

The Record: 19 October 2011

Ardaloedd Menter

1. Llyr Huws Gruffydd: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad am yr Ardaloedd Menter. OAQ(4)0055(BET)

Enterprise Zones

1. Llyr Huws Gruffydd: Will the Minister make a statement on Enterprise Zones. OAQ(4)0055(BET)

The Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science (Edwina Hart): I am introducing enterprise zones in Wales and have identified five preferred locations for detailed development.

Llyr Huws Gruffydd: Yr ydym eisoes wedi gweld rhywfaint o'ch cynlluniau ar gyfer y parthau menter, ac edrychwn ymlaen at weld y manylion yn llawn. Fe fyddwch yn ymwybodol bod y sefyllfa economaidd yn gwaethygu a bod gofid difrifol ynglŷn â'r cynnydd diweddar a welwyd mewn diweithdra a'r cynnydd arfaethedig a wynebwn dros y misoedd a'r blynyddoedd i ddod. Pa gynlluniau ychwanegol y byddwch yn eu cyflwyno mewn ymateb i'r sefyllfa gynyddol argyfyngus y mae economi Cymru yn ei hwynebu?

Llyr Huws Gruffydd: We have already seen some of your plans for the enterprise zones, and we look forward to seeing the details in full. You will be aware that the economic situation is deteriorating and that there is real concern about the recent increases seen in unemployment and the increase that we anticipate over the coming months and years. What additional plans will you introduce in response to the increasingly critical state of the Welsh economy?

Edwina Hart: Thank you for that question. You, like me, recognise that the enterprise zones will not help to the extent that some people imagine that they will in terms of dealing with some of the issues regarding the Welsh economy. The department is therefore reviewing all of our assistance to business and how we can be more proactive with business, and I am discussing with my colleagues what help and assistance they can give from their portfolios to assist business in these difficult times.

Kenneth Skates: I once again welcome the announcement about enterprise zones. With regard to social enterprises in particular, everyone knows the enormous positive impact that they make in communities across Wales, but many ambitious social entrepreneurs struggle to raise the funds needed to start or develop the next phase of their business. Will you commit to ensuring that the needs of social enterprises will be given full consideration during the development stage of enterprise zone policy and examine whether the Welsh Government could consider specific incentives for companies that operate along social enterprise lines?

Edwina Hart: Social enterprises are businesses, therefore I will respond positively to your question.

William Graham: Yesterday, the First Minister made it clear that the door is not completely closed on new enterprise zones. Would you look again at the case for Newport? You will know that a cross-party petition has been handed to the Petitions Committee on the subject. The council is doing its best, but would like an impetus from you. Could you indicate that you may look at this favourably?

Edwina Hart: I have already received representations on this from the Member concerned in the Chamber, and, dare I say it, from the Presiding Officer and my ministerial colleague, John Griffiths, about the issues around Newport and enterprise zones. My officials will be looking

at the issues surrounding this.

Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas: A oes gan y Gweinidog ychwanegiad diweddar i'w wneud i'w datganiad ynglŷn â'r posibilrwydd o ddatblygu rhagor o barthau menter gyda golwg arbennig ar sefyllfa safle datgomisiynedig Trawsfynydd a'r posibilrwydd o sicrhau canolfan addas ar gyfer ynni ac ynni cynaliadwy ar y safle hwnnw?

Lord Elis-Thomas: Does the Minister have an update to her statement about the possibility of developing further enterprise zones with a particular view to the situation of the decommissioned site in Trawsfynydd and the possibility of ensuring an appropriate centre for energy and sustainable energy on that site?

Edwina Hart: It is my intention, hopefully before Christmas, to make further announcements on the possibility of enterprise zones. I am mindful that enterprise is sometimes focused on quite industrial areas, and it is important that we look at rural Wales and locations such as Trawsfynydd in terms of enterprise zones. I am having discussions on this issue with Gwynedd Council.

Eluned Parrott: Can you give us an idea as to what measures you have put in place to protect Newport from the adjacent enterprise zone in Bristol?

Edwina Hart: I do not think that it is my job to protect cities from anything. We have to acknowledge that business and commerce exist, and will go where they need to go. We can only enhance opportunities for developments to come into Wales, and we have a comprehensive package to attract businesses in, with excellent training packages that are always commented upon favourably by employers that come here. Obviously, I have given an indication to William Graham that I am considering Newport, and my officials are having ongoing discussions.

Eluned Parrott: I am delighted to hear that. The leader of Newport City Council is on record as saying that he fears that:

'The city will now be 'squeezed' by Bristol and Hereford on one side and Cardiff and Ebbw Vale on the other...in facing the on-going economic challenges.'

The city of Newport would like to hear you talk about ways in which you might feel able to protect it with the measures that you wish to introduce. Can you give us an overview of a schedule? Obviously, Newport wants an enterprise zone and you have talked about—

The Presiding Officer: Could you come to the question, please?

Eluned Parrott: Can you give us an idea of what schedule you are working to with regard to reviewing the success of implementing the first tranche of enterprise zones?

Edwina Hart: I have already indicated that I will probably be making a statement before the end of the year regarding any possible new enterprise zones. It will be my intention to flesh out the detail before the end of this term in order to make a statement to Members about how the five enterprise zones will work.