

Plenary

Meeting date:
Wednesday, 26 March 2014

Meeting time:
13.30

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru
National
Assembly for
Wales



Votes and Proceedings

(190)

1 Questions to the Minister for Finance

The item started at 13.30

All 15 questions were asked. Questions 2, 5, 8 and 12 were grouped together for answer.

2 Questions to the Minister for Local Government and Government Business

The item started at 14.16

All 15 questions were asked. Question 3 and 5 were grouped together for answer.

Urgent Question

The item started at 15.00

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on today's ambulance figures which show just 52.8% of emergency responses to Category A (immediately life-threatening) calls arrived at the scene within 8 minutes in Wales last month?

3 Questions to the Assembly Commission

No questions tabled.

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

The item started at 15.17

NNDM5464

Mick Antoniw (Pontypridd)

Dafydd Elis-Thomas (Dwyfor Meirionnydd)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

Commits to playing its full part in European affairs; and in particular:

- a) recognises the value both to Wales and to the EU of positive Welsh engagement in Europe;
- b) utilises the skills, experience and innovation of the Government and people of Wales to promote social justice, economic prosperity and democratic governance across Europe.

The motion was agreed in accordance with Standing Order 12.36.

5 Welsh Conservatives Debate

The item started at 16.16

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

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

NDM5477 Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes that the UK Government has made support available to local authorities in England to freeze council tax for a fourth successive year.

2. Further notes that the Scottish Government has made support available to local authorities in Scotland to freeze council tax for 2014/15; and that such a freeze has been in place since 2008/09.

3. Believes local authorities have a moral imperative to spend public money with care and prudence; ensuring council tax rates are as low as possible for residents.

4. Regrets the refusal of the Welsh Government to implement a similar scheme to that of England, which creates a council tax rise referendum threshold of 2%.

5. Further regrets the average council tax increase of 4.2% for local authorities in Wales for 2014/15, and that council tax bills have increased by over 150% in Wales since 1997/98, and believes that such crippling rises have placed undue pressure on hard-pressed households.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
11	0	39	50

The motion without amendment was not agreed.

The following amendments were tabled:

Amendment 1 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

Insert as new point 3 and renumber accordingly:

Notes the difficult financial situation facing local government and the likelihood of sustained pressures on local authority budgets.

A vote was taken on Amendment 1:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
50	0	0	50

Amendment 1 was agreed.

Amendment 2 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

Insert as new point 3 and renumber accordingly:

Acknowledges the role of council tax in providing a revenue stream to sustain local services and jobs and believes council tax levels are a matter for individual local authorities as part of their budget process.

A vote was taken on Amendment 2:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
40	10	0	50

Amendment 2 was agreed.

Amendment 3 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Delete point 3 and replace with:

Believes that while local authorities are responsible for setting their own council tax levels, for which they are accountable to their electorate, in doing so they should take account of the economic circumstances of council tax payers in their area.

A vote was taken on Amendment 3:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
38	11	0	49

Amendment 3 was agreed.

Amendment 4 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

Delete point 4 and replace with:

Welcomes the action taken to protect the poorest households in Wales from UK Government cuts to council tax support.

A vote was taken on Amendment 4:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
35	0	15	50

Amendment 4 was agreed.

As amendment 4 was agreed, amendment 5 was de-selected.

Amendment 6 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

Delete point 5.

A vote was taken on Amendment 6:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
35	0	15	50

Amendment 6 was agreed.

Amendment 7 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Welcomes the proposal within the Housing (Wales) Bill to increase council tax on empty homes, which was a key recommendation of the Welsh Liberal Democrat debate on empty homes in February 2013.

A vote was taken on Amendment 7:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
39	0	11	50

Amendment 7 was agreed.

A vote was taken on the motion as amended:

NDM5477 Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes that the UK Government has made support available to local authorities in England to freeze council tax for a fourth successive year.
2. Further notes that the Scottish Government has made support available to local authorities in Scotland to freeze council tax for 2014/15; and that such a freeze has been in place since 2008/09.
3. Acknowledges the role of council tax in providing a revenue stream to sustain local services and jobs and believes council tax levels are a matter for individual local authorities as part of their budget process
4. Notes the difficult financial situation facing local government and the likelihood of sustained pressures on local authority budgets.
5. Believes that while local authorities are responsible for setting their own council tax levels, for which they are accountable to their electorate, in doing so they should take account of the economic circumstances of council tax payers in their area.
6. Welcomes the action taken to protect the poorest households in Wales from UK Government cuts to council tax support.

7. Welcomes the proposal within the Housing (Wales) Bill to increase council tax on empty homes, which was a key recommendation of the Welsh Liberal Democrat debate on empty homes in February 2013.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
39	0	11	50

The motion as amended was agreed.

6 Plaid Cymru Debate

The item started at 17.13

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

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

NDM5478 Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes the lower life expectancy rates in deprived communities;
2. Recognises the role of legislation, taxation and public policy in promoting good health and tackling the link between poverty and ill-health; and
3. Calls on the Welsh Government to take action to break the link between poverty and ill-health.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
35	0	15	50

The motion without amendment was agreed.

Voting Time

The item started at 18.08

7 Short Debate

The item started at 18.12

NDM5476 Julie James (Swansea West)

Women into Science – the case for maximising science potential in Wales

The meeting concluded at 18.35

The Assembly will sit again in Plenary at 13.30, Tuesday, 1 April 2014