

Plenary

Meeting date:
Wednesday, 26 March 2014

Meeting time:
13.30

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Agenda

(190)v2

1 Questions to the Minister for Finance (45 mins)

[View Questions](#)

2 Questions to the Minister for Local Government and Government Business (45 mins)

[View Questions](#)

Urgent Question

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 (0 mins)

No questions tabled.

4 Debate by Individual Members under Standing Order 11.21(iv) (60 mins)
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.

5 Welsh Conservatives Debate (60 mins)
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.

The following amendments have been 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.

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.

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.

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.

[If amendment 4 is agreed, amendment 5 will be de-selected]

Amendment 5 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Delete point 4.

Amendment 6 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

Delete point 5.

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.

The transcript of the Welsh Liberal Democrat debate on empty homes is available at:

http://www.assemblywales.org/docs/rop_xml/130220_plenary_bilingual.xml#63153

6 Plaid Cymru Debate (60 mins)

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.

The following amendments have been tabled:

Amendment 1 – Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Regrets that the real term budget cuts for the Welsh NHS pose a risk to improved public health outcomes, particularly for those in deprived communities.

Amendment 2 – Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Calls upon the Welsh Government to improve the way in which it designs and evaluates public health initiatives to deliver better and more efficient services for deprived communities.

Amendment 3 – Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Given the link between poverty and ill-health, welcomes the action being taken by the UK Government to tackle poverty, including increasing the national minimum wage and tax breaks for those on low incomes.

Amendment 4 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Calls on the Welsh Government to outline the timetable for the introduction of the proposed public health bill, and to explain how this legislation would address the current levels of poverty and ill-health in Wales.

Voting Time

7 Short Debate (30 mins)

NDM5476 Julie James (Swansea West)

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

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

Oral Assembly Questions tabled on 19 March 2014 for answer on 26 March 2014

R – Signifies the Member has declared an interest.

W – Signifies that the question was tabled in Welsh.

(Self identifying Question no. shown in brackets)

To ask the Minister for Finance

1. **Aled Roberts (North Wales):** Does the Minister have any additional plans for the allocation of one-off funding to the Health and Social Services portfolio? OAQ(4)0394(FIN)W

2. **Simon Thomas (Mid and West Wales):** What assessment has the Minister made of the effect on Welsh expenditure of the UK Government's 2014 Budget Statement? OAQ(4)0389(FIN)W

3. **David Rees (Aberavon):** What is the current position with regard to the approval of the 2014 – 2020 European structural funds programmes for South Wales West? OAQ(4)0393(FIN)

4. **Bethan Jenkins (South Wales West):** Will the Minister make a statement on the funding of new capital projects? OAQ(4)0381(FIN)

5. **Llyr Gruffydd (North Wales):** Will the Minister make a statement on the implications for Wales of the UK Government's 2014 Budget Statement? OAQ(4)0392(FIN)W

6. **William Powell (Mid and West Wales):** Will the Minister make a statement on the availability of Invest to Save allocations to the Health and Social Services budget? OAQ(4)0388(FIN)

7. Julie James (Swansea West): Will the Minister make a statement on the overall strategy for utilising structural funds in south west Wales? OAQ(4)0383(FIN)

8. Gwyn Price (Islwyn): Will the Minister make a statement on levels of funding for Wales announced in the UK Government's 2014 Budget Statement? OAQ(4)0387(FIN)

9. Leighton Andrews (Rhondda): Will the Minister make a statement on capital budgets to 2016–17? OAQ(4)0380(FIN)

10. Ann Jones (Vale of Clwyd): How is the Minister seeking to increase the involvement of the private sector in new structural funds and related programmes? OAQ(4)0386(FIN)

11. William Graham (South Wales East): Does the Minister have any plans to allocate additional one-off funding to the Economy, Science and Transport portfolio? OAQ(4)0385(FIN)

12. Janet Finch-Saunders (Aberconwy): Will the Minister make a statement on the extra £36 million announced for the Welsh Government in the UK Government's 2014 Budget Statement? OAQ(4)390(FIN)

13. Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister provide an update on the Welsh Government's public procurement activity in South Wales Central? OAQ(4)0384(FIN)

14. Mick Antoniw (Pontypridd): Will the Minister provide a progress update on preparations for the new structural funds programmes for Wales? OAQ(4)0382(FIN)

15. Mohammad Asghar (South Wales East): What discussions has the Minister had with the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport regarding the budget allocation to that portfolio? OAQ(4)0379(FIN)

To ask the Minister for Local Government and Government Business

1. Nick Ramsay (Monmouth): Will the Minister outline her plans to provide a greater understanding of the workings of local government?
OAQ(4)0404(LG)

2. Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): Will the Minister make a statement on her priorities for local government in west Wales?
OAQ(4)0392(LG)

3. Sandy Mewies (Delyn): Will the Minister make a statement on the Welsh Government's work to raise awareness of modern slavery?
OAQ(4)0396(LG)

4. Mohammad Asghar (South Wales East): Will the Minister make a statement on council tax increases in Wales for 2014/15?
OAQ(4)0393(LG)

5. Darren Millar (Clwyd West): Will the Minister provide an update on the action she is taking to tackle modern day slavery in Wales?
OAQ(4)0394(LG)

6. Rhodri Glyn Thomas (Carmarthen East and Dinefwr): What discussions has the Minister had with the UK Government regarding local authority chief executives undertaking Returning Officer duties during elections? OAQ(4)0406(LG)

7. Simon Thomas (Mid and West Wales): What voluntary requests for local authority mergers has the Minister received following the report of the Williams Commission? OAQ(4)0403(LG)W

8. Ann Jones (Vale of Clwyd): Will the Minister provide an update on the local government settlement? OAQ(4)0402(LG)

9. Lindsay Whittle (South Wales East): What progress is being made to strengthen collaboration between local authorities in Wales?
OAQ(4)0399(LG)

10. Darren Millar (Clwyd West): Will the Minister make a statement on council tax levels in north Wales? OAQ(4)0395(LG)

11. Gwyn Price (Islwyn): How is the Welsh Government supporting members of the armed forces? OAQ(4)0401(LG)

12. Christine Chapman (Cynon Valley): Will the Minister make a statement on what measures the Welsh Government is taking to improve the diversity of local government? OAQ(4)0400(LG)

13. Llyr Gruffydd (North Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on the future of local government funding in Wales? OAQ(4)0407(LG)W

14. Lynne Neagle (Torfaen): What discussions has the Minister had regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the Williams Commission? OAQ(4)0408(LG)

15. Elin Jones (Ceredigion): What assessment has the Minister made of the impact UK Government policies will have on local government services in Wales? OAQ(4)0398(LG)

To ask the Assembly Commission

No questions tabled.