

Plenary

Meeting date:
Wednesday, 14 March 2012

Meeting time:
13:30

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Agenda (53)v2

1. Questions to the Minister for Education & Skills (45 mins)

[View Questions](#)

2. Questions to the Minister Local Government & Communities (45 mins)

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3. Welsh Conservatives Debate (60 mins)

NDM4937 William Graham (South Wales East)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Believes that SMEs are the lifeblood of the Welsh economy;
2. Notes the role effective business rate relief can play in stimulating local economies and enhancing employment opportunities; and
3. Calls on the Welsh Government to abolish business rates for all businesses with a rateable value of under £12,000 per annum, and provide tapered relief for small businesses with a rateable value up to £15,000, in order to promote wealth creation and boost employment.

The following amendments have been tabled:

[If amendment 1 is agreed, amendments 2 and 3 will be deselected]

Amendment 1 – Jane Hutt (Vale of Glamorgan)

Delete point 3 and replace with:

Notes that matters relating to Business Rates policy in Wales are being considered by the Business Rates Review Task and Finish Group, which will be reporting shortly.

[If amendment 2 is agreed, amendment 3 will be deselected]

Amendment 2 – Peter Black (South Wales West)

Delete point 3 and replace with:

Calls on the Welsh Government to ensure its business rates review addresses:

- a) the scenario whereby improvement of premises which causes an increase in value results in an increase in their business rate;
- b) the huge rises in business rates when values increase;
- c) the role local authorities have in collecting and retaining business rates;
- d) the possibility of extending business rates relief to more community facilities; and
- e) whether Wales would benefit from adopting the same accounting arrangements as Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Amendment 3 – Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)

In point 3 delete all before ‘in order to’ and replace with:

‘Calls on the Welsh Government to provide full rate relief for all businesses with a rateable value of up to £6,000 per annum, and provide tapered relief for small businesses with a rateable value of up to £18,000’.

4. Plaid Cymru Debate (60 mins)

NDM4938 Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

1. Welcomes the progress made in securing enhanced devolved powers resulting from the successful referendum in 2011;
2. Recognises the widespread support for further devolution; and
3. Looks forward to further advances in the devolution of powers, including fiscal responsibility.

The following amendments have been tabled:

Amendment 1 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Insert at the end of point 1:

‘, but regrets the failure of the current Welsh Government to utilise the full potential of the powers issued to the National Assembly as a result of the referendum in 2011 since the election in May 2011’;

Amendment 2 – William Graham (South Wales East)

In point 3, delete all after 'Looks forward to' and replace with 'receiving the recommendations of the Silk Commission, following its extensive review of fiscal matters in Wales.'

Amendment 3 – Peter Black (South Wales West)

Add new point at end of motion:

Welcomes the Commission on Devolution in Wales established by the UK government to look at further advancement in the devolution of powers, including fiscal responsibility.

Amendment 4 – Peter Black (South Wales West)

Add new point at end of motion:

Welcomes the poll published by BBC Wales / ICM which shows that a majority of people in Wales support some form of tax-varying powers for Wales.

The results of the poll can be accessed on the following link:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-17212309>

5. Welsh Liberal Democrats Debate (60 mins)

NDM4939 Peter Black (South Wales West)

The National Assembly for Wales:

1. Calls for:

a) the introduction of a deposit guarantee scheme in Wales to help first time buyers on to the housing ladder;

b) the active use of alternative funding methods such as bonds and building new homes at differing rent levels as a way of tackling the current deficit in affordable housing;

c) a Wales-wide empty homes programme to increase the number of empty properties returned to residential use with greater powers given to local authorities to bring empty properties back into use; and

d) greater powers to be given to local authorities to set council tax rates for empty properties and second homes in their areas.

The following amendments have been tabled:

[If amendment 1 is agreed, amendments 2 and 3 will be deselected]

Amendment 1 – Jane Hutt (Vale of Glamorgan)

Delete all and replace with:

1. Notes:

a) the Welsh Government is considering the merits of a mortgage indemnity guarantee scheme to help first time buyers onto the housing ladder;

b) the Welsh Government is seeking to identify alternative funding sources to finance the building of more affordable homes;

c) the new national empty homes initiative "Houses into Homes" will assist local authorities in using their existing powers to maximum effect to tackle the problem of empty homes;

d) the Welsh Government will consider extending local authorities' discretionary powers to vary council tax rates for empty properties and second homes in their areas; and

e). the challenges set out in the recent paper, published by the Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage, and the need for a consensus on the priorities to meet people's housing needs.

2. Believes that the UK Government's proposed Welfare Reforms will have a direct impact on affordable housing, especially for those on low incomes, as highlighted in recent research by the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Information on "Houses into Homes" can be found at the following link:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/housing/private/emptyhomes/housestohomes/?lang=en>

The recent paper, "Meeting the Housing Challenge: Building a consensus for action" published by the Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage can be found at the following link:

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/housingcommunity/housingchallenge/?lang=en>

The Chartered Institute of Housing research can be accessed on the following link:

http://www.cih.org/news-article/display/vpathDCR/templatedata/cih/news-article/data/Housing_benefit_cuts_will_put_800000_homes_out_of_reach

Amendment 2 – Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 1:

the Welsh Government to set ambitious targets for creating affordable homes, building on the success of the previous government.

Amendment 3 – William Graham (South Wales East)

Add as new sub-point at end of point 1:

the Welsh Government to engage with key Private and Third Sector Housing providers and funders to agree and implement a Housing recovery Strategy for Wales.

Amendment 4 – Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Notes that the reduction in capital funding available to the Welsh Government significantly reduces its ability to fund affordable housing schemes.

Voting Time

6. Short Debate (30 mins)

NDM4936 Mike Hedges (Swansea West):

How Should Wales be Funded?

The topic of the debate will focus on the criteria to be used in deciding which taxes should be devolved to Wales, as well as which taxes meet those criteria.

The Assembly will sit again in Plenary at 13:30, Tuesday, 20 March 2012