

Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday, 16th March 2004

The meeting commenced at 2.00pm

The Presiding Officer made a statement about the recent terrorist atrocity in Madrid.

2.01pm

The First Minister made a statement about the tragic death that occurred on the construction site of the new assembly debating chamber yesterday.

2.02pm

First Minister's Question Time

The first 9 questions were answered.

2.56pm

Business Statement

More than 10 Members objected to the business statement.

A vote was taken on the business statement:

For 30; Abstain 0; Against 25; Total 55

The business statement was agreed

3.05pm

Statement by the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside: Welsh Assembly Government's Response to the EPC Committee Report Planning Aspects Associated with the Provision of Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities in the Countryside

3.38pm

This item was not subject to debate and proceeded to an immediate vote.

Motion to approve under Standing Order 22.25

NDM1869 Karen Sinclair (Clwyd South)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales, acting under Standing Order 22.25:

1. a) Considers the report of the Legislation Committee laid in the Table Office, on 2 March 2004 on the draft Regulations **The Inspection of Education and Training (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2004** and

b) Approves that The Inspection of Education and Training (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2004

is made in accordance with:

- i) the draft Regulations laid in the Table Office on 10 February 2004;
- ii) Regulatory Appraisal laid in the Table Office on 10 February 2004;
- ii) Memorandum of Correction laid in the Table Office on 2 March 2004

2. a) Considers the report of the Legislation Committee laid in the Table Office, on 2 March 2004 on the draft Regulations **The Education (School Inspection) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2004** and

b) Approves that The Education (School Inspection) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2004 is made in accordance with:

- i) the draft Regulations laid in the Table Office on 10 February 2004;
- ii) Regulatory Appraisal laid in the Table Office on 10 February 2004;
- iii) Memorandum of Correction laid in the Table Office on 2 March 2004

3. a) Considers the report of the Legislation Committee laid in the Table Office, and e-mailed to Assembly Members on 9 March 2004 on the draft Order **The Library Advisory Council for Wales Abolition and Consequential Amendments Order 2004** and

b) Approves that The Library Advisory Council for Wales Abolition and Consequential Amendments Order 2004 is made in accordance with:

- i) the draft Order laid in the Table Office on 25 February 2004;
- ii) Regulatory Appraisal laid in the Table Office on 25 February 2004.

A vote was taken on the motion:

For 52; Abstain 0; Against 0; Total 52

The motion was carried

3.34pm

Presiding Officer Ruling

The Presiding Officer made a statement on the corporate responsibility of the Assembly in connection with the Counsel General appointment process.

3.39pm

Motion to approve under SO 22.27(iv) the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2004

NDM1867 Karen Sinclair (Clwyd South)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

Considers the principle of The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2004 a copy of which was laid in Table Office and emailed to Assembly Members on 9th March 2004.

The following amendment was tabled:

Amendment 1 - Jonathan Morgan (South Wales Central)

Add new point at the end of the motion:

Notes with regret that there will be an inevitable increase in the use of regulation to recover unpaid council tax as a result of the Government's policy of forcing up council tax beyond the level of affordability for an increasing number of council tax payers.

A vote was taken on the amendment to the principle of the Order

For 10; Abstain 0; Against 43; Total 53

The amendment to the principle of the order fell

A vote was taken on the principle of the Order

For 51; Abstain 0; Against 0; Total 51

The principle of the order was approved

NDM1868 Karen Sinclair (Clwyd South)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales:

Approves that The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) (Amendment) (Wales)

Regulations 2004 is made in accordance with the draft laid in the Table Office and e-mailed to Assembly Members on 9th March 2004.

To note: No Legislation Committee Report is laid in respect of these Regulations, procedural requirements having been disapplied by the Assembly Cabinet under Standing Order 22.27 (i), (ii) and (iii).

A vote was taken on the Order

For 52; Abstain 0; Against 0; Total 52

The Order was approved

The Deputy Presiding Officer took the Chair

3.52pm

Debate on Revising and Remaking the Sustainable Development Scheme

NDM1866 Karen Sinclair (Clwyd South)

To propose that the National Assembly for Wales

1. Adopts as its Sustainable Development Scheme, in accordance with Section 121(1) of the Government of Wales Act 1998, the document entitled '*Starting to Live Differently*' which was e-mailed to Assembly Members on 9 March 2004.
2. Notes that a draft Action Plan to enable the Welsh Assembly Government to implement the Scheme is being prepared and will issue for consultation shortly.
3. Notes the commitment to finalise a set of top-level composite indicators to gauge progress towards sustainable development.

4. Commends the positive role that Wales is taking in international thinking on these issues and in particular the progress of the international regional government network, whose conference takes place in Wales from 22-26 March.

5. Thanks all individuals and organisations who responded to the consultation.

The following amendments were tabled:

Amendment 1 - Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)

Add at the end of point 1:

' but regrets the inadequacy of paragraph 1.4 of the Scheme which describes the current unsustainability of Wales and calls on the Minister to re - draft the paragraph in consultation with appropriate voluntary organisations'.

Amendment 2 - Jonathan Morgan (South Wales Central)

In point 2 delete 'and will issue for consultation shortly' and replace with 'and will be issued for consultation before 1st April 2004'.

Amendment 3 - Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)

Add at the end of point 2:

' and calls on the Minister to bring that Action Plan for a full debate to plenary by July 2004'.

Amendment 4 - Jonathan Morgan (South Wales Central)

Add at the end of point 3:

' and that these indicators will be finalised and published by 1st April 2004'.

Amendment 5 - Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)

Add as new point after point 3 and renumber accordingly:

'Commits the Labour Assembly Government to developing appropriate targets in the Action Plan linked to a full indicator set; and further calls on the Minister to bring forward an annual report to plenary on performance against the agreed targets.'

Amendment 6 - Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)

Add as new point after point 3 and renumber accordingly:

'Commits the Labour Assembly Government to developing a sustainability appraisal tool that relates to the full indicator set.'

Amendment 7 - Jonathan Morgan (South Wales Central)

In point 4 delete 'Commends' and replace with 'Notes'.

Amendment 8 - Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)

Add at the end of point 4:

', whilst recognising Local Government's and Assembly Sponsored Bodies' key roles in delivering sustainable development at a local level, and calls on the Labour Assembly Government to give clear support and direction to them'.

Amendment 9 - Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)

Add as new point 5 and renumber:

Recognises that the Government's commitment and progress towards Sustainable Development will be judged by practical improvements in the environment and the quality of peoples' lives.

Amendment 10 - Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire)

Add as new point at the end of the motion:

Believes that the sustainable development scheme's action plan should incorporate:

- i) indicators that clearly and transparently show the progress made by the Assembly; and
- ii) tough targets that ensure the Assembly government delivers on the principles of the scheme.

Amendment 11 - Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire)

Add as new point at the end of the motion:

Believes that the sustainable development scheme and the Assembly government will be judged by the contents and implementation of the action plan.

A vote was taken:

Amendment 1

For 20; Abstain 0; Against 29; Total 49

Amendment 1 was defeated

Amendment 2

For 14; Abstain 0; Against 39; Total 53

Amendment 2 was defeated

Amendment 3

For 53; Abstain 0; Against 1; Total 54

Amendment 3 was carried

Amendment 4

For 13; Abstain 0; Against 37; Total 50

Amendment 4 was defeated

Amendment 5

For 24; Abstain 0; Against 30; Total 54

Amendment 5 was defeated

Amendment 6

For 24; Abstain 0; Against 30; Total 54

Amendment 6 was defeated

Amendment 7

For 10; Abstain 0; Against 44; Total 54

Amendment 7 was defeated

Amendment 8

For 24; Abstain 0; Against 30; Total 54

Amendment 8 was defeated

Amendment 9

For 24; Abstain 0; Against 30; Total 54

Amendment 9 was defeated

Amendment 10

For 23; Abstain 0; Against 30; Total 53

Amendment 10 was defeated

Amendment 11

For 23; Abstain 0; Against 30; Total 53

Amendment 11 was defeated

The motion, as amended

For 54; Abstain 0; Against 0; Total 54

The motion, as amended, was carried

4.47pm

Plaid Cymru nominated debate

NDM1870 Jocelyn Davies (South Wales East)

The National Assembly for Wales:

1. Believes that affordable housing is a human right.
2. Calls on the Labour Assembly Government to introduce measures to ensure that all people have access to quality affordable housing within their own community.

The following amendments were tabled:

Amendment 1 - Karen Sinclair (Clwyd South)

Delete all after 'The National Assembly for Wales:' and replace with:

Reaffirms the vision set out in "Better Homes for People in Wales" - that everyone should have the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable, housing; to be able to choose where they live and decide whether buying or renting is best for them and their families; and

2. Supports the action, which the Welsh Assembly Government has taken to create opportunities for people to access affordable housing.

Amendment 2 - Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire)

Add new point at the end of the motion:

Recognises that although the Homebuy scheme has made a significant contribution to providing affordable housing in rural areas, it has done so by eating into the money available to build new homes for rent. Accordingly, this Assembly calls on the Government to establish a separate Homebuy budget line in addition to the existing resources available for Social Housing Grant.

Amendment 3 - Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire)

Add new point at the end of the motion:

Recognises the high level of disrepair in privately rented accommodation in Wales and urges the Welsh Assembly Government to work in partnership with UK Ministers to put a compulsory private rented housing licensing scheme in place at the earliest possible moment to establish minimum standards and better management.

Amendment 4 - Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire)

Add new point at the end of the motion:

Recognises that although affordability is a key factor so is fitness for purpose. Further recognises that many privately owned properties in Wales will fail to reach the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2010 and urges the Welsh Assembly Government to increase the resources available for Disabled Improvement Grants and Renovation Grants whilst developing other forms of investment such as equity release through a Welsh Home Improvement Lending Agency.

Amendment 5 - Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire)

Add new point at the end of the motion:

Calls on the Welsh Assembly Government to require Councils to take account of affordability in drawing up Local Housing Strategies and use their powers to ensure that these strategies are delivered on time and are relevant and fit for purpose.

Amendment 6 - Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire)

Add new point at the end of the motion:

Expresses concern at the impact of proposals by the Treasury to allow tax relief on the purchase of residential property as a private pension investment, recognises that this will have an impact on the affordability of houses in rural areas and urges the Welsh Assembly Government to oppose this measure.

Amendment 7 - Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire)

Add new point at the end of the motion:

Calls on the Assembly Government to support and encourage local planning authorities in engendering greater flexibility for different affordable housing planning policies to be developed. In particular calls for the use of exceptions policies to provide affordable housing in rural areas.

Amendment 8 - Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire)

Add new point at the end of the motion:

Requires the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that all local authorities carry out local housing needs surveys and recognises the need for Planning Authorities to undertake surveys on a community level in order to establish local housing needs.

Amendment 9 - Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire)

Add new point at the end of the motion:

Calls on the Welsh Assembly Government to encourage and promote the formation of Community Housing Trusts.

Amendment 10 - Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire)

Add new point at the end of the motion:

Recognises that affordability also encompasses costs such as those for energy and calls on the Welsh Assembly Government to promote sustainable principles in the development of new Social Housing.

A vote was taken:

Amendment 1

For 30; Abstain 0; Against 23; Total 53

Amendment 1 was carried

Amendment 2

For 23; Abstain 0; Against 30; Total 53

Amendment 2 was defeated

Amendment 3

For 14; Abstain 0; Against 39; Total 53

Amendment 3 was defeated

Amendment 4

For 23; Abstain 0; Against 30; Total 53

Amendment 4 was defeated

Amendment 5

For 54; Abstain 0; Against 0; Total 54

Amendment 5 was carried

Amendment 6

For 13; Abstain 10; Against 30; Total 53

Amendment 6 was defeated

Amendment 7

For 24; Abstain 0; Against 30; Total 54

Amendment 7 was defeated

Amendment 8

For 24; Abstain 0; Against 30; Total 54

Amendment 8 was defeated

Amendment 9

For 24; Abstain 0; Against 30; Total 54

Amendment 9 was defeated

Amendment 10

For 53; Abstain 0; Against 0; Total 53

Amendment 10 was carried

The motion, as amended

For 43; Abstain 0; Against 11; Total 54

The motion, as amended, was carried

The meeting concluded at 5.35pm

The Assembly will sit again in Plenary at

2.00pm on Wednesday, 17th March 2004

E P Silk

Clerk to the Assembly

DOCUMENTS LAID SINCE THE ASSEMBLY LAST MET

Documents Laid on 12 March 2004

- Report of the Local Government and Public Services Committee on the Civil Contingencies Bill - LD2781

Documents Laid on 11 March 2004

- Report of the Business Committee - LD2776
- The National Assistance (Assessment of Resources) (Amendment)(Wales) Regulations 2004 - LD2777
- The National Assistance (Assessment of Resources) (Amendment)(Wales) Regulations 2004 - Regulatory Appraisal - LD2778
- The National Assistance (Sums for Personal Requirements)(Wales) Regulations 2004 - LD2779

- The National Assistance (Sums for Personal Requirements)(Wales) Regulations 2004 - Regulatory Appraisal - LD2780

Documents Laid on 10 March 2004

- Statement to Plenary on Cabinet's Proposals for Primary Legislation 2004-05 - LD2772
- The Education (School Performance Information) (Wales) Regulations 2004 - LD2773
- The Education (Pupil Information) (Wales) Regulations 2004 - LD2774
- The Education Act 2002 (Commencement No. 4 and Transitional Provisions) (Wales) Order 2004 - LD2775