

# Plenary

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Meeting date:  
**Wednesday, 7 March 2012**

Meeting time:  
**13:30**

Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



## Votes and Proceedings

(51)

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### **1. Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services**

The item started at 13.30

The first 12 questions were asked.

### **2. Questions to the Counsel General**

The item started at 14.16

All 4 questions were asked.

### **3. Statement by the Minister for Education and Skills: Remploy**

The item started at 14.27

In accordance with Standing Order 12.16(i), the Minister for Education and Skills made an oral Government statement without notice.

### **4. Questions to the Assembly Commission**

The item started at 15.02

Questions 1 – 4, 7, 9 and 10 were asked. Questions 5 and 6 were not asked and question 8 was withdrawn.

### **5. Debate by Individual Members under Standing Order 11.21(iv)**

The item started at 15.18

**NDM4863**

**Llyr Huws Gruffydd (North Wales)**  
**Rebecca Evans (Mid and West Wales)**

## **William Powell (Mid and West Wales)**

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

Urges the Welsh Government to ensure that the National Transport Plan promotes funding and activity focused on enabling a wide variety of low carbon, sustainable modes of travel in rural areas, including National Parks.

### **Supported by:**

Antoinette Sandbach (North Wales)

**The motion was agreed in accordance with Standing Order 12.36.**

## **6. Welsh Conservatives Debate**

The item started at 16.05

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

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

### **NDM4930 William Graham (South Wales East)**

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Welcomes the UK Government's decision to allocate funding to provide English local authorities with the opportunity to freeze Council tax for the second successive year, and notes that approximately 90% of Councils in England will utilise these funds to ensure households benefit from no Council tax rise next year.

2. Notes the Scottish Government's announcement that all local authorities in Scotland will be freezing Council tax for 2012/2013, and notes that the freeze began in 2008/2009.

3. Deeply regrets the Welsh Government's failure to pass on the £38.9 million consequential funding to Welsh councils, denying 22 local authorities the opportunity to freeze council tax.

4. Further regrets that council tax in Wales is estimated to increase by nearly 2.2% on average over the next year.

5. Expresses disappointment that a majority of Welsh households have been denied assistance with daily living costs as a consequence of the Welsh Government's failure to pass on the £38.9 million consequential funding to local authorities.

<b>For</b>	<b>Abstain</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>53</b>

**The motion without amendment was not agreed.**

**The following amendments were tabled:**

### **Amendment 1 – Jane Hutt (Vale of Glamorgan)**

In point 1, delete "welcomes" and replace with "notes".

A vote was taken on Amendment 1:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
27	0	26	53

**Amendment 1 was agreed.**

### **Amendment 2 – Peter Black (South Wales West)**

In point 1, after 'next year' insert 'and welcomes the £38.9 million of additional funding for Wales as a result'.

A vote was taken on Amendment 2:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
44	0	9	53

**Amendment 2 was agreed.**

### **Amendment 3 – Jane Hutt (Vale of Glamorgan)**

Insert as new point 3 and renumber accordingly:

Notes that council tax in Wales is already 19% lower than England and it will continue to be significantly lower this year.

A vote was taken on Amendment 3:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
32	0	21	53

**Amendment 3 was agreed.**

### **Amendment 4 – Jane Hutt (Vale of Glamorgan)**

Delete point 3, 4 and 5 and replace with:

Notes that Welsh Government is providing 1.3% more funding for councils in Wales over the spending review period than the UK Government is providing to councils in England and that this funding could be used by councils to assist with the council tax freezes if they choose to do so.

Notes that it is anticipated that once all authorities have set their budgets for 2012–13, Wales will see the lowest council tax rises ever.

Expresses regret at the UK Government's plans to abolish council tax benefit which impacts negatively on those who are most vulnerable.

A vote was taken on Amendment 4:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
27	0	26	53

**Amendment 4 was agreed.**

**As amendment 4 was agreed, amendments 5 and 6 were deselected.**

**Amendment 7 – Peter Black (South Wales West)**

Add as new point at end of motion:

Believes that councils will benefit from additional revenue through increased economic activity in their areas, and welcomes the £38.9 million economic stimulus package, which aims to provide additional economic activity.

A vote was taken on Amendment 7:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
32	0	21	53

**Amendment 7 was agreed.**

**A vote was taken on the motion as amended:**

**NDM4930 William Graham (South Wales East)**

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes the UK Government's decision to allocate funding to provide English local authorities with the opportunity to freeze Council tax for the second successive year, and notes that approximately 90% of Councils in England will utilise these funds to ensure households benefit from no Council tax rise next year and welcomes the £38.9 million of additional funding for Wales as a result.
2. Notes the Scottish Government's announcement that all local authorities in Scotland will be freezing Council tax for 2012/2013, and notes that the freeze began in 2008/2009.
3. Notes that council tax in Wales is already 19% lower than England and it will continue to be significantly lower this year.
4. Notes that Welsh Government is providing 1.3% more funding for councils in Wales over the spending review period than the UK Government is providing to councils in England and that this funding could be used by councils to assist with the council tax freezes if they choose to do so.
5. Notes that it is anticipated that once all authorities have set their budgets for 2012–13, Wales will see the lowest council tax rises ever.
6. Expresses regret at the UK Government's plans to abolish council tax benefit which impacts negatively on those who are most vulnerable.
7. Believes that councils will benefit from additional revenue through increased economic activity in their areas, and welcomes the £38.9 million economic stimulus package, which aims to provide additional economic activity.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
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27	0	26	53
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**The motion as amended was agreed.**

## **Point Of Order**

Ann Jones raised a point of order under Standing Order 13.9 about the use of appropriate language in the Chamber. The Deputy Presiding Officer ruled that the use of "crony" was not usually considered out of order unless aggravated by the context. He agreed to review the record and that he or the Presiding Officer would rule on the matter, if necessary.

## **7. Plaid Cymru Debate**

The item started at 17:05.

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

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

### **NDM4931 Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)**

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Regrets the Welsh Government's failure to bring forward a comprehensive fiscal stimulus for the economy, which includes capital investment sourced from funding streams outside the block grant; and
2. Calls on the Welsh Government to bring forward a package of capital projects and further measures to support businesses and safeguard jobs.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
9	0	44	53

**The motion without amendment was not agreed.**

**The following amendments were tabled:**

### **Amendment 1 – Jane Hutt (Vale of Glamorgan)**

Delete point 1 and replace with:

Notes the steps taken by the Welsh Government in bringing forward a comprehensive fiscal package to help stimulate the economy, including the provision of capital investment, both from traditional and non-traditional sources; and

A vote was taken on Amendment 1:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
33	0	20	53

**Amendment 1 was agreed.**

### **Amendment 2 – Peter Black (South Wales West)**

In point 2, after 'measures' insert ', such as improved infrastructure and higher skills levels,'.

A vote was taken on Amendment 2:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
53	0	0	53

**Amendment 2 was agreed.**

### **Amendment 3 – William Graham (South Wales East)**

Insert at end of point 2:

‘including the abolition of business rates for companies up to a rateable value of £12,000’.

A vote was taken on Amendment 3:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
12	0	41	53

**Amendment 3 was not agreed.**

### **Amendment 4 – William Graham (South Wales East)**

Add as new point at end of motion:

Calls on the Welsh Government to work closely with the UK Government to improve the Welsh economy.

A vote was taken on Amendment 4:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
53	0	0	53

**Amendment 4 was agreed.**

### **Amendment 5 – Peter Black (South Wales West)**

Add as new point at end of motion:

Believes that a comprehensive economic stimulus could be provided if the Assembly had borrowing powers and greater fiscal responsibility and welcomes the establishment of the Silk Commission which is investigating this possibility.

A vote was taken on Amendment 5:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
41	12	0	53

**Amendment 5 was agreed.**

**A vote was taken on the motion as amended:**

**NDM4931 Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)**

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Notes the steps taken by the Welsh Government in bringing forward a comprehensive fiscal package to help stimulate the economy, including the provision of capital investment, both from traditional and non-traditional sources.
2. Calls on the Welsh Government to bring forward a package of capital projects and further measures, such as improved infrastructure and higher skills levels, to support businesses and safeguard jobs.
3. Calls on the Welsh Government to work closely with the UK Government to improve the Welsh economy.
4. Believes that a comprehensive economic stimulus could be provided if the Assembly had borrowing powers and greater fiscal responsibility and welcomes the establishment of the Silk Commission which is investigating this possibility.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
32	0	21	53

**The motion as amended was agreed.**

### **Voting Time**

Voting Time started at 18.04

### **8. Short Debate**

The item started at 18.09

#### **NDM4929 Aled Roberts (North Wales):**

“Fair Hearing” – Improving Acoustics in the Classroom

This short debate seeks to highlight the difficulties that school children with a hearing loss face when trying to follow their teacher in a classroom with poor acoustics, and to support calls for greater regard to acoustics in the design of new schools and classrooms.

The meeting concluded at 18:27

**The Assembly will sit again in Plenary at 13:30, Tuesday, 13 March 2012**