

Plenary

Meeting date:
Wednesday, 14 March 2012

Meeting time:
13:30

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Votes and Proceedings

(53)

1. Questions to the Minister for Education & Skills

The item started at 13:30.

Questions 1 – 6 and 8 – 14 were asked. Questions 1, 2 and 3 were grouped together for answer. Questions 1, 2, 3, 5 and 13 were answered by Deputy Minister for Skills. Questions 7 and 15 were withdrawn.

2. Questions to the Minister Local Government & Communities

The item started at 14.13.

The first 12 questions were asked.

3. Welsh Conservatives Debate

The item started at 15:00.

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

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

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.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
12	0	44	56

The motion without amendment was not agreed.

The following amendments were tabled:

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.

A vote was taken on Amendment 1:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
29	4	23	53

Amendment 1 was agreed.

As amendment 1 was agreed, amendments 2 and 3 were deselected.

A vote was taken on the motion as amended:

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. 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.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
44	0	12	56

The motion as amended was agreed.

4. Plaid Cymru Debate

The item started at 15:54.

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

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

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.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
40	0	16	56

The motion without amendment was agreed.

5. Welsh Liberal Democrats Debate

The item started at 16:54.

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

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

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.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
4	0	52	56

The motion without amendment was not agreed.

The following amendments were tabled:

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.

A vote was taken on Amendment 1:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
41	11	4	56

Amendment 1 was agreed.

As amendment 1 was agreed, amendments 2 and 3 were deselected.

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.

A vote was taken on Amendment 4:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
40	12	4	56

Amendment 4 was agreed.

A vote was taken on the motion as amended:

NDM4939 Peter Black (South Wales West)

The National Assembly for Wales:

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.

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

For	Abstain	Against	Total
40	0	16	56

The motion as amended was agreed.

Voting Time

Voting Time started at 17.55.

6. Short Debate

The item started at 17.59.

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 meeting concluded at 18.28.

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