

Plenary

Meeting date:
Wednesday, 7 May 2014

Meeting time:
13.30

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Agenda

(196)v2

1 Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services (45 mins)

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2 Questions to the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty (45 mins)

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3 Welsh Conservatives Debate (60 mins)

NDM5497 Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes that the number of small businesses with a rateable value of up to £12,000 in Wales now stands at 73% of all businesses;
2. Recognises that the Welsh Government will have full responsibility for business rates once the Wales Bill has been given Royal Assent;
3. Acknowledges that a balance between third sector and independent retailers is

essential to sustain our high streets;

4. Calls on the Welsh Government to:

a) Consider the benefits of splitting the Welsh multiplier into small and large businesses to bring Wales into line with Scotland and England;

b) Reinvigorate hardship relief, a vital lifeline for small businesses.

The Wales Bill is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wales-bill>

The following amendments have been tabled:

Amendment 1 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

In point 4a) delete all after ‘large businesses’.

Amendment 2 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 4:

Extend the small business rate relief scheme to cover all businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or less.

Amendment 3 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 4:

Explore ways to make business rates more responsive to changing market conditions, to ensure that rateable values are more reflective of current valuations.

4 Plaid Cymru Debate (60 mins)

NDM5498 Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

Calls for the abolition of the bedroom tax.

The following amendments have been tabled:

Amendment 1 – Aled Roberts (North Wales)

Delete all and replace with:

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Recognises the problem of under-occupancy in social housing.
2. Recognises the work of Liberal Democrats in the UK Government in securing Discretionary Housing Payments for local authorities to help mitigate the impact of reforms in individual deserving cases.
3. Welcomes the recent announcement that the cap on the amount councils can spend on Discretionary Housing Payments will be lifted to give local authorities more flexibility.
4. Expresses concern at the barriers put in place by local councils to those seeking to apply for Discretionary Housing Payments and their failure to allocate all the resources given to them for this purpose in good time.
5. Welcomes the motion passed at the Liberal Democrat conference in September 2013 calling for an immediate evaluation of the impact of the spare room subsidy, and awaits the outcome of the independent review of the policy commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions which is now underway.
6. Believes that the withdrawal of the spare room subsidy should be mitigated by exempting disabled adults and disabled children who require a carer and only applying it to new public sector tenancies.

[If amendment 1 is agreed, amendment 2 will be de-selected]

Amendment 2 – Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Delete all and replace with

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

Notes:

- a) that there is a shortage of social housing across the UK, and in particular Wales, and that the removal of the spare room subsidy is a response to the consequent increases in waiting lists, overcrowding and hidden homelessness that sit alongside the issue of under occupancy in social housing;
- b) that the removal of the spare room subsidy was first introduced for housing benefit recipients in the private rented sector in April 2008 by the UK Labour Government;
- c) that additional UK Government funding that was made available for Discretionary Housing Payments from 2013/14 allowing local authorities to target those who need it the most;
- d) the recent announcement that the cap on the amount councils can spend on Discretionary Housing Payments will be lifted to give local authorities more flexibility;
- e) the failure of local authorities to allocate all the resources given to them for Discretionary Housing Payments in good time;
- f) the advance guidance issued to local authorities by the DWP, which states that disabled people living in significantly adapted accommodation and those heavily reliant on a local support network should be prioritised for discretionary housing payments.

5 Welsh Liberal Democrats Debate (60 mins)

NDM5499 Aled Roberts (North Wales)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes the publication of the Welsh Liberal Democrat report 'Powering Wales'

Future'.

2. Regrets that politically conservative parties across the UK are increasingly denying the overwhelming evidence which substantiates climate change.

3. Recognises that a sustainable low carbon future can be achieved through an ambitious change in how we generate energy.

4. Acknowledges that a smart and diverse grid network is essential for ensuring that our future energy needs can be met in a reliable and sustainable manner.

5. Calls on the Welsh Government to:

a) review Technical Advice Note 8 to permit updates which reflect technological improvements and the development of new Strategic Search Areas, to encourage new projects and reduce existing concentrations;

b) work with industry to develop regional community benefit schemes, so that communities along transportation and grid corridors can benefit from the economic investments which come with renewables;

c) maximise the economic benefits of renewables by working with developers and educational institutions to expand supply chains and centres of excellence for the next generation of engineers and apprentices;

d) explore the development of Marine Energy Hubs to provide a safe environment to manufacture and test emergent marine technologies to help Wales gain a competitive advantage;

e) focus public support for research into large scale electrical storage technology such as batteries;

f) explore the potential of developing new pumped storage facilities so that more energy can be stored for peak time usage and ensure a stable supply of low carbon electricity; and

g) develop new technical advice for hydraulic fracturing, including test drilling, to ensure that safety and environmental protection can be guaranteed to the highest

standards.

The Welsh Liberal Democrat report 'Powering Wales' Future' can be found here:

<http://welshlibdems.org.uk/en/document/energy-policy-paper-2014.pdf>

Technical Advice Note 8 is available at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/publications/050701technical-advice-note-8-en.pdf>

The following amendments have been tabled:

Amendment 1 – Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Delete point 2 and replace with “Notes that there are people across all aspects of society who will continue to question the rationale behind changes in our global climate”.

[If amendment 1 is agreed, amendment 2 will be de-selected]

Amendment 2 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

In point 2, delete ‘politically conservative parties across the UK are’ and replace with ‘the UK Government is’.

Amendment 3 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

Insert as new point 3 and renumber accordingly:

Regrets the restrictions placed on the competence of the National Assembly for Wales in the field of energy.

Amendment 4 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

Insert as new sub-point 5b) and renumber accordingly:

explore the potential of establishing a publicly-owned, not-for-distributable-profit, arm’s length energy company

Amendment 5 – Lesley Griffiths (Wrexham)

Delete sub-point 5g

Amendment 6 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 5:

fund a nation-wide retrofitting scheme to cut energy consumption and lower energy bills for consumers

Amendment 7 – Elin Jones (Ceredigion)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 5:

publish any research into the feasibility of building a grid connection between the north and south of Wales

Amendment 8 – Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Believes that the Welsh Government must support and invest in a variety of renewable energy forms to achieve key climate change objectives and notes that there are enough onshore wind farm applications in the planning pipeline to fulfil UK renewable energy targets

Amendment 9 – Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Believes the Planning Bill should give local communities more power to accept or reject particular renewable energy schemes to best fit their locality.

Voting Time

6 Short Debate (30 mins)

NDM5496 Mike Hedges (Swansea East): The cost of being poor

How high interest lenders and other providers make poor people pay more.

The Assembly will sit again in Plenary at 13.30, Tuesday, 13 May 2014