

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT

Second Delegated Legislation Committee

DRAFT WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED
AUTHORITY (BUSINESS RATE SUPPLEMENTS
FUNCTIONS) ORDER 2018

Monday 9 July 2018

No proofs can be supplied. Corrections that Members suggest for the final version of the report should be clearly marked in a copy of the report—not telephoned—and must be received in the Editor’s Room, House of Commons,

not later than

Friday 13 July 2018

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2018

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright/.

The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chair: PHIL WILSON

- | | |
|---|---|
| † Aldous, Peter (<i>Waveney</i>) (Con) | Hughes, Eddie (<i>Walsall North</i>) (Con) |
| † Berry, Jake (<i>Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government</i>) | † Jones, Darren (<i>Bristol North West</i>) (Lab) |
| † Chishti, Rehman (<i>Gillingham and Rainham</i>) (Con) | † Kawczynski, Daniel (<i>Shrewsbury and Atcham</i>) (Con) |
| † Davies, Glyn (<i>Montgomeryshire</i>) (Con) | McFadden, Mr Pat (<i>Wolverhampton South East</i>) (Lab) |
| † Ellman, Dame Louise (<i>Liverpool, Riverside</i>) (Lab/Co-op) | † Morgan, Stephen (<i>Portsmouth South</i>) (Lab) |
| † Elmore, Chris (<i>Ogmore</i>) (Lab) | † Tolhurst, Kelly (<i>Rochester and Strood</i>) (Con) |
| † Ford, Vicky (<i>Chelmsford</i>) (Con) | Umunna, Chuka (<i>Streatham</i>) (Lab) |
| † Fovargue, Yvonne (<i>Makerfield</i>) (Lab) | |
| Grogan, John (<i>Keighley</i>) (Lab) | Adam Evans, <i>Committee Clerk</i> |
| † Hart, Simon (<i>Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire</i>) (Con) | † attended the Committee |

Second Delegated Legislation Committee

Monday 9 July 2018

[PHIL WILSON *in the Chair*]

Draft West of England Combined Authority (Business Rate Supplements Functions) Order 2018

4.30 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Jake Berry): I beg to move,

That the Committee has considered the draft West of England Combined Authority (Business Rate Supplements Functions) Order 2018.

The order was laid before the House on 7 June. It will confer a power to raise business rate supplements on the West of England combined authority Mayor. The power is similar to that for a mayoral infrastructure supplement, which was included in the Government's devolution agreement.

With the order having been laid just over a month ago, I think the House has had ample time to consider it. I therefore commend it to the Committee.

4.30 pm

Yvonne Fovargue (Makerfield) (Lab): The Opposition have no objections to the order.

4.31 pm

Darren Jones (Bristol North West) (Lab): It is a pleasure to speak in this debate as the Member for

Bristol North West, which is under the West of England combined authority. I just want to raise a couple of points on behalf of my constituents.

The first—I hope the Minister can clarify this today—is around the conversation that took place to show that local businesses were fully consulted on and aware of this increase in business rates and therefore support it, at a time when, for many businesses on the high street, this is a challenging expenditure in terms of their cash flow.

Secondly, in terms of the governance over how business rates pools are spent, we have the local enterprise partnership board and the West of England combined authority board, where decisions are made by a panel of mayors and leaders. We now have this additional pot of funding, over which decisions are taken solely by the Mayor. Will the Minister clarify what governance arrangements might be in place to ensure accountable and fair spending of this money in the interests of constituents right across the West of England combined authority?

4.31 pm

Jake Berry: There is no supplement at the moment. The order seeks to confer a supplement power on the Mayor. If the Mayor seeks to use it, he has to come forward with a prospectus, and it has to be supported by a majority of the businesses entitled to vote. As proposed, that would mean that 87% of businesses in the combined authority would not have to pay.

In relation to the Mayor, he is of course answerable to his combined authority and, ultimately, to the electorate.

Question put and agreed to.

4.32 pm

Committee rose.