work.

Deputy Presiding Officer Statement

The Deputy Presiding Officer made a statement regarding a written statement made by the Counsel General this afternoon about The Recovery of Medical Costs for Asbestos Diseases (Wales) Bill.

The Deputy Presiding Officer stated that the Presiding Officer and he had asked the Counsel General to come to the Assembly this afternoon to answer Members' questions, but unfortunately he was not available. The Business Minister has given an assurance that the Counsel General will make an oral statement at the first opportunity in the New Year.

Voting Time

The item started at 17.52

Votes Summary

6 Short Debate (30 mins)

NDM5384 Julie Morgan (Cardiff North): E-cigarettes: How much regulation do we need?

Presiding Officer Statement

The Presiding Officer announced that Kirsty Williams had won the Members' ballot to submit a proposal for legislation. In accordance with Standing Order 26.91, Kirsty Williams may now seek the Assembly's agreement to introduce a Member proposed Minimum Nurse Staffing Levels Bill.

The Assembly will sit again in Plenary at 13:30, Tuesday, 14 January 2014