

Votes and Proceedings – Plenary

Meeting Venue:

Y Siambr – Y Senedd/ Zoom

Meeting date:

Wednesday, 23 September 2020

Meeting time: 13.30

This meeting can be viewed

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/6566>

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

1 Statement by the First Minister – Keeping Wales Safe from Coronavirus

The item started at 13.32

2 Questions to the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd

The item started at 14.35

The first 6 questions were asked. The Presiding Officer invited party spokespeople to ask questions to the Minister after question 2.

3 Questions to the Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language

The item started at 15.21

The first 6 questions were asked. Questions 1–3 and 5 were answered by the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism. The Presiding Officer invited party spokespeople to ask questions to the Minister after question 2.

4 Questions to the Senedd Commission

The item started at 16.06



All 4 questions were asked.

5 Topical Questions

No topical questions were accepted.

6 90 Second Statements

The item started at 16.25

Helen Mary Jones made a statement on Adult Learning Week.

In accordance with Standing Order 12.18, at 16.27 the Deputy Presiding Officer suspended the meeting.

7 Motion to amend Standing Orders: Oversight of the Electoral Commission

The item started at 16.32

NDM7388 [Elin Jones \(Ceredigion\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd, in accordance with Standing Order 33.2:

1. Considers the report of the Business Committee, 'Amending Standing Orders – Oversight of the Electoral Commission', [laid](#) in the Table Office on 16 September 2020;
2. Approves the proposals to amend Standing Orders as set out in Annex B of the report of the Business Committee; and
3. Notes that this motion takes effect when section 28 of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 is commenced by order made under Section 42 (3) (b) of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020.

The motion was agreed in accordance with Standing Order 12.36.

8 Motion to establish a committee under Standing Order 16.3: The Llywydd's Committee

The item started at 16.33

NDM7389 [Elin Jones \(Ceredigion\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd, in accordance with Standing Order 16.3:

1. Establishes the Llywydd's Committee to carry out the functions set out in Standing Order 18.B2; and
2. Notes that this motion takes effect when section 28 of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 is commenced by order made under Section 42 (3) (b) of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020

The motion was agreed in accordance with Standing Order 12.36.

9 Motion to elect a member to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee.

The item started at 16.33

NDM7390 [Elin Jones \(Ceredigion\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd, in accordance with Standing Order 17.3, elects Caroline Jones (Independent) as a member of the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee.

The motion was agreed in accordance with Standing Order 12.36.

10 Motion to elect Members to the Llywydd's Committee

The item started at 16.34

NDM7391 [Elin Jones \(Ceredigion\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd, in accordance with Standing Order 17.3 and 18B.4:

1. Elects the following as members of the Llywydd's Committee:
 - a) The Deputy Presiding Officer as Chair of the Committee;
 - b) Llyr Gruffydd, (chair of the responsible committee under Standing Order 19); and

c) Rhianon Passmore (Welsh Labour), Suzy Davies (Welsh Conservatives), Dai Lloyd (Plaid Cymru), and David Rowlands (Brexit Party).

2. Notes that this motion takes effect when section 28 of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020 is commenced by order made under Section 42 (3) (b) of the Senedd and Elections (Wales) Act 2020.

[Senedd and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2020](#)

The motion was agreed in accordance with Standing Order 12.36.

11 Debate on the Finance Committee report – Impact of variations in national and sub-national income tax

The item started at 16.34

NDM7385 [Llyr Gruffydd \(North Wales\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

Notes the report of the Finance Committee on the Impact of variations in national and sub-national income tax, which was [laid](#) in the Table Office on 2 July 2020.

Note: The [response](#) of the Welsh Government to the report was laid in the Table Office on 16 September 2020.

The motion was agreed in accordance with Standing Order 12.36.

12 Welsh Conservatives debate – Higher Education

The item started at 17.08

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

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

NDM7387 [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Notes the importance of higher and further education to Wales and its economy.
2. Believes that students deserve value for money in return for the investment they make in their higher and further education.

3. Regrets the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on students in Wales and the interruption to courses.

4. Welcomes the additional financial resources provided to Welsh colleges and universities to support them through the pandemic.

5. Notes that there has been no reduction in fees paid by students to reflect the adverse impact of the pandemic on their studies.

6. Calls upon the Welsh Government to:

a) work with colleges and universities to ensure that fees reflect the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on their courses;

b) ensure that students take the opportunity to access learning either in person or, in the event of unavoidable COVID-19 restrictions, through more live streaming;

c) address the concerns of students, employers, and further and higher education providers in relation to a narrowing of the syllabus of some courses which contribute towards entry requirements for colleges and universities.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
14	2	36	52

The motion without amendment was not agreed.

The following amendments were tabled:

Amendment 1 [Siân Gwenllïan \(Arfon\)](#)

Delete point 4 and renumber accordingly.

A vote was taken on amendment 1:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
10	0	42	52

Amendment 1 was not agreed.

Amendment 2 [Rebecca Evans \(Gower\)](#)

Delete points 5 and 6 and replace with:

Welcomes the efforts of students, colleges and universities to continue operating safely and effectively in challenging circumstances over the coming term, and thanks them for their efforts.

Notes the extensive work by colleges and universities to maintain opportunities to access learning either in person or, in the event of unavoidable COVID-19 restrictions, through online tuition, assessment, and support.

Notes the guidance issued by Welsh Government to support higher and further education providers to prepare for the new term and open campuses safely.

[Guidance for safe operation in post-16 learning from September 2020](#)

[Guidance for higher education: Keep Wales Safe \(COVID-19\)](#)

A vote was taken on amendment 2:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
28	1	23	52

Amendment 2 was agreed.

As Amendment 2 was agreed, Amendments 3 and 4 were de-selected

A vote was taken on the motion as amended:

NDM7387 [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Notes the importance of higher and further education to Wales and its economy.
2. Believes that students deserve value for money in return for the investment they make in their higher and further education.

3. Regrets the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on students in Wales and the interruption to courses.
4. Welcomes the additional financial resources provided to Welsh colleges and universities to support them through the pandemic.
5. Welcomes the efforts of students, colleges and universities to continue operating safely and effectively in challenging circumstances over the coming term, and thanks them for their efforts.
6. Notes the extensive work by colleges and universities to maintain opportunities to access learning either in person or, in the event of unavoidable COVID-19 restrictions, through online tuition, assessment, and support.
7. Notes the guidance issued by Welsh Government to support higher and further education providers to prepare for the new term and open campuses safely.

[Guidance for safe operation in post-16 learning from September 2020](#)

[Guidance for higher education: Keep Wales Safe \(COVID-19\)](#)

For	Abstain	Against	Total
30	0	22	52

The motion as amended was agreed.

In accordance with Standing Order 12.18, at 18.11 the Deputy Presiding Officer suspended the meeting.

13 Plaid Cymru debate – Second Homes

The item started at 18.16

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

A vote was taken on the motion without amendment:

NDM7386 [Sian Gwenllian \(Arfon\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Recognises the housing crisis in many of Wales's communities and specifically recognises the detrimental impact of unsustainable levels of second homes in depriving the ability of local people to access homes in those communities.
2. Welcomes the steps some local authorities have taken as a result of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to introduce council tax premiums on second homes as one behaviour changing method around the use of second homes and to facilitate the introduction of measures to meet the local need for housing, but agrees that renewed intervention and leadership is now required at a national level.
3. Calls on the Welsh Government to act immediately in developing and introducing a package of measures which would include but would not be limited to:
 - a) using the planning system to control the ability to change the use of a residential dwelling from a sole or main residence to a second home;
 - b) enabling the introduction of a cap on the proportion of the overall housing stock in a community which may be used as second homes in communities where the concentration of second homes is already unsustainable;
 - c) modernising legislation which currently means that not a penny of council tax must be paid on some second homes;
 - d) doubling the council tax premium which may be charged on second homes to at least 200 per cent to reinforce work already taking place in some local authorities in seeking to change behaviour around the use of second homes, generate revenue to be invested in social housing and to compensate communities for the detrimental impact of an overuse of second homes on local communities and local services;
 - e) doubling the higher rates of land transaction tax for an initial period of six months in an attempt to prevent house prices from spiralling further beyond the reach of the local population and first time buyers in many communities;

f) taking positive steps to promote access to housing at a price which is within the reach of the local market, including the possibility of encouraging the development of homes which have local market clauses attached;

g) encouraging and prioritising the purchase of empty homes by local authorities and housing associations in order to meet the local need for social housing; and

h) looking afresh at what constitutes an affordable home.

[Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

For	Abstain	Against	Total
10	0	42	52

The motion without amendment was not agreed.

The following amendments were tabled:

Amendment 1 [Darren Millar \(Clwyd West\)](#)

Delete all and replace with:

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Recognises the housing crisis in many of Wales's communities and the need to enable local people to access homes in those communities.
2. Calls on the Welsh Government to act immediately in developing and introducing a package of measures which would include but would not be limited to:
 - a) taking positive steps to promote access to housing at a price which is within the reach of local people, including reintroducing a reformed right to buy and exploring the options for encouraging the development of homes which have local market clauses attached;

- b) encouraging and prioritising the purchase of empty homes by local authorities and housing associations in order to meet the local need for social housing; and
- c) clarifying what constitutes an affordable home.

3. Calls on the Welsh Government to work with the tourism sector and the Valuation Office Agency to establish an evidence base for policy regarding eligibility for self-catering accommodation to be recorded on the non-domestic rating list.

A vote was taken on amendment 1:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
13	0	39	52

Amendment 1 was not agreed.

Amendment 2 [Rebecca Evans \(Gower\)](#)

Delete all and replace with:

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Recognises the challenges second homes – and empty homes – can have on the affordability and availability of housing in some communities in Wales.
2. Welcomes the Welsh Government’s long-standing commitment to the provision of good quality, affordable housing, recognising its fundamental role as the bedrock of strong sustainable communities.
3. Welcomes that whilst the pandemic has had an impact on the building of affordable homes, the Welsh Government will meet the 20,000 target by the end of this Senedd term, which will help to meet the need for local housing.
4. Notes that Wales is the only nation in the UK where local authorities are able to charge a premium of up to 100 per cent of the standard rate of council tax both on second homes and long-term empty properties.

5. Further notes that in Wales, unlike the rest of the UK, the Welsh Government did not provide a temporary tax reduction for buy to let investors, investors in furnished holiday lets or buyers of second homes.

6. Calls on the Welsh Government to undertake an evidenced, thorough review of second home ownership in Wales and the measures that might be necessary to ensure the needs of individuals, communities and the economy, in particular the visitor economy, are well balanced. Such a review should look at the role of taxation, planning, local regulation and the supply and access to affordable housing of all tenures.

A vote was taken on amendment 2:

For	Abstain	Against	Total
27	4	21	52

Amendment 2 was agreed.

As Amendment 2 was agreed, Amendment 3 was de-selected

A vote was taken on the motion as amended:

NDM7386 [Sian Gwenllian \(Arfon\)](#)

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Recognises the challenges second homes – and empty homes – can have on the affordability and availability of housing in some communities in Wales.
2. Welcomes the Welsh Government’s long-standing commitment to the provision of good quality, affordable housing, recognising its fundamental role as the bedrock of strong sustainable communities.

3. Welcomes that whilst the pandemic has had an impact on the building of affordable homes, the Welsh Government will meet the 20,000 target by the end of this Senedd term, which will help to meet the need for local housing.

4. Notes that Wales is the only nation in the UK where local authorities are able to charge a premium of up to 100 per cent of the standard rate of council tax both on second homes and long-term empty properties.

5. Further notes that in Wales, unlike the rest of the UK, the Welsh Government did not provide a temporary tax reduction for buy to let investors, investors in furnished holiday lets or buyers of second homes.

6. Calls on the Welsh Government to undertake an evidenced, thorough review of second home ownership in Wales and the measures that might be necessary to ensure the needs of individuals, communities and the economy, in particular the visitor economy, are well balanced. Such a review should look at the role of taxation, planning, local regulation and the supply and access to affordable housing of all tenures.

For	Abstain	Against	Total
26	3	23	52

The motion as amended was agreed.

14 Voting Time

In accordance with Standing Order 34.14D, at 19.09 proceedings were suspended to allow a technical break before voting time.

The item started at 19.18

Votes Summary

15 Short Debate

The item started at 19.27

NDM7377 [Mark Isherwood \(North Wales\)](#)

Building the foundations for change: the impact of the Welsh Government's Neurological Conditions Delivery Plan.

The meeting concluded at 19.4747

The Senedd will sit again in Plenary at 13.30, Tuesday, 29 September 2020