Agenda - Plenary

Meeting Venue:

Y Siambr - Y Senedd

Meeting date:

Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Meeting time: 13.30

192(v4)

This meeting will be held in a hybrid format, with some Members in the Senedd Chamber and others joining by video-conference.

1 Questions to the First Minister

(45 mins)

The Presiding Officer will call Party Leaders to ask questions without notice to the First Minister after Question 2.

View Questions

2 Business Statement and Announcement

(30 mins)

View Business Statement and Announcement

3 Debate: Budget flexibilities and the operation of the UK Funding Framework - Withdrawn

(0 mins)

NDM8492 Lesley Griffiths (Wrexham)

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Recognises that the Welsh Government's fiscal flexibilities are insufficient and constrain its ability to deal with the unprecedented pressures and uncertainty

facing Wales, including responding quickly and effectively to emerging needs and opportunities.

2. Recognises the Welsh Government is dependent on UK Government decisions and timings, and the need for greater predictability and certainty of the Welsh Government's funding arrangements to support its budget planning and that of partner organisations, including local authorities.

3. Acknowledges that the Welsh Government Reserve and borrowing limits are the same as when they were set in 2016 and, in 2024-25, will be worth 23% less in real terms than when they were introduced in 2018-19.

4. Notes the lack of fairness and consistency regarding the UK Government's decisions on devolved government funding flexibilities and that the Welsh Government's arrangements are significantly less generous than Scotland's and its capital borrowing arrangements far less generous than Northern Ireland's.

5. Calls upon the UK Government to provide greater fiscal flexibilities for the Welsh Government, in the interests of effective budget management, enabling greater investment and delivering better outcomes for the people of Wales, including immediately:

a) indexing the Welsh Government's borrowing and overall reserve limits to inflation; and

b) abolishing the Welsh Government's reserve draw-down limits.

The following amendments were tabled:

Amendment 1 Darren Millar (Clwyd West)

Delete all and replace with:

1. Recognises that the Welsh Government's fiscal levers are limited.

2. Notes that the budgetary flexibilities available to the Welsh Government are insufficient.

3. Recognises the need for greater predictability and certainty of the Welsh Government's funding arrangements to support its budget planning and that of partner organisations.

4. Acknowledges that the Welsh Government Reserve and borrowing limits are the same as when they were set in 2016.

5. Calls upon the UK Government to provide greater fiscal flexibilities for the Welsh Government, in the interests of effective budget management, including immediately:

a) subjecting borrowing and overall reserve limits to annual review; and

b) abolishing reserve draw-down limits.

If amendment 1 is agreed, amendments 2, 3 and 4 will be de-selected.

Amendment 2 Heledd Fychan (South Wales Central)

Add as new point after point 4 and renumber accordingly:

Regrets that Westminster's lack of fair funding and fiscal flexibility has led to billions of pounds which is owed from the funding of HS2 and the inability to invest in local energy generation using Crown Estate funds.

Amendment 3 Heledd Fychan (South Wales Central)

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

review the Barnett Formula to address the unfairness in Wales' current funding and financial settlement;

Amendment 4 Heledd Fychan (South Wales Central)

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

increase capital borrowing limits;

Amendment 5 Heledd Fychan (South Wales Central)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Calls upon the Welsh Government and the Senedd to jointly explore new ways of analysing the flexibility and fiscal frameworks of the Welsh Government, and their impacts on Wales, for example by establishing a Parliamentary Budget Office.

Motion to suspend Standing Orders

NNDM8498 Lesley Griffiths (Wrexham)

To propose that the Senedd, in accordance with Standing Orders 33.6 and 33.8:

Suspends Standing Order 12.20(i) and 12.22(i) to allow NNDM8497 to be considered in Plenary on Tuesday, 27 February 2024.

4 Debate: Budget flexibilities and the operation of the UK Funding Framework

(60 mins)

NNDM8497 Lesley Griffiths (Wrexham)

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Recognises that the Welsh Government's fiscal levers are limited.

2. Believes that the budgetary flexibilities available to the Welsh Government are insufficient.

3. Notes the need for greater predictability and certainty of the Welsh Government’s funding arrangements to support its budget planning and that of partner organisations.

4. Acknowledges that the Welsh Government Reserve and borrowing limits are the same as when they were set in 2016.

5. Calls upon the UK Government to provide greater fiscal flexibilities for the Welsh Government, in the interests of effective budget management, including immediately:

a) addressing the impact of inflation on borrowing and reserve limits since 2016;

b) subjecting borrowing and overall reserve limits to annual review; and

c) abolishing reserve draw-down limits.

Co-submitters

Darren Millar (Clwyd West)

Heledd Fychan (South Wales Central)

Jane Dodds (Mid and West Wales)

The following amendments were tabled:

Amendment 1 Heledd Fychan (South Wales Central)

Add as new point after point 4 and renumber accordingly:

Regrets that Westminster's lack of fair funding and fiscal flexibility has led to billions of money owed from HS2 funding and the inability to invest in local energy production using Crown Estate funds.

Amendment 2 Heledd Fychan (South Wales Central)

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

replacing the Barnett Formula in order to remedy the inequity across Wales's current fiscal and funding settlement with a new system that moves away from ad-hoc funding of our public services and towards a framework that provides consistent, transparent and fair funding for Wales;

Amendment 3 Heledd Fychan (South Wales Central)

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

increasing capital borrowing limits;

Amendment 4 Heledd Fychan (South Wales Central)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Calls upon the Welsh Government and the Senedd to jointly explore new ways of analysing the flexibility and fiscal frameworks of the Welsh Government, and their impacts on Wales, for example by establishing a Parliamentary Budget Office.

Amendment 5 Heledd Fychan (South Wales Central)

Add as new point at end of motion:

Calls upon the Welsh Government to formally request powers to set specific income tax bands for Wales.

5 LCM on the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

(15 mins)

NDM8490 Rebecca Evans (Gower)

To propose that the Senedd, in accordance with Standing Order 29.6, agrees that provisions in the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill, in so far as they fall within the legislative competence of the Senedd, should be considered by the UK Parliament.

A Legislative Consent Memorandum was laid in Table Office on 8 September 2023 in accordance with Standing Order 29.2.

Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

Supporting Documents

Report of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

6 Statement by the Minister for Economy: Policy Statement on Apprenticeships

(30 mins)

7 Statement by the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing: Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping – Postponed

(0 mins)

8 Statement by the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership: LGBTQ+ History Month

(30 mins)

9 Statement by the Minister for Climate Change: Second Homes and Affordability – Postponed until 12 March

(0 mins)

10 Statement by the Deputy Minister for Climate Change: The Welsh Government's Response to the North Wales Transport Commission

(30 mins)

11 Statutory Instrument Consent Memorandum – The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2024

(15 mins)

NDM8491 Julie James (Swansea West)

To propose that Senedd Cymru agrees, in accordance with Standing Order 30A.10, that the Secretary of State makes The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (Consequential and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2024 in accordance with the draft laid in Table Office on 19 January 2024.

The Statutory Instrument Consent Memorandum was laid in Table Office on 19 January 2024 in accordance with Standing Order 30A.2.

Supporting Documents

Report of the Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

12 Voting Time

The Senedd will sit again in Plenary at 13.30, Wednesday, 28 February 2024