

## Petitions Committee

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Meeting Venue:  
**Committee Room 1 - Senedd**

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Meeting date:  
**12 July 2011**

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Meeting time:  
**09:30**

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



For further information please contact:

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## Agenda

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- 1. Introduction, apologies and substitutions**
- 2. New petitions**
  - 2.1 P-04-321 Arriva Trains Wales services between South West and South East Wales (Pages 1 - 10)
  - 2.2 P-04-327 Keep Our Community Hospital (Pages 11 - 13)
  - 2.3 P-04-328 MCA Modernising Coastguard Proposals (Pages 14 - 17)
- 3. Updates to previous petitions**
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  - 3.5 P-03-170 To increase the number of people with a learning disability employed by the public sector in Wales (Pages 29 - 30)
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  - 3.7 P-03-188 Special Care Baby Unit (Page 34)
  - 3.8 P-03-204 Public Accountability and Consultation in Higher Education (Pages 35

- 39)

- 3.9 P-03-205 Keep Abergavenny Livestock Market (Pages 40 - 45)
- 3.10 P-03-219 Pharmacies in Barry (Pages 46 - 47)

**The following two petitions will be considered together**

- 3.11 P-03-220 Lower the speed limit on the A40 near Abergavenny (Page 48)
- 3.12 P-03-240 Road safety on the A40 in Llanddewi Velfrey (Pages 49 - 51)
- 3.13 P-03-221 Improved NHS Chiropody Treatment (Pages 52 - 57)
- 3.14 P-03-222 National Osteoporosis Society (Page 58)
- 3.15 P-03-253 Adoption of private sewers (Page 59)
- 3.16 P-03-260 The Campaign for Dark Skies (Pages 60 - 61)
- 3.17 P-03-261 Local Solutions to Newtown Traffic Congestion (Pages 62 - 78)
- 3.18 P-03-262 Wales Peace Institute (Page 79)
- 3.19 P-03-265 Include leaving home information and education in the National Curriculum - Shelter Cymru (Pages 80 - 81)
- 3.20 P-03-268 Accident and Emergency Department at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (Pages 82 - 84)

**The following two items will be considered together**

- 3.21 P-03-271 Business Rates in Narberth (Page 85)
- 3.22 P-03-286 Ceredigion Business Rates (Pages 86 - 88)
- 3.23 P-03-273 Transportation of Wind Turbines in Mid Wales (Pages 89 - 95)
- 3.24 P-03-280 Cardiff Royal Infirmary (Page 96)
- 3.25 P-03-283 NHS Charging for alcohol related incidents (Pages 97 - 99)
- 3.26 P-03-291 Development of HIV and Sexual Health Services (Page 100)
- 3.27 P-03-296 Unfair Proposals on Student Loans (Pages 101 - 102)
- 3.28 P-03-301 Equality for the Transgender Community (Pages 103 - 110)
- 3.29 P-03-303 Against Homophobic Bullying (Pages 111 - 112)
- 3.30 P-03-304 Amendment to the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (Pages 113 - 115)
- 3.31 P-03-305 Statutory School Libraries (Pages 116 - 122)

- 3.32 P-03-307 Design for Innovation in Wales (Pages 123 - 126)
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# Agenda Item 2.1

## **P-04-321 Arriva Trains Wales services between South West and South East Wales**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that Arriva Trains Wales provide commuter train services between South West and South East Wales that are timely, convenient, fit-for-purpose and have a suitable number of seats/carriages for passengers to travel in comfort.

### **Background**

This petition was raised by Bjorn Rödde and collected 162 signatures. Supporting information provided by the petitioner and correspondence from the Committee to the Minister for Local Government and Communities are included below.

### **Additional information:**

The Arriva Trains Wales service to Manchester Piccadilly currently leaves Carmarthen at 05:50am and arrives at Cardiff Central at 07:40am. After 21<sup>st</sup> May, Arriva Trains Wales have decided that this service will start at Carmarthen only 3 minutes later, at 05:53am, but will not arrive in Cardiff Central until 08:01am. This means that the many passengers that commute to Cardiff on this service to start work at 08:00am will no longer get to work on time. The delay is caused by an increased wait at Swansea station, meaning that commuters who stop at each station East of Swansea will be significantly delayed. A solution that Arriva Trains Wales is likely to suggest is to change at Swansea to the First Great Western service destined for London Paddington. However, this train will arrive in Cardiff Central at 07:52am, which still leaves inadequate time for most customers to arrive at work by 08:00am. In addition, the majority are likely to be opposed to changing trains due to nervousness and inconvenience. It is reasonable to expect a direct service when commuting to work. As holders of the Wales rail franchise, Arriva Trains Wales ought to be committed to providing direct services for those travelling within Wales.

The majority of workers who use the above service return home on the train that leaves Cardiff Central at 16:04pm (the Manchester Piccadilly – Milford Haven Service). This will change to 15:54pm after 21<sup>st</sup> May and the next train to West Wales won't leave until 17:04pm.

Most passengers will find that this 30minute reduction in their working day will not be justified to their employers and it would be very impractical to travel either significantly earlier in the morning or significantly later in the evening to compensate.

The Arriva Trains Wales summer timetable for 2011 is likely therefore, to render this commuter service an unusable mode of public transport, resulting in many current customers choosing to travel by car instead.

As part of these timetable changes, there are also a number of stations in West Wales where certain services will no longer stop, making public transport even less accessible than it currently is in West Wales. Passengers using these stations feel particularly betrayed since Arrive Trains Wales have community groups that adopt their local stations to aid their operation (particularly in West Wales). These community groups consist of volunteers who give their time for zero cost, but in return, will no longer benefit from trains stopping frequently at their stations.

There are many days, when travelling from Cardiff Central towards West Wales, when only two passenger carriages are in service; this results in inadequate space for passengers and luggage, with train station staff frequently squashing people onto trains so that all passengers can board. This is particularly evident on Friday afternoon and the level of discomfort is widely regarded by passengers as unacceptable.

Head of Customer Services

Arriva Trains Wales

April 2011

To the Head of Customer Services

***Re: Arriva Trains Wales Summer Timetable Changes Adversely Affecting Commuters***

I write to you on behalf of fellow passengers in protest of the timetable changes being made to the service which starts at Carmarthen at 05:50 destined for Manchester Piccadilly. Like many other customers, I commute to Cardiff on this service daily. I board at Llanelli at 06:18 but this petition speaks for customers boarding at all stations between Carmarthen and Cardiff.

Currently, the service arrives at Cardiff at 07:40, giving those who start work by 08:00 enough time to travel by foot or by bus to their place of work in Cardiff. The proposed changes see this service arriving at Cardiff at 08:01, rendering the service useless to almost all passengers who currently board the train West of Cardiff.

For those who have the option, Arriva Trains Wales will lose customers to the First Great Western Service leaving Swansea at 06:58, however this service is not available to those boarding West of Swansea or at Pyle or Llanharan. However, since the First Great Western Service arrives at Cardiff 12 minutes later than current Arriva Trains Wales service, this solution may not be viable even for those who have the option of using it.

There is further outrage amongst customers regarding the following issues:

- Trains stopping less frequently at stations in West Wales on some services
- The 16:04 train from Cardiff to Milford Haven (used on the way home by many commuters who catch the service arriving at Cardiff at 07:40) will be leaving at 15:54 after the timetable

changes. Many people will no longer be able to catch this train and have to wait until the 17:04 train departs

- The fact that there are often only two carriages on the 16:04 train from Cardiff when customer numbers require at least three carriages in order for customers to travel in relative comfort

For more detail surrounding the background information, see the last page of the attached petition.

I trust that Arriva trains Wales takes the opinion of its customers seriously and that, as the national rail franchise holders for Wales, is dedicated to providing a service which your Welsh customers find acceptable.

On this basis, I look forward to hearing from you with constructive actions to address the issues which have prompted this petition from 85 unhappy customers.

Yours faithfully

Mr B.M. Rödde.

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Mr Bjorn Rödde



31 May 2011

Contact Reference No. ATW-110520-BCJ

Dear Mr Rödde

Thank you for your letter and petition of April 2011 concerning the recent timetable changes.

The timetable has been changed primarily to improve journey times and connections along the Swansea – Cardiff - Manchester corridor. These changes follow an extensive review of the timetable and the capability of the route in conjunction with Network Rail and will attract additional passengers to rail, by improving the speed and convenience of our services for the majority of passengers.

To facilitate these changes on a route with limited spare track capacity, some re-timings and one or two compromises have had to be made. The one significant change for stations west of Cardiff is that the 0553 from Carmarthen now arrives in Cardiff 0801. As you have identified, there is an option to change at Swansea, using First Great Western and arrive in Cardiff at 0752, but I appreciate that this is not an option for passengers at Pyle and Llanharan

Whilst we understand that this change is less convenient for some (in particular those named in your petition) it is also likely that those who start work slightly after 0800 will find the service more convenient than the previous times. We do however recognise the difficulties faced for those who have an 0800 fixed work start time, although regrettably we have not been able to address this issue, despite efforts to identify a solution.

The departure at 1604 from Cardiff to Swansea and Milford Haven remains unchanged and is planned as a 3 car train. At times of service disruption, it is occasionally necessary to change the planned formation, however all efforts are made to minimise these occurrences

The Kidwelly and Ferryside stops on the 1604 from Cardiff (1705 from Swansea) have been removed but are replaced on a new service leaving Swansea at 1735. This enables a small journey time improvement for passengers travelling to Carmarthen and onwards to Milford Haven, while those local stations are served by local shuttle service



Mr Bjorn Rödde

-2-

31 May 2011

I hope the above is helpful in explaining why the changes have been made. We will be keeping the new timetable under close review and we will take on board the comments you have raised behalf of yourself and other passengers as part of this process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Bagshaw".

Mike Bagshaw  
Commercial Director

Mr Mike Bagshaw  
Commercial Director  
Arriva Trains Wales

23<sup>rd</sup> June 2011

Dear Mr Bagshaw

***Re: Arriva Trains Wales Summer Timetable Changes Adversely Affecting Commuters***

I am grateful to have had a response from Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) but I am writing to you again since the response was not satisfactory.

In your letter of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2011, you stated that the changes to the timetable have been made to improve journey times along the Swansea-Cardiff-Manchester corridor.

1. Firstly (as I speak on behalf of the passengers named in the previous petition and petition via the National Assembly website), I can assure you that the changes have most certainly not improved journey times to Cardiff in the early morning. As we have already established, the same train that used to arrive at Cardiff at 07:40 now arrives at 08:01 – I struggle to see how a 21 minute delay to a service which has run perfectly well for a number of years is an improvement? This train is now empty in comparison to previous passenger numbers when it leaves Swansea in the morning (now at 07:03) since any passenger who used to regularly use this service to travel to Cardiff before 08:00 (or any stations west of Cardiff – except Pyle and Llanharan - at earlier times) now use the First Great Western Service instead which leaves Swansea at 06:58.
2. Secondly, taking the first point into consideration, any improvements that ATW have managed to achieve as a result of the changes must be for the benefit of those passengers travelling on towards Manchester? I would question why ATW is sacrificing the satisfaction

of its customers who commute across South Wales in favour of those who travel outside of Wales and on to Manchester when ATW has the Welsh Rail Franchise? One might wonder whether it is more lucrative to prioritise the services outside Wales rather than within Wales. In your letter it states that 'it is likely' that those who start work after 08:00 in Cardiff will find the service more convenient than the previous times. This suggests that there is not currently any evidence of this. I am yet to meet a passenger who finds it more convenient to wait at Swansea station for 20-30minutes at 06:35 in the morning.

3. Thirdly, having used this service daily for over a year, I have come to notice the general trend of passengers boarding and leaving the train. As you would expect, the vast majority of passengers using the service along the stretch between Carmarthen and Cardiff leave the train at or before Cardiff Central station. The majority of passengers travelling up to Manchester from Cardiff seem to board at Cardiff (and presumably stations beyond Cardiff). So, it seems as if any improvements that might have been made would actually benefit the Cardiff-Manchester corridor, not the Swansea-Cardiff-Manchester corridor. This brings me back to the point made by the petition, that when considering the majority of passengers, the service has not been improved for those travelling to Cardiff from further west; instead, the passengers suffer a delay which either causes significant inconvenience or results in the service being unusable.

The best solution identified by ATW (which I acknowledged in my original letter as an option) is not to travel on an ATW train at all and use a First Great Western (FGW) Service instead. This cannot be accepted as a viable response from ATW to one of their customer services-related issues. As you are aware, this solution is also flawed in a number of ways:

1. The FGW service arrives at Cardiff at 07:52, leaving passengers 8 minutes to walk, cycle, etc. to their place of work by 08:00. By the time you have negotiated the ticket barriers and exited the station, this is not realistically enough time unless your place of work is within the immediate vicinity of the station. Furthermore, this assumes that that FGW train runs on time. With your previous timetable, one would arrive at Cardiff at 07:40 with ample time to get to the office by 08:00.
2. As you have already acknowledged, this is simply not an option for passengers who board(ed) your service at Pyle and Llanharan since the FGW service does not stop at these stations
3. Changing trains mid-journey is a significant inconvenience and time delay in itself. Many passengers are nervous and anxious of changes. If there is a delay to the running of the first train then there is a significant risk that a passenger will miss the connecting train which will result in further delay.

It is the opinion of many that ATW has grossly underestimated the number people who travel beyond Swansea from further west and the number of those passengers who use the service to travel to Cardiff to start work at 08:00. It is as if ATW have formed the opinion that most passengers travelling from West Wales don't usually travel further east than Swansea. This is not the case. Most passengers who arrive at Swansea station at 06:41 walk to the next platform and board the

FGW train to continue their journey (which of course doesn't include the passengers that would do the same if they weren't now travelling to work by other modes of transport following the timetable change). These passengers then have a 20 minute wait, as already discussed, which is inconvenient enough at any time of day but particularly so at that time in the morning.

Since receiving your letter, I have also spoken to some of your customers who stop at Kidwelly and Ferryside and they are equally dissatisfied with your response. It seems disproportionate and illogical to increase journey times for passengers travelling to these stations by 30 minutes in return for a saving of 3 or 4 minutes for those travelling further West on the same service if it doesn't stop at those stations along the way.

As I said in my previous letter, I trust that ATW takes the opinion of its customers very seriously and that, as the national rail franchise holders for Wales, ATW is dedicated to providing a service which its Welsh customers find acceptable.

I look forward to hearing from you again, this time with more constructive suggestions as to how ATW will address these, rather than an explanation of why your customers have to live with these inconveniences.

Yours sincerely

Mr B.M. Rödde.

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## Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

### Petitions Committee

Cynulliad  
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Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



Carl Sargeant AM  
Minister for Local Government and  
Communities  
Welsh Government  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-04-321

05 July 2011

*Deat Carl*

#### **P-04-321 Arriva Trains Wales Services between South West and South East Wales**

The Petitions Committee has received a petition submitted by Bjorn Rödde, which has collected 162 signatures:

*We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that Arriva Trains Wales provide commuter train services between South West and South East Wales that are timely, convenient, fit-for-purpose and have a suitable number of seats/carriages for passengers to travel in comfort.*

The petitioner has provided supporting information, which is enclosed.

The Committee would like to ask for your views on the issues raised by the petition. We would particularly welcome information on whether these issues have been discussed with Arriva Trains Wales and if any actions will be taken to address the petitioners concerns.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

*William*

**William Powell AM**

**Chair, Petitions Committee**

Encs: Supporting information from the petitioner

# Agenda Item 2.2

## **P-04-327 Keep our Community Hospital**

### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned call upon our National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to look into and address the proposed closure of Blaina and District Hospital by the local health board.

### **Background**

This petition was raised by Mandy Howells and collected 40 signatures. Additional information provided by the petitioner and correspondence from the Committee to the Minister for Health and Social Care are included below.

**Additional information:** This hospital has served our community for over 100 years, and is used for many purposes. One of these purposes is that once the elderly patients are ready to leave other hospitals such as Nevill Hall Abergavenny, but not quite ready to return to home, they therefore spend a period of time at blaina hospital. The hospital also offers and provides the community with 42 beds in two wards, and approximately 80 full and part-time staff. Nantyglo Ward has 32 beds the General Practitioner Ward has 10 beds The hospital provides sub-acute and rehabilitation inpatient care including physiotherapy and occupational therapy for the local community, and a range of outpatient services including: adult medicine outpatient clinics continence advice outpatient physiotherapy outpatient occupational therapy radiology podiatry rheumatology outpatient clinics diabetic and dietetic clinics twice monthly The hospital is also a base for the Blaenau Gwent Rapid Response team.

## Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

### Petitions Committee

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Lesley Griffiths AM  
Minister for Health and Social Care  
Welsh Government  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-04-327

05 July 2011

#### **P-04-327 Keep our Community Hospital**

The Petitions Committee has received a petition submitted by Mandy Howells, which has collected 40 signatures:

*We the undersigned call upon our National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to look into and address the proposed closure of Blaina and District Hospital by the local health board.*

The petitioner has provided supporting information, which is enclosed.

The Committee would like to ask for your views on the issues raised by the petition.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

**William Powell AM**

**Chair, Petitions Committee**

Encs: Supporting information from the petitioner

## **P-04-328 MCA Modernising Coastguard Proposals**

### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to conduct independent risk impact assessments on the safety of coastal tourists, of the closure of MRCC Milford Haven, MRCC Holyhead, and the downgrading of MRCC Swansea to 'daylight hours

### **Background**

This petition was raised by Graham Warlow and collected 293 signatures. Supporting information provided by the petitioner and correspondence from the Committee to the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science are included below.

On December 16<sup>th</sup> 2010, the UK Coalition Government launched the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) Consultation on Modernising Coastguard for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The consultation process was originally due to end on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2011, though this was later extended to May 5<sup>th</sup> 2011.

Within Wales, the MCA proposal is to shut down the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (MRCC) at Milford Haven & Holyhead, and to downgrade Swansea to operate during 'daylight hours' only. (I am assuming that Swansea would be required to cover the whole of the Wales coastline during the daytime, though this detail was not provided within the MCA Consultation).

During the night time, HM Coastguard Rescue Coordination services would be centralised to a Maritime Operations Centre (MOC) at Southampton or Portsmouth.

Serious concerns arose throughout the UK that the closure of MRCC's will also result in a loss of valuable & vital local knowledge, and the impact this would have on response to an emergency situation. Considerable concern also arose concerning the lack of Risk Assessments presented with the Consultation.

The 'compendium' of Risk Assessments were eventually published by the MCA, but these appear to be loaded in support of the MCA proposals, and also some elements were written subsequent to the Transport Select Committee requesting publication of the documents. (Risk Assessments available)

Many local campaigns throughout the UK were formed along with many petitions. In Milford Haven, a local paper & online petition was started which eventually acquired in excess of 20,000 signatures opposing the MCA Modernisation Proposals. This petition was delivered to Downing Street, along with a 15,000 Signature National Online Petition, on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

So great were the concerns of so many, the Transport Select Committee launched a full Inquiry into the MCA proposals for Modernising the Coastguard, Emergency Towing Vessels (ETV), and the Maritime Incident Response Group (MIRG).

The Save Milford Haven Coastguard Campaign submitted a formal response to the Transport Select Committee and was subsequently invited to Westminster for one member of the Campaign to offer evidence at the final Oral Evidence Meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup> 2011. (Campaign Response available)

The subsequent Transport Select Committee Report on the Coastguard Modernisation was highly critical of the MCA Consultation Process. It states;

*"By failing to involve serving coastguard officers, unions, volunteers, stakeholders or the devolved administrations in the drafting of the current proposals for the future of the Coastguard, and by failing to publish a risk assessment of the current plans or an impact assessment of the previous round of closures until prompted, the MCA management has badly miscalculated. It has mishandled the consultation and made it appear opaque rather than clear and open-minded. It has appeared arrogant, and reluctant to open itself to proper scrutiny in the process. The atmosphere of disquiet and suspicion generated by this consultation process is of the MCA's own making."*

Many debates have taken place in Westminster on the Coastguard Modernisation proposals, as well as a Short Debate at The Senedd. All of these debates have met with cross-party support in opposition to the proposals.

The MCA also conducted a series of public meetings throughout the UK which met with fierce public opposition and many ending with unanimous votes of no confidence in the proposals. (Transcripts available)

On May 19<sup>th</sup> 2011 , the Secretary of State for Transport Mr Phillip Hammond MP announced that the Government were "*looking again*" at the MCA proposals, fuelling speculation that a reprieve for some Coastguard Rescue Centres may be possible.

The MCA have tasked an 'Independent Review Team' to analyse approx. 1700 responses to the proposals, and is shortly to issue its own report.

The Government have stated that it will make an announcement of 'Alternative Proposals' before the Houses of Parliament rises on July 19<sup>th</sup>. We await that announcement.

In the meantime, the National Assembly of Wales E-petition was started to urge the Wales Government to conduct its own independent Risk Assessments on Coastal Tourism associated with the closure of MRCC Milford Haven, MRCC Holyhead & the downgrading of MRCC Swansea to 'daylight hours' only.

**Y Pwyllgor Deisebau**

**Petitions Committee**

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Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales



Edwina Hart AM  
Minister for Business, Enterprise,  
Technology and Science  
Welsh Government  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-04-328

05 July 2011

*Dear Edwina*

**P-04-328 MCA Modernising Coastguard Proposals**

The Petitions Committee has received a petition submitted by Graham Warlow, which has collected 293 signatures:

*We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to conduct independent risk impact assessments on the safety of coastal tourists, of the closure of MRCC Milford Haven, MRCC Holyhead, and the downgrading of MRCC Swansea to 'daylight hours*

The petitioner has provided supporting information, which is enclosed.

The Committee would like to ask for your views on the issues raised by the petition and whether any consideration has been given to undertaking a risk assessment as requested by the petitioners.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue. I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

*William*

**William Powell AM**  
**Chair, Petitions Committee**

Encs. Supporting information from the petitioner

## **P-03-143 Ysgol Penmaes**

### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned request that the National Assembly for Wales urge the Welsh Assembly Government to invest in better transport links in rural areas like Powys.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-143.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Catherine Lewis

**Number of signatures:** 15

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 23 July, 20 November 2008 and 31 March 2009, 29 June, 16 November 2010, 25 January 2011 and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Local Government and Communities.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-03-143  
Ein cyf/Our ref: CS/05194/11

Naomi Stocks  
Clerk Petitions Committee  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff  
CF991NA

14 June 2011

*Jon Naun*

Thank you for your letter of 1 June on behalf of the Petitions Committee about the Welsh Government's plans for funding local bus services and protecting rural services.

As far as local bus services are concerned, we have been able to protect the funding of around £32m that is being made available in 2011-12 for Local Transport Services Grant (LTSG) and Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG). This is a good result in the face of tight public spending settlements and will help to keep cuts in local and rural subsidised services to a minimum. We are also close to completing our review on how LTSG and BSOG are used to support the provision of local bus services and I will announce my decisions on a way forward in due course.

The TrawsCymru Service is our flagship longer-distance bus network that provides important links between rural communities across Wales. We recently announced plans for a major new investment in the new TrawsCymru T4 service which will link Newtown - Llandrindod Wells - Builth Wells - Brecon - Merthyr Tydfil - Cardiff. This new service will benefit from the introduction of new easy access coach-style vehicles, enhanced frequencies, better connections to other public services at key hubs and improved ticketing offers. This new service will be fully operational by March 2012. In the meantime, an interim timetable is in place with services operating between Newtown - Llandrindod Wells - Builth Wells - Brecon - Merthyr Bus Station (with onward connections to Cardiff).

I am taking the opportunity to look again at the range of measures that are in the National Transport Plan for improving local bus and rural services following the Welsh Government's published spending plans. I will announce my priorities in due course as they will need to

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Correspondence: Carl.Sargeant@wales.gsi.gov.uk  
*Printed on 100% recycled paper*

be affordable and delivered within the agreed budgets. I will want to secure the best outcomes from our resources and will also want to see greater collaboration between local authorities in order to encourage innovation and increased efficiency in the way that local transport services are contracted and delivered.

Handwritten signature consisting of a cursive 'a' followed by a vertical line '1'.

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**

Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities

# Agenda Item 3.2

## (iii) P-03-150 National Cancer Standards

### Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to investigate whether Local Health Boards have the necessary strategies and action plans in place to deliver the target to comply with the National Cancer Standards by March 2009 in RCT and throughout Wales, as a matter of urgency.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/eform-sign-petition-old/p-03-150.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Rhondda Breast Friends

**Number of signatures:** The e-petition collected 43 signatures. In addition Rhondda Breast Friends have developed a charter regarding improvements required to cancer care services, supported by 1,475 signatories.

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 9 July 2008, 6 November 2008, 13 January 2009, 10 February 2009, 31 March 2009, 24 November 2009, 19 January, 23 March and 27 April 2010, 15 June, 30 November 2010, 25 January, 15 March and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Health and Social Care.

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-150  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05410/11

Naomi Stocks  
Clerk  
Petitions Committee

[committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)

  
June 2011

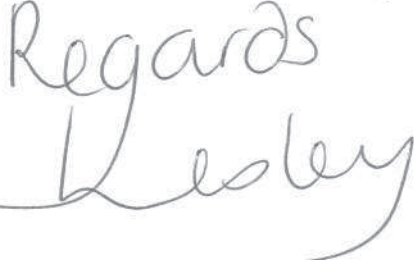
Dear Naomi,

Thank you for your letter of 5 April to my predecessor Edwina Hart AM regarding the Macmillan Cancer Support report 'Changing Cancer Care in Wales'.

With one in three people diagnosed with cancer at some stage in their lives, efforts to reduce the incidence of cancer and improve survival rates in Wales will continue to be a priority for the Welsh Government.

The NHS in Wales is expected to plan and deliver patient-centred services, including cancer services which meet the needs of the individual. This is a key theme of efforts to improve the management of chronic conditions and to develop a primary and community care-led NHS. My predecessor met Macmillan in March and communicated this message to them.

As our Manifesto says, Macmillan's work will be used to help inform the development of the Welsh Government's strategic plan for cancer for the period 2011-2015.

Regards  


**Lesley Griffiths AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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# Agenda Item 3.3

## **P-03-153 Body Piercing**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to place restrictions on the age at which a minor can have body piercing. The age for body piercings, other than the ears and nose, should be regulated up to the age of 16 years.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-153.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Councillor Russell Downe

**Number of signatures:** 14

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 10 February 2009, 31 March, 19 May, 7 July, 24 November, 19 January 2010, 23 March, 11 May and 25 January 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Health and Social Care.

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-153  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05411/11

William Powell AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA  
committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

 July 2011

*Dear Bill,*

I am writing further to Christine Chapman's letter of 26 January to my predecessor, Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM regarding Petition P-03-153 which called upon the National Assembly for Wales to: "place restrictions on the age at which a minor can have body piercing. The age for body piercings, other than the ears and nose, should be regulated up to the age of 16 years". I understand that the Committee did not receive a response to this letter.

The Welsh Labour Manifesto contained a commitment to: "Consult on whether legislation should be introduced which would require the involvement and consent of parents for cosmetic piercing procedures on a young person below a certain age". I intend to issue a consultation paper on this issue shortly and will inform the Committee when the consultation exercise will begin. I will also ensure that the Committee receive details of the stakeholders that will be engaged during the consultation.

The Committee also asked for further information on the Scottish Government position on cosmetic piercing. In January 2001, the then Scottish Executive published a consultation on proposals to introduce controls on skin piercing in Scotland. The consultation set out the existing controls, as they were at the time, and sought comments on their adequacy and any improvements that could be made.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

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On 1 April 2006, the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Skin Piercing and Tattooing) Order 2006 came into force in Scotland. This gave Local Authorities in Scotland the power to licence and inspect businesses that carry out skin piercing or tattooing activities. In relation to age, the Order introduced a requirement for written parental consent for body piercing of children under the age of 16. A review into the implementation of the legislation in Scotland is currently taking place and is due to report shortly.

Regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Lesley'.

**Lesley Griffiths AC / AM**

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

## **P-03-156 Sleep Apnoea**

### **Petition wording**

That Wales should have an effective, cohesive, well-funded policy for all patients with sleep disorders. This would include the provision of Constant Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machines for diagnosed sufferers of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA).

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-156.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Welsh Sleep Apnoea Society

**Number of signatures:** 1 organisation

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 16 October 2008, 6 November 2008, 13 January 2009, 2 March 2009, 31 March 2009, 24 November 2009, 19 January 2010, 23 March, 11 May, 12 October 2010, and 15 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the former Minister for Health and Social Services.

**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ**

Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

Our ref: EH/01017/11

Your ref: P-03-156

Christine Chapman  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
petition@wales.gov.uk



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Bae Caerdydd  
Caerdydd CF99 1NA  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg: 0845 010 4400  
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Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA  
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Fax: 029 2089 8131  
E-Mail: Correspondence.Edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

8 April 2011

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter dated 18 March on behalf of the Petitions Committee about the development of sleep apnoea services in South Gwent and across the rest of Wales.

The provision of sleep apnoea services are the responsibility of Local Health Boards (LHBs) who are expected to put in place arrangements for services for their local populations. Aneurin Bevan LHB has assured me that work is continuing to improve the patient pathway with specialist sleep clinics established at Nevill Hall and County Hospital to help reduce its waiting times.

In tackling variation in service provision, an all Wales Sleep Apnoea Working Group, comprising of respiratory consultants delivering sleep apnoea services in NHS Wales has been established. They recently submitted a proposal for minimum clinical standards for sleep apnoea in Wales via the Respiratory National Service Advisory Group (NSAG). This document has been jointly issued by my Medical Director and the NSAG to all LHBs to help them ensure improved provision and assist them in planning for improvements.

The Welsh Assembly Government's Service Development and Commissioning Directives for Chronic Respiratory Conditions sets out a clear direction for improving respiratory services, including sleep apnoea. NLIAH's audit of the Respiratory Directives undertaken in November 2010 established that across Wales 88% of all the key actions have been full complied with by LHBs. Although

progress has been made I have asked all LHBs to ensure compliance with the Directives by the end of March 2011.

I have noted your request for the response to be sent directly to the Clerking Team. This has been passed to the relevant officials.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LW', located in the upper left quadrant of the page.

# Agenda Item 3.5

## **P-03-170 MENCAP Cymru - Petition to increase the number of people with a learning difficulty employed by the public sector in Wales.**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Assembly Commission and the Welsh Assembly Government to take a lead in employing more people with a learning disability, and to encourage other public sector employers, such as the NHS and Local Authorities, to employ more people with a learning disability

Only 1 in 10 people with a learning disability who want to work are in any form of paid employment. This is unfair.

**Link to petition:** <http://assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/eform-sign-petition-old/p-03-170.htm>

**Petition raised by:** MENCAP Cymru

**Number of signatures:** 134

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 13 January, 10 February, 19 May, 7 July, 22 September, 10 November 2009, 15 June, 28 September 2010, 25 January and 1 March 2011, 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the then Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning (now the Minister for Education and Skills).

**Leighton Andrews**

Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg & Dysgu Gydol Oes  
Minister for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-170  
Ein cyf/Our ref LA/00876/11

Rhodri Wyn Jones

Rhodri.WynJones@Wales.gov.uk

4 April 2011

*Dear Mr Jones*

Thank you for your letter of 5 April regarding the commitment in my letter of 17 February to Christine Chapman for petitioners from Mencap Cymru to present to the Development and Implementation Group on Post-16 SEN and, prior to that, discuss with officials issues around their supported employment model.

The Development and Implementation Group had its first meeting on 28 March. I confirm that an invitation is to be sent to Mencap Cymru to present their employment model, and prior to that, to discuss it with officials.

*Yn eiddo  
Leighton Andrews*

**Leighton Andrews**

Minister for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
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CF99 1NA

*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

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# Agenda Item 3.6

## **P-03-187 Abolish the Severn Bridge Tolls**

### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the UK Government in Westminster to do everything in its power to abolish the two Severn Bridge tolls.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-187.htm>

**Petition raised by:** John Warman

**Number of signatures:** 23

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 2 March, 5 May, 7 July, 6 October, 8 December 2009, 1 February, 23 March, 25 May, 13 July, 28 September 2010, and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the former Deputy First Minister.

Ieuan Wyn Jones  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-187  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00753/11

Naomi Stocks  
Clerk  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

26 April 2011

*Dear Ms Stocks*

Thank you for your letter of 5 April, requesting additional information about the study into the economic impact of the Severn Tolls.

The contract for undertaking the study was awarded on 11 March 2011 to Ove Arup. We expect the study to take around 6 to 8 months to complete and hope to receive the final report in late autumn. I have attached the terms of reference for the study for your information.

*Yn siŵr*  
*Ieuan Wyn Jones*

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

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PS.DeputyFirstMinister@wales.gsi.gov.uk

## **The Economic Impact of Tolls on the Severn Crossings**

### **Terms of Reference**

The Severn Crossings provide an important link in Wales' transport infrastructure. The responsibility for the Severn Crossings and the levying of tolls lie with the UK Government with the tolling regime for the Severn Crossings set out in the Severn Bridges Act 1992. The concession agreement for the Severn Crossings will end when the defined sum of just under £996 million (in 1989 prices) has been collected, subject to a maximum 30 year period. Current expectation is that this funding requirement will be met in 2017, at which point the operation of the Severn Crossings will be handed over to the UK Government.

Given the strategic transport role of the M4 corridor, and the Severn Crossings, for south Wales, the potential impact of the Severn Crossings tolls on the Welsh economy has attracted much attention. To date, there exists very limited economic evidence upon which to fully understand the effects and distributional consequences of the Severn Crossings, the current tolling regime and of any economic and transport impacts that might result through either potential changes to the tolls or following the conclusion of the concession agreement.

This research study aims to conduct a detailed and rigorous economic assessment of the impact of the Severn Crossing tolls on the Welsh economy, examining the nature and magnitudes of the effects. The geographical focus of the study should be on the economic effects relating to Wales, particularly South Wales, though drawing suitable comparisons with the economic effects and development patterns of the greater Bristol area and relevant surrounding areas of Southern England.

The study requires that the full range of potential economic and transport effects arising from the Severn Crossings tolls on the Welsh economy be examined. A detailed baseline assessment of the economic impact of the current tolling regime on the Severn Crossings, and an investigation of the potential economic, transport, and financial impacts of any changes to the tolling regime is required.

Use of relevant existing economic evidence and statistical information will need to be considered and, where appropriate, new data collected in order to generate the required empirical evidence. Other on-going and completed research on the Severn Crossings tolls will need to be considered.

## **P-03-188 Special Care Baby Unit**

### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned are protesting against the downgrading of the Royal Glamorgan Hospital SCBU from a level 3 intensive care unit to a level 2 High dependency unit.

Whilst we understand the need to ensure that staffing levels are adequate and that staff are appropriately qualified in order to ensure patient safety we deplore the lack of investment that has led to this situation.

We are therefore seeking assurances that the downgrade will only be temporary and will be for as short a period as possible, and that the Royal Glamorgan SCBU will be reinstated to a full Level 3 Intensive Care Unit.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-188.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Zoe Walters

**Number of signatures:** 2340

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 20 November 2008, 13 January 2009, 10 February 2009, 5 May 2009, 9 June 2009, 22 September 2009, 10 November 2009, 23 March and 13 July 2010.

**Update:** An update will be considered.

# Agenda Item 3.8

## **P-03-204 Public Accountability and Consultation in Higher Education**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh government to introduce an open and transparent system to scrutinise the standards of service and value for money offered by the Higher Education sector in Wales, and to ensure changes in service levels are subject to public consultation.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-204.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Trevor Mayes

**Number of signatures:** 13

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 22 September 2009, 8 December 2009 and 1 February 2010, 25 May, 13 July, 12 October, 16 November 2010, and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the petitioner.

Thursday, 02 June 2011

To: The Petitions Committee

**Re: P-03-204 Public Accountability and Consultation in Higher Education**

With regard to the question of whether the published report into higher education governance meets some of the concerns in my petition the answer is no, some of its proposals could be a step in the right direction, however, many issues need clarification. The parts of the report relevant to my petition are the need for change and Universities Wales: powers and responsibilities.

Firstly, with regard to whistle blowing, I wish to briefly address the submissions from the trade union and the NUS both of which I found quite astonishing. Trade unions are well aware of the appalling treatment of staff some of whom have contacted me with horror stories of abuse that has destroyed their lives; I am disappointed that they were unable to comment on relevant issues that are of serious concern to their members. The NUS has ignored my request for discussion on the fact that the Quality Assurance Agency is just a registered charity with no powers of intervention and its Cause for Concern process is meaningless therefore puts beneficiaries at risk.

As a registered charity, the QAA is claiming to do something that it cannot do, the higher education department at Westminster suggested a complaint to the Charity Commission. I had already done this only to be told they have no powers to tell a charity how to run its business. This is an example of how politicians in Cardiff and Westminster point to organisations that are neither able nor willing to address issues of serious concern. This includes referring to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) as a remedy for everything when in fact it solves nothing of any substance. Politicians seem to choose to ignore issues that are likely to rock the boat with the establishment and least of all higher education. As far as whistle blowing is concerned, the report failed to suggest an effective independent process.

Both academics and students have supported me in this petition and personal campaign for change in an arcane, corrupt, and self-serving system. This is not a staff student conflict but a conflict with a system that has unaccountable power and no effective regulation. The preservation of reputation at all costs at the expense of the people they are there to serve is something that has been kept from the public with threats of legal action and the use of gagging orders. This in effect means that trade unions and the NUS are powerless to prevent the destruction of people's lives which has left them isolated and unable to pursue any remedy. As the law stands, there is no effective remedy anyway and that point is in effect made in the report but its proposals do not go far enough to make a real difference.

I agree that it would be wrong to assimilate student complaints into Universities Wales and that they should remain independent, however, the report does not address the failings of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). Instead of supporting High Court Judges in saying there is no evidence that the OIA is not impartial, the NUS should listen to students who claim that the OIA still relies upon quotes for its judgements, rewrites complaints to remove contentious issues, and refuses to make any inquiry whereby the reputation of the institution is at risk. However, like many students I have discovered that the NUS are part of the problem and not the solution. Unfortunately, many people see the NUS as a route into politics.

I fail to see how making comments on a 'have your say' website is of any use to anyone, and must make the point that student interests and concerns were not properly represented because they are

being ignored. Student complaints need the same sort of overhaul as the proposals for Universities Wales to address the issues of growing student discontent. The easiest way for universities to deal with complaints is simply to ignore them, followed by the fabrication of evidence together with threats of legal action and the character assassination of the student concerned.

The report does not address the issue of the treatment of foreign students, which fall into two main categories that bring economic benefits to Wales. They are external students who complain that complaints are simply ignored leaving them powerless to seek any remedy, and secondly students outside of the EU whose complaints are ignored until their visa runs out and they are forced to leave the country. Perhaps a foreign appointee to the board could look at this issue.

The big question is whether Universities Wales is going to ensure compliance with student complaints procedures that same way that one would expect a commission to do. If not then I will pursue a petition to the European Parliament as this situation violates Article 13 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) No Effective Remedy. This in turn raises the question of who is going to ensure compliance with regard to Universities Wales. The reason why I ask this question is because HEFCW has claimed many times that it has no power of intervention, yet it does have the power to withhold funding to ensure compliance, which would bring about the same result, however, that, is something that is never going to happen. Moreover, if you are going to get the same people doing the same job you are simply going to have the same thing under a different name.

Is Universities Wales going to impose time limits on any complaint to prevent outstanding issues from reaching the public domain? A tactic recently introduced by the University of Wales but then they just ignore complaints anyway. In my view, the only way of changing the current culture is with public disclosure of any wrongdoing as the biggest deterrent against abuses of position and power is the likely hood of being caught and then publically named and shamed. If this happens then a number of scandals may well emerge which while initially damaging would help achieve the objectives in the report.

I fail to see how any change can take place until we are fully aware of the problems, in that respect there was not enough consultation or awareness of the seriousness of the issues that appear to have been identified. My main concern that it is yet another 'for display purposes only' set of rules and regulations that result in people being ignored to make anything uncomfortable go away.

The key issue of my petition, which the report fails to address, is that of consultation with, and accountability to, the public who in my opinion are the major stakeholders, I cannot see any reference to public consultation in any part of the document. Currently the way in which higher education business is conducted falls way below the legal requirements of the public sector and with regard to the Seven Principles of Public Life.

Concerning appointments, public appointment rules currently state a one-year gap with regard to connections with an interested party however, for any sort of inquiry in the private sector then a two-year gap of any contact is required, even then, it may be necessary for an appointee to stand down. Given that Universities Wales will have an inquiry function then the two-year gap should apply to any member of the board and anyone involved in the inquiry.

What is the criteria for independent members of the board, putting people in from other HEI's outside of Wales is not independent, what is there role, are they there as non-executive members to ensure standards and compliance. Moreover, are they going to be fully informed of what is going

on? I am concerned that this is simply going to create another elite of people in higher education who consider themselves accountable to nobody.

To give an example of the issues I am raising that of the merger of the University of Wales Lampeter and Trinity University College.

There was no public consultation; the Review of Lampeter by Haines Watts Corporate Finance was withheld from the public, the governors of Trinity, and the BBC by HEFCW, and although this was deemed lawful by the Information Commissioner new evidence may well mean this decision will be reconsidered. If these were private institutions withholding that information from shareholders would have constituted a criminal offence.

The public are entitled to the same consideration as shareholders and the only reason a criminal offence was not committed is that no law exists governing this conduct. It is however, an example of how the Seven Principles of Public Life and the public are disregarded.

The consequences of this action has led to other public interest issues in that the current Visitor the Bishop of St David's has unlawfully delegated his Visitorial Duties to the Sub Visitor who is also Chancellor of the Diocese of St David's. This is in clear breach of Trinity's Royal Charter with the collusion of the Vice Chancellor for exactly the same reason to avoid accountability and prevent public knowledge of what is going on.

The common people should not have to apply to the high court for a judicial review on the obstruction of justice at every stage in the complaints process by an elite acting in its own interests in contravention of the basic human right to a fair hearing.

HEFCW says a breach of Royal Charter is a matter for the Welsh Assembly, the Welsh Assembly says it has no powers to intervene yet public money is still being paid to an institution that has no legal right to continue functioning and therefore no right to our money. I have therefore referred HEFCW's refusal to deal with this matter to the Auditor General for Wales for appropriate action and if none can be taken then I wish to raise this issue with the Petitions Committee at a later date.

This has implications for the Chair of HEFCW and his involvement with the Church in Wales. It is wholly unacceptable for a private organisation to be able to interfere in the governance of a public spending body in its own interests and nobody is either willing or able to act appropriately to stop it. It can give rise to a perception of the old boys' network pulling strings to make anything uncomfortable go away. In my view, the same public concerns over connections with the Freemasons should also apply to the Church in Wales.

My complaint to the Auditor General is also to establish if there is any remedy to such a situation. It also supports my claim to a public right of complaint directly to the Auditor General with regard to any financial irregularity or mismanagement inside a university. I cannot see the necessary change in culture taking place for the public to have any trust in a university regulator undertaking this task.

A university in breach of its charter has no legal right to function and therefore risks having its charitable status removed by the Charity Commission under the Charity Act 2006. If Trinity St David was forced to go private then many outstanding issues could then be addressed. Moreover, there would be a public outcry because such conduct would then be reported without fear of gagging orders.

There are also issues concerning the process whereby Universities obtain any change to their Royal Charter. There is a right of public complaint to the Privy Council, however, they have no powers of inquiry so who are they going to believe? If a university fails to make a full disclosure with regard to any complaint with the intention of receiving public funding then it is fraud. I have recently also raised this issue with the Auditor General and I am still waiting a reply.

This situation is an insult to the concept of public service, which some Assembly Members have chosen to ignore, and I must question the political will to resolve these issues where politics and religion appear to be confused. It is wholly unacceptable in a modern democracy for a private unaccountable religious organisation to have more control over a public spending body than the public.

My view is that there needs to be an independent Commission fully accessible to the public to ensure compliance of both the institutions and Universities Wales. I strongly oppose any move to make Universities Wales the principle regulator for charitable purposes of the HEI's in Wales for the same reasons that student complaints should not be incorporated. It is illogical as charity should remain independent from the growing business culture, self-interest, old boys' network and provide an addition public safeguard.

Is Universities Wales going to allow failing universities such as the University of Wales Lampeter to close down or try to merge it with another so ensuring that two institutions rather than one end up being brought into disrepute. Moreover, is it like HEFCW going to use vast sums of public money and flout the principles of public life to keep them afloat? The public has a right to know what went wrong and what is being done about it.

The report makes no direct reference to training concerning the Seven Principles of Public Life and of the conduct of student complaints procedures. Apart from the character assignation and false allegations made against students to discredit them and their complaints, I have had to send student leaflets to senior officers to explain to them what they are supposed to do. No mention is made of the need for the training of members of University Councils with regard to compliance with procedures and there is no way anyone can guarantee that they are being told the truth.

I hope via my petition that I can receive assurances with regard to these issues and the basic right of direct public consultation and complaint. If it is not forth coming, then this document will be used as evidence in my petition to the European Parliament that there is also no effective remedy for public complaints concerning higher education in Wales.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Mayes

## (i) P-03-205 Keep Abergavenny Livestock Market

### Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to preserve Abergavenny's historic character as a market town by not repealing or amending the Abergavenny Improvement Acts 1854 to 1871, thereby preserving all the associated economic, social and cultural benefits of a market town.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-205.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Barry Greenwood

**Number of signatures:** 4757

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 19 May 2009, 9 June 2009, 23 June 2009, 6 October 2009, 20 October, 24 November 2009, 25 January 2011, and 15 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from Monmouthshire County Council and from the petitioner.



CYNGOR  
**monmouthshire**  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
*sir fynwy*

National Assembly for Wales,  
Petitions Committee,  
Cardiff Bay,  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA.

Your Ref/Eich Cyf: P-03-205  
Our Ref/Ein Cyf: SKFG  
Date/Dyddiad: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011  
The Person dealing with this matter is/  
Y Person sy'n delio gyda'r mater yma yw:  
Mr. Steve Greenslade  
Tel/Ffôn: 01633 644266  
Fax/Ffacs: 01633 644260  
e-mail address/ cyfeiriad e-bost  
stevegreenslade@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Dear Sirs,

**Re: Abergavenny Livestock Market**

Thank you for your letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> March enquiring on progress with the application for repeal of the Abergavenny Improvement Acts.

I can advise that in consultation with officers of the Assembly, it was agreed some time ago that an appropriate "trigger" to request repeal would be the granting of planning consent to redevelop the current livestock market area. As you will be aware the Council has both land and a valid planning consent, with site works having commenced, for the relocation of the market to a new facility near Raglan.

Planning applications for the redevelopment of the Abergavenny site have now been submitted by Morrisons (for a superstore) and the Council (for a new Library). The expectation is for these to be considered by the Local Planning Authority towards the end of May.

Obviously there has been extensive discretionary and statutory consultation on the proposals. In terms of the repeal itself, the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government has previously advised his intention for his officers to manage the necessary consultation with key stakeholders and users.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance

Yours sincerely

**STEVE GREENSLADE**  
Director of Transition

S.K.F. Greenslade, J.P., C.P.F.A., I.R.R.V.  
Corporate Director – Regeneration, Environment & Resources/  
Cyfarwyddwy Corfforedig, Cyfarwyddiaeth Adfywio, Yr Amgylchedd ac Adnoddau  
Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, Cwmbran, NP44 2XH. Cyngor Sir Fynwy, Neuadd y Sir, Cwmbran, NP44 2XH  
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*Working with the citizens of Monmouthshire / Cwrthbio gyda dinasyddion sir Fynwy*

Correspondence from the public is welcome in Welsh or English / Croesewir gobebiaeth gan y cyhoedd yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg





### **a) KALM Survey I**

In April 2009 301 farmers (all Abergavenny Market Users) signed a KALM petition to retain the Abergavenny Acts which secure the present livestock market site. This evidence of actual farmer names and addresses was presented on 13th May 2009 to Mike German, then S.E. Wales Regional AM, who received them on behalf of our Monmouthshire constituency AM Nick Ramsay, who was unable to see us on the morning. You will already be aware of this and the petition documents are already with you.

### **b) KALM Survey II**

Following a series of four farmer discussion meetings hosted by KALM in the rural areas surrounding Abergavenny in October 2009, the voting was 203 to 16 to keep the Abergavenny Livestock Market - that's 92.7% of actual farmers in support of retention of the current market. These figures comprise those farmers who attended the meetings plus those unable to attend the meetings but who wished to participate in the vote. The voting forms have the names and addresses of the farmer - real, verifiable evidence in the possession of KALM.

These results are publicly available on the KALM website: [www.keepkalm.co.uk](http://www.keepkalm.co.uk) and are attached separately as Appendix A

### **c) MCC's lack of credible evidence**

MCC, as owners of the Abergavenny Livestock Market site, have failed to conduct any surveys or publish any evidence to back their claim that farmers who use Abergavenny livestock market support its sale. These claims of farmer support for the proposed new market at Bryngwyn appear to be based on two claims:

(i) discussions with leaders of the two farming unions, i.e. discussions with approximately two people.

(ii) the vote at a meeting organised by the NFU at Alice Springs golf club in 2009 where a verbal motion was put asking if those present wanted a market which they would have to pay for or a market which MCC would pay for. The show-of-hands vote indicated about 100 in favour of the MCC-funded market and about 5 not in favour. A predictable outcome to a very biased motion. The meeting was poorly advertised in the Abergavenny area and an Abergavenny farmer and long-time market user who was present, and who knows most of the local market users, said he recognised hardly anybody there. It was clear that most of those present were from the South of Monmouthshire and not regular Abergavenny market users, The voting was anonymous, and non-verifiable.

This contrasts with KALM's verifiable recorded voting described in paras a) and b) above. It was clear in the KALM meetings (para b above) that farming union representatives did not represent the opinions of the great majority of local market users and the recorded voting speaks for itself - 92.7% in favour of retaining the present market.

### **d) MCC's admission of no written consultation**

In response to a Freedom of Information Request submitted by lawyers acting for KALM in December 2010, MCC replied on 9th February 2011 as follows to one of the requests:

“Consultation Documents (farming community) - informal meetings and conversations took place, but there was no formal written consultation or response, so the Council holds no such documentation.”

This admission by MCC proves beyond doubt that local market users have NOT been properly consulted by MCC, and KALM’s evidence in a) and b) above proves that the local market users’ wishes are overwhelmingly against closing the market.

**MCC claims of “extensive consultation” with the farming community would appear to be false, casting doubt on Mr. Greenslade’s statement quoted above and on the processes which underpin it.**

**We request that this information and evidence be placed before the Minister at the appropriate time.**

Jenny Long  
*On behalf of KALM*

Barry Greenwood  
*On behalf of KALM*



## **P-03-219 Pharmacies in Barry**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh government to save our local high street pharmacies. Our intention in submitting this petition is to point out the current anomalies of the present system of 'neighbourhoods' as they stand with regard to relocating pharmacies in Wales.

No pharmacy is allowed to make a 'minor' relocation as defined by the Pharmacy Regulations 1992 unless it falls within the defined neighbourhood

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-219.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Aneurin Evans Chemists Ltd. and Judith Evans Pharmacies

**Number of signatures:** 3000+

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 23 June, 6 October, 8 December 2009, 1 February, 23 March, 27 April 2010, 08 February and 15 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Health and Social Services.

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-219  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/05303/11

Naomi Stocks  
Clerk Petitions Committee  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff  
CF991NA  
committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

 June 2011

Dear Naomi,

Further to my letter of 30 March to Christine Chapman, I am writing to provide you with an update on the review of the Pharmaceutical Services NHS regulations 1992/662.

The task and finish group that was referred to in the original correspondence has agreed a number of initial recommendations. These will be the subject of a public consultation which I expect to be held in mid September.

Regards  
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

## **P-03-220 Lower the speed limit on the A40 near Abergavenny**

### **Petition wording**

Petition to the Welsh Assembly:

In order for pedestrians to be able to walk in safety, we feel it is imperative that the 40 mph speed limit on the A40 between the Hardwick round-a-bout and Plas Derwen Way be lowered to at least 30 mph.

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-220.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Councillor Maureen Powell

**Number of signatures:** 220

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 19 May 2009, 7 July 2009, 22 September 2009, 10 November 2009, 8 December 2009, 1 February, 23 March, 25 May and 16 November 2010.

**Update:** An update will be considered.

# Agenda Item 3.12

## **P-03-240 Improvements to the A40 in Llanddewi Velfrey**

### **Petition Wording**

Due to the increasing levels of traffic, especially heavy goods vehicles, on the A40 and due to the inadequate provision of safe pavements and pedestrian crossings acknowledged by the Trunk Road Agency through research on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government we, the undersigned, hereby demand the Welsh Assembly Government, as a matter of urgency, improve road safety in the village of Llanddewi Velfrey, Narberth, Pembrokeshire through implementation of the following measures:

1. Improve the inadequate pavement along the southern side of the A40 between Llandaff Row and the far eastern end of the village to ensure that it meets current safety standards, that it is sufficiently wide for the safe use of pedestrians, pushchairs and wheel chair users taking into consideration the proximity of heavy goods traffic passing by at speeds often in excess of the current limit of 40mph.
2. Install speed cameras at the eastern and western ends of the village.
3. Utilise the existing electrical installation for road crossing signs to provide flashing warning lights at times when children will be crossing the A40 to catch their school bus.
4. Install traffic calming measures at each end of the village and at road junctions to emphasise the need to reduce speed.
5. Reduce the speed limit to 30mph.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-240.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Llanddewi Velfrey Community Council

**Number of signatures:** 154

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 22 September 2009, 10 November 2009, 8 December 2009, 1 February 2010, 23 March, 25 May, 16 November 2010, and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Local Government and Communities.

Dear Rhodri

I would be grateful if you could pass the following message to members of the Petitions Committee.

Many thanks  
Lynda Hill  
Clerk to Llanddewi Velfrey Community Council

---

Dear Members of the Petitions Committee

Members of the Llanddewi Velfrey Community Council are pleased that the Petitions Committee is due to reconvene and hope that it will now be possible to make progress on the petition to improve road safety on the section of the A40 going through the village. The petition was submitted in June/July 2009 and although limited action has been taken, largely as a result of the persistence of the Community Council, this is not sufficient to make significant improvements to the safety of pedestrians and road users.

The petition asked for:

- a speed limit of 30mph through the village
- speed cameras installed at both ends of the village to enforce the speed limit
- improved provision for safe road crossing
- pavements widened to meet safety standards
- traffic calming measures at both ends of the village and at road junctions to emphasise the need to reduce speed

The former Deputy First Minister, Ieuan Wyn-Jones made a site visit in 2010 and agreed that something definitely needed to be done, yet all that has so far been achieved is:

- the installation of flashing speed warning signs that, according to an electronic speed survey, have had a negligible effect on vehicle speeds
- widening of a small section of footpath at the far eastern edge of the village leaving the rest still unsafe
- painting of red strips across the road at both ends of the village still waiting for a decision on speed limit

According to minutes of previous meetings of the Petitions Committee the former Deputy First Minister repeatedly deferred a decision on reducing the speed limit saying he needed to consider it alongside the issue of the speed limit on the A40 in Abergavenny. These two sites are not comparable as the A40 in Llanddewi Velfrey is a major trunk road and, apart from a small stretch of the motorway in Port Talbot, is the first point that vehicles travelling from London and the south coast are asked to reduce their speed. A short time standing by the flashing speed warning signs shows this simply doesn't happen. Heavy goods vehicles are the worst offenders and the most dangerous for pedestrians.

Ieuan Wyn-Jones made an announcement just prior to the election that the Llanddewi Velfrey by-pass is to be included in spending plans for 2011-12. While this sounded optimistic at the time, no answers were forthcoming about the detail of these proposals and the extent to which progress is likely to be made on the by-pass. Residents agree that the immediate priority, no matter what plans are being considered, is to take steps NOW to secure the safety of local residents and road users.

We would be very grateful of your continued support and in particular some speedy action to resolve a very dangerous situation.

Many thanks  
Lynda Hill  
Clerk to Llanddewi Velfrey Community Council

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-240  
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/05094/11

Naomi Stocks  
Clerk Petitions Committee  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff  
CF991NA

7 June 2011

Der Naomi

I am responding to your letter dated 5 April regarding the Petitions Committee's enquiry into the improvements to the A40 at Llanddewi Velfrey.

I intend to review the current National Transport Plan and its proposed programme of works. On completion of the review I will announce the revised programme, this is likely to take place in the late autumn.

Until then I am unable to provide any commitment on the Llanddewi Velfrey scheme.

Yours sincerely,

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Correspondence: Carl.Sargeant@wales.gsi.gov.uk  
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## **P-03-221 Improved NHS Chiropody Treatment**

### **Petition wording**

We the Cynon Valley 50 plus Older People's Forum wish to present a petition for improved Chiropody Service (footcare) to be available on the NHS especially for Older People who are housebound in the RCT area:

Please sign our petition

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-221.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Cynon Valley 50 plus Older People's Forum

**Number of signatures:** 49

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 9 June, 22 September and 24 November 2009, 19 January, 23 March, 11 May, 29 June 2010, 1 March and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the petitioner.

Dear Mr. Rhodri Wyn Jones

Ref: P-03-221

Thank you for your letter of 3 June, 2011 addressed to my predecessor, Sian Jones.

By way of background, the Cynon Valley 50+ Older People's Forum have been diligent in pursuing this matter from the beginning. We were led to believe that we would be a consultee on the Foot Care Scoping Study, due to be published in the summer of 2010. Since September, 2010 I have sent at least 5 emails and made as many phone calls to officers of WAG to obtain a status on the Footcare Scoping Study. On 8 March, 2011, I wrote to Andrea Nicolas Jones:

Dear Andrea Nicholas-Jones,

I write again on behalf of the 5 50+ Forums in Rhondda Cynon Taff asking about the status of the Footcare Scoping Study, originally due to be published last summer.

On 24 February 24, 2011 I wrote you:

**'Dear Andrea,  
When I talked to your colleague a few weeks ago, he kindly told me to expect news of the publication of the study 'soon'.  
I have just visited the WAG website, and have found nothing mentioning news of the Footcare Study.  
Please advise me as to what I should tell the Cynon Valley 50+Forum (113 members) on 15 March, when they next meet and ask me about the status of this document?  
Sincerely,'**

I did not receive a response to the email.

I have reviewed the Minutes of the Petition's Committee dated 1 March 2011 on this matter, and they refer to a 'forthcoming consultation exercise'

I phoned your office today and was informed by your colleague that the Scoping Study should be published 'before the election period'. When I asked about the post publication consultation period, I was informed that it might be 'shortened'.

On behalf of the Forums in RCT, I am concerned that the post-consultation period will not allow enough time for our public, voluntary Forums, most of which meet in alternate months, to respond in a meaningful way.

Please provide the Forums with an expected timetable for publication and post publication consultation.

Because this issue is vital to the Cynon Valley 50+ Forum that meets on 15 March, I would appreciate a response by next Monday.

Yours truly,

**Anthony M. D'Anna**  
**50+ Forum Support Officer**

### **I did not receive a response to this email.**

Because I was getting nowhere with WAG, I turned to Cwm Taf LHB.

On 14 March, 2011 I wrote the following email to Nicola Davies, Cwm Taf LHB:

Hi,

This is a follow up to Claire's email prompted by my phone call to her this afternoon

I have been doggedly pursuing the Foot Care Scoping Study which was due to be published by Gwenda Thomas's office last summer. Apparently it is still with her office and due to be published 'for consultation before the election.'

As the election is in May, I am trying to get a copy of the Study in sufficient time to allow the Forums an opportunity to participate in the consultation.

On 1 March, 2011, the NAW's Petition's committee met, and according to its minutes:

#### **'P-03-221 Improved NHS Chiropody Treatment**

The committee considered an update to this petition.

#### **Actions**

The committee agreed to:

- Write to Cwm Taf Local Health Board to ask that that they involve the petitioners in the forthcoming consultation exercise on social footcare;

- Write to the Minister for Health and Social Services to request that the Committee be kept informed with on the progress of the consultation’.

Do you know what ‘forthcoming consultation’ the Petitions committee is referring to? How do we assure the Cynon Valley Forum, the original petitioner, are kept in the loop?

Cheers,

**Anthony M. D'Anna**  
**50+ Forum Support Officer**

**I did not receive a written response to this email either.**

However, I was assured that if the Cynon Valley Forum provided its response through the Cwm Taf Local Health Board, our comments would be included as consultees.

I am forwarding that to you now in the attachments entitled ‘Responses to Social Footcare in Wales Scoping Study’.

Please confirm that this is the correct approach.

**Anthony M. D'Anna**  
**50+ Forums Support Officer**

Age Concern Morgannwg Ltd  
Principality House  
Rear of 31 Taff Street  
Pontypridd  
CF37 4TR  
Tel: 01443 490870  
Fax: 01443 490679

---

**From:** Tony D'Anna  
**Sent:** 24 May 2011 16:12  
**To:** 'Denise.Jenkins@wales.nhs.uk'  
**Cc:** 'Rhian Webber (Cwm Taf Local Health Board - Executive Directorate)'  
**Subject:** Response to the Scoping Study

Dear Denise,

Attached are the responses of the Cynon Valley 50+ Forum Foot Care Campaign to the Foot Care Scoping Study.

Members have asked that these responses be forwarded directly to the appropriate departments in Welsh Government.

Can you advise as to the best way to do this?

Yours truly,

**Anthony M. D'Anna**  
**50+ Forums Support Officer**

## Cynon Valley 50+ Older People's Forum

### Responses to 'Social Foot Care in Wales' June, 2010

The Social Footcare Campaign of the Cynon Valley 50+ Older People's Forum met on 19 May, 2011, reviewed the report and has the following responses to the 'Social Foot Care in Wales' Scoping Study.

- A. The Social Footcare Campaign was first publicised in October, 2008. The Cynon Valley 50+ Forum filed a supporting petition with the National Assembly in early 2009. The Cynon Valley 50+ Forum was identified as a stakeholder. Why did it take nearly two years to complete this report?
- B. Why did it take over eight months after completion to release the report for consultation on or about 31 March, 2011?
- C. As we understand it, the responses are due by the end of May, 2011. Why aren't volunteer member organisations such as the Forums, which meet monthly, at best, given more time to formulate a response?
- D. Recommendation 12 states: "**Where charges for social foot care are made to individuals, these should range between £10 and £15 per visit**". We disagree because in our experience, some services charge less. For example, Wellbeing Regeneration charged £6.50 for toenail cutting. Some people get home visit footcare for £10.00.
- E. Sentence 4 of Paragraph 85 should be modified to include those with impaired eyesight [partial blindness] among those at risk of injury.

## **P-03-222 National Osteoporosis Society**

### **Petition Wording**

The National Osteoporosis Society calls upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh government to fully implement the Falls and Fractures Standard in the National Service Framework for Older People, ensuring that patients with and at risk of fragility fractures are identified, assessed and treated by Fracture Liaison Services (FLS) in all of the new Local Health Boards. We would like a FLS to be linked to every hospital that receives fragility fractures, and ask that the Welsh government insists upon universal provision of FLS's across the NHS in Wales

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-222.htm>

**Petition raised by:** National Osteoporosis Society

**Number of signatures:** 22

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 7 July 2009, 6 October 2009, 24 November 2009 and 29 June 2010

**Update:** An update will be considered.

# Agenda Item 3.15

## **P-03-253 Adoption of private sewers (Carmarthenshire residents)**

### **Petition wording**

To the Welsh Assembly, the petition of residents of Carmarthenshire request that the Welsh Assembly Government speed up negotiations with Welsh Water and agree the earliest possible date for all private sewers on existing housing estates to be adopted by Welsh Water and that sewers on future developments be likewise adopted.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-253.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Tracy Thomas

**Number of signatures:** 260

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 20 October 2009, 8 December 2009, 23 March, 15 June, 28 September, 16 November 2010 and 11 January 2011.

**Update:** Regulations that will transfer the responsibility for private sewers and lateral drains from householders to statutory water and sewerage companies (the Water Industry (Schemes for Adoption of Private Sewers) Regulations 2011), were passed in Plenary on 21 June 2011. The transfer will come into force from 1 October 2011.

## **P-03-260 Campaign for Dark Skies**

### **Petition Wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to tackle the growing problem of light pollution in Wales. Light pollution is the result of wasted light, which means wasted energy. The Campaign for Dark Skies are calling on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to provide clear guidance to Welsh local authorities regarding light pollution. Such guidance should be aimed at curbing light pollution by setting clear limits for lighting on all planning applications and by placing a statutory duty on local authorities to reduce the amount of wasted light in their area.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-260.htm>

**Petition raised by:** The Campaign for Dark Skies

**Number of signatures:** 1643

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 23 March 2010, 27 April 2010, 11 January 2011, 1 March 2011 and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the petitioners.

Tuesday, 07 June 2011

Naomi Stocks  
Clerk of the Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear Naomi

Thank you for your letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011 regarding the Campaign for Dark Skies petition (P-03-260).

Regarding the information you have received to date, I remain disappointed by the responses from the Minister for Transport and the WLGA.

The WLGA mention the use of new lighting technology such as LED lanterns and dimming technology which could help local authorities reduce light pollution, however they state that the speed in which these improvements can be made are limited by the availability of funding. I accept that in the current financial climate local authorities have budgetary concerns; however, this issue needs to be considered in light of the long term savings that can be achieved by reducing energy costs.

It is also worth noting that new technologies are not the only answer to the problem, proper lighting design and shielding can also contribute to a reduction in light pollution.

The Minister for Transport states they have no intention of switching off any trunk road street lights. I would like to reiterate that we have never and will never call for the switching off a single necessary street light; however, there is a problem with poorly designed lighting on the trunk road network. The Minister refers to the use of full cut off street lighting; we would like to see this type lighting used as standard by every highways authority across Wales, including the Welsh Government.

'Street Lighting – Invest to Save' by the Institute of Lighting Engineers was mentioned by the Minister for the Environment, we believe this guidance could form the basis of guidance issued to local authorities and public bodies. CfDS have worked with the Institute of Lighting Engineers for many years and their expertise has helped improve lighting design ensuring light is directed to where it is needed.

As members of your committee will see from the correspondence to date, there is a lot of confusion on this issue; this is why we believe the best approach would be to issue national guidance

Thank you once again for your continuing support.

Kind regards,

Mark Major

Campaign for Dark Skies  
Cardiff Astronomical Society

## **P-03-261 Local Solutions to Newtown Traffic Congestion**

### **Petition wording**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to defer a decision on the proposed bypass of Newtown until it has developed and trialled a set of sustainable measures in the town itself to address traffic congestion.

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-261.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Gary Saady

**Number of signatures:** 37

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 19 January, 23 March, 15 June 2010, 08 February 2011, and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Local Government and Communities.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-261  
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/05003/11

Naomi Stokes  
Clerk, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA  
Committee. business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

13. June 2011

*Der Naomi*

Thank you for your letter of 5 April about local solutions to traffic congestion in Newtown.

Last October we announced new plans to ease transport congestion in Newtown, having held a public consultation and taken into consideration the comments received from members of the public. The preferred option comprises a southern bypass, the Orange Option, plus a package of improvements to local transport to tackle local congestion in the town. I attach a copy of the Statement of Results and also a copy of the Preferred Route plan.

Currently construction of the 'Preferred Route' is programmed to start in late 2014/early 2015 with an anticipated two year construction period. I will however be prioritising the objectives of the National Transport Plan over the coming months, and will publish a rescheduled delivery plan this autumn.

Any major road scheme is subject to the Welsh Government obtaining statutory consent to do so. This means, we publish draft Orders and an Environmental Statement setting out the justification for the Scheme, identifying the land requirements, and assessing the impacts, which we would then mitigate wherever possible. As part of the statutory procedures, once we publish the draft Orders, we give the public and relevant bodies the opportunity to comment, support or object to the proposals. If there are objections then we hold a Public Local Inquiry before an Independent Inspector.

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

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*Printed on 100% recycled paper*



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Welsh Assembly Government

## **A483/A489 NEWTOWN STUDY**

### **STATEMENT OF RESULTS FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

OCTOBER 2010

**A483/A489 NEWTOWN STUDY  
STATEMENT OF RESULTS  
FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**AUGUST 2010**

**Contents:**

- 1 INTRODUCTION**
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- 3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION**
- 4 ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES**
  - Analysis of Questionnaire responses
  - County Council and Community Views
  - Non Statutory Bodies
- 5 OUTCOMES**
  - Actions Taken Following Concerns Raised During Public Consultation
- 6 REASONS FOR SELECTING THE PREFERRED ROUTE**
- 7 DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER'S DECISION**
- 8 PROTECTION OF THE PREFERRED ROUTE**
- 9 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

**REFERENCES**

- ANNEX A PUBLIC CONSULTATION BROCHURE & QUESTIONNAIRE**
- ANNEX B PREFERRED OPTION PLAN**
- ANNEX C PREFERRED ROUTE PLAN – TR111**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2007 the Welsh Assembly Government commissioned a study to address the transport problems associated with the A483 and A489 through Newtown. As part of this study, public consultation took place in September 2009.
- 1.2 This Statement of Results summarises the scheme's technical, economic and environmental aspects and the views expressed during the public consultation. It also explains the Deputy First Minister's decision, acting in his capacity as Minister for the Economy and Transport.

## 2 DEVELOPMENT AND APPRAISAL OF OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Study placed specific emphasis on the social, economic and environmental, impacts.
- 2.2 The main issues raised by the study were:
- The existing road network is subject to significant congestion and delays, particularly at peak and tourist times or in an event of an accident.
  - Two existing railway bridges on the A483 and A489 in Newtown where bridge headrooms are less than 5.3m, preventing high-sided heavy goods vehicles from passing under.
  - A number of 'rat runs' have developed through housing estates as an alternative to the congested through roads.
  - There is a lack of crossing opportunity for north-south movements over the River Severn.
  - Gradual housing and commercial development will increase the demand on the existing road network.
  - There are limited commercial opportunities within Newtown and to the west.
  - The parallel nature of the River Severn, trunk road and railway line causes severance of the town.
  - Perceived diminished quality of life along the trunk road.
  - Lack of centralised public transport hub caused by separate railway and bus stations.
  - Perceived road safety issues along 'rat runs'.
  - Considerable number of accesses onto the trunk road.
  - Physical barriers preventing continuous pedestrian, cycling and other non-motorised users' links.
  - Air Quality issues particularly at the A483/A489 junction in Newtown.

- 2.3 The study used Welsh Transport Planning and Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG)<sup>1</sup> principles.
- 2.4 To address the problems raised, and in line with strategic network objectives, we identified Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs). We developed options in consultation with stakeholders, appraised how they performed against these objectives using WelTAG, and discarded those that did not perform well.
- 2.5 These options generally included a bypass proposal either as a stand alone scheme or combined with other improvements, with three exceptions. These other improvements were either off line highway improvements, on-line rail bridges, highway or traffic improvements or improvements to local transport, including cycling and public transport.
- 2.6 A northern bypass either on its own or in combination with other improvements was discarded as it did not satisfy all the TPOs.
- 2.7 On line bridge improvements were considered unacceptable to Network Rail and did not satisfy the TPOs.
- 2.8 A southern bypass in combination with online highway and traffic improvements or a southern bypass in combination with online highway and traffic improvements and local transport improvements satisfied all requirements.
- 2.10 The consultation brochure at Annex A describes the resulting options in more detail.
- 2.11 The Technical Appraisal Report<sup>2</sup> records the findings of the study in detail.

### **3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 We consulted on three bypass routes; Orange, Brown, and Purple, in combination with improvements to public transport and non motorised users facilities, together with, as variants, the same options but including improvement of the existing A483/A489 trunk roads through Newtown. Consultation took place between 3 September and 24 November 2009.
- 3.2 1,403 people attended the exhibition and preview evening. We received 833 completed questionnaires and seven letters from individuals, interested groups, community councils and local authorities. The report on the consultation<sup>3</sup> contains the details and a summary of the views expressed is given below.

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Transport Planning and Appraisal Guidance WelTAG, June 2009 – on our website

<sup>2</sup> A483/A489 Newtown Study – Technical Appraisal Report, (in two volumes), March 2010

<sup>3</sup> A483/A489 Newtown Study - Report on September 2009 Public Consultation – on our website

## 4 ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES

### Analysis of Questionnaire responses

- 4.1 The questionnaire asked people about the need for improvement, what was most important to them and their option preference. Analysis of the responses to the nine questions is as follows.

*Question 1 - Do you consider that the flow of traffic through Newtown needs to be improved?*

96% of questionnaire respondents supported the proposal; 2% against; 2% did not express an opinion

*Question 2 - What do you think are the current problems on this section of the A483/A489 trunk road through Newtown?*

Based upon an analysis of the responses the current problems were put in the following descending order of importance:

- (b) Congestion of traffic through Newtown
- (h) Other - 103 respondents highlighted other current problems. Typical additional problems highlighted were; Poor synchronisation of the traffic lights on the network causing disjointed flows; Pollution; HGVs using back roads such as Plantation Lane; Speeds too high and unsafe for cycling
- (a) Poor safety for pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists
- (d) Community severance effects caused by traffic
- (e) Traffic noise or vibration effects
- (c) Poor public transport reliability
- (g) Inappropriate use of local roads by vehicular traffic (rat running)
- (f) Limited right turn facilities

*Question 3 - Do you consider that there should be a bypass to Newtown?*

91 % indicated support, 7 % were against the idea and 2% did not express an opinion.

*Question 4 - If you do not consider a bypass is necessary, please suggest an alternative solution to the problems*

66 respondents suggested an alternative was necessary. Typical of the alternative solutions suggested were; Sort out the traffic lights and assess the effect before making any decisions; Re-education of the populace to walk, cycle and use buses with incentives/facilities such as buses to the industrial sites; Replace traffic signals with roundabouts; Reduce school traffic by provision of better buses and cycle paths

*Question 5 - For the section between A489 Llanidloes Road and A483 Dolfor road, which option on the brochure map do you prefer if a bypass were part of the solution?*

Orange	77%
Brown	13%
Purple	6%
No preference expressed	4%

*Question 6 - Which additional works with your choice of bypass option would you see as beneficial to Newtown and the surrounding area?*

The response to this question ranked these additional works in the order given below.

- b) Improved train service on the Cambrian line (54%)
- c) On-line improvements to Llanidloes Road (53%)
- d) On-line improvements to New Road (52%)
- e) On-line improvements to Pool Road (52%)
- f) Footway improvements to Llanidloes Road, New Road and Pool Road (45%)
- a) Improved bus services (45%)
- h) Improved pedestrian and cycle links across the River Severn (41%)
- g) Improved pedestrian and cycle links across the Cambrian railway (36%)
- i) Improved access to the railway station (36%)

91 respondents proposed a number of additional items of work to be included with the main works, examples of which are: Footpaths under the railway bridges; local on-line improvements and improvements to the pavements; footpath along Canal Road by Tan y Graig; cycle paths in and around Newtown

*Question 7 - Which to you would be the most important factor in choosing an option?*

The response to this question ranked these additional works in the order given below.

- f) Removal of through traffic from Newtown (73%)
- e) Reducing traffic in communities (12%)
- a) Impact on residential property (10%)
- h) Improved facilities for non-motorised (6%) users
- b) Impact on landscape (5%)
- c) Impact on farms and businesses (5%)
- d) Protection of wildlife (4%)
- g) Cost (3%)

Some 34 respondents proposed additional factors that should be considered when choosing an option. Typical examples of the additional factors were: Impact on Cedewain special school and its facilities; improving the through traffic flow; reduction in pollution

*Question 8 - Which of the following best describes your interest in the scheme?*

- Resident of Newtown (64%)
- Local resident (e.g. Kerry, Caersws, or other communities near the route) (24%)
- Landowner through which one of the routes would pass (3%)
- Regular user of the A483/A489 (71%)
- Tourist or a visitor to the area(3%)

Other: 112 respondents added comments about their interest in the scheme. A sample of the comments are : Connections with Cedewain school with a child there, teacher, support worker and governor; factory and or a service based in Newtown; owner of a static caravan in the Glandulas Caravan Holiday Park

*Question 9 - Please add any other comments you may have or provide reasons for your choice*

426 respondents added comments to justify their decision. Additional comments on the options and the problems within Newtown were also aired.

The main themes of the comments were:

1. The Purple option is too close to Cedewain School
2. Congestion and traffic delays on the existing roads
3. Purple option as it minimises the amount of farmland used and land that will become part of Newtown if the Orange option is chosen
4. Brown option because it causes less harm to residents and businesses
5. Orange because it takes the new road out of residential areas
6. Orange option needs a connection into Mochdre Industrial Estate
7. Use of Plantation Lane by heavy goods vehicles
8. The bypass is overdue and the existing situation makes Newtown a place to be avoided
9. Keep traffic out of Mochdre Industrial Estate. It would also make access between units difficult.
10. Incentives to walk, cycle, use bus and car share would be more effective.
11. Orange option takes traffic from town centre
12. Bypass should be a dual carriageway
13. There is damage to the economic well being of Mid Wales due to the bottleneck in Newtown.
14. Brown option would have the least effect on the countryside
15. Consideration should be given to a passing lane to ease flows and cater for increase in traffic.

### **Community and County Council Views**

- 4.2 **Mochdre with Pentrowed Community Councils** agreed that the traffic flow through Newtown needed to be improved. They considered that the congestion was the most significant problem followed by the inappropriate use of local roads by vehicular traffic with limited right turn facilities as the third problem. They supported a bypass; either the Orange or the Brown options. They also supported the Variant 1 proposals including improvement of the Cambrian line services.
- 4.3 **Newtown and District Civic Society** agreed that the traffic flow through Newtown needed to be improved. They considered that the congestion was the most significant problem followed by poor safety for pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists. The inappropriate use of local roads by vehicular traffic was the third problem. They supported the Orange bypass option. They also supported the Variant 1 proposals including improvement of the Cambrian line services. They proposed that there should be a link from the bypass into Mochdre Industrial Estate. They expressed concern at the closeness of the Orange bypass option to the earthworks close to Castell y Dail farmhouse. Their final comment concerned the lack of obvious overtaking opportunities on the adjoining network and that the bypass was a chance to provide this facility.

- 4.4 **Powys County Council (PCC)** supported the need for a bypass to Newtown and considered that the Orange option with Variant 1 was most appropriate. They drew attention to the lack of obvious overtaking opportunities on the adjoining network and that the bypass was a chance to provide this facility, possibly using a 2+1 layout. They proposed that there should be a link from the bypass and A483 Dolfor Road into Mochdre Industrial Estate. PCC considered that the Brown option would have too many accesses and pedestrian movements even when the existing accesses were optimised. The Purple option, whilst following the current protected line, was considered to be too close to residential properties and the special needs school Ysgol Cedewain. PCC also supported enhancement of public transport facilities.
- 4.5 **Powys County Council Countryside Services** highlighted the need to maintain the non-motorised user routes.

#### **Non Statutory Bodies**

- 4.6 **Countryside Council for Wales** were content that the description of the baseline environment has been considered in adequate detail to give a balanced view of the baseline conditions and the potential impacts of the three bypass options. They considered that the Orange option was the least preferred option. They highlighted the environmental and ecological sensitivity of the area around Mochdre Brook.
- 4.7 **Montgomeryshire Wildlife Trust** submitted a letter and plan showing two woodland habitats that are of interest to them. These are both close to the Orange Bypass option.
- 4.8 **Defence Estates Safeguarding** confirmed that the area was outside the Ministry of Defence safeguarding areas.
- 4.9 **Ysgol Cedewain** Governors accepted that Newtown required a bypass and supported the Orange option, but also expressed their concern at the impact on Ysgol Cedewain if the Purple option was adopted.
- 4.10 **SUSTRANS** did not support any bypass option but did support the local transport improvements. They included details of further improvements they would wish to see and queried the need for widening the existing A483/A489 at a number of locations.
- 4.11 **Farmers' Union of Wales** supported the need for a bypass with the Orange option being preferred. They felt that the closeness of the existing traffic signals prevented traffic clearing properly and was a problem.

#### **5 OUTCOMES**

The public consultation process was considered effective in terms of attendance at the exhibition and the number of returned questionnaires and written responses.

There was clear support for improvements to the traffic flow through Newtown with strong support for a bypass. There was also support for the improvement of the local transport facilities within Newtown.

There was also support for localised improvements to the existing trunk roads to improve footways and provide cycleways and additional right turning facilities.

### **Actions Taken Following Concerns Raised During Public Consultation**

We listened carefully to the views expressed and carried out some further work, described below:

(a) Changes of Use within Mochdre Industrial Estate

We have investigated the possible implications on generated traffic that may result from possible changes of use within the Mochdre Industrial Estate to retail. This showed that there would be an increase in traffic using the Coleg Powys roundabout. We would have to look more closely at the economic implications of this in the next stage of design.

(b) Inclusion of a link from the Proposed Bypass Route to the Mochdre Industrial Estate (Heol Ashley)

The Orange Bypass Route could be designed to accommodate a link to the Eastern end of the Mochdre Industrial Estate. This results in a slight reduction in traffic using this route between the A489 and A483 trunk roads. We would consider this in more detail at the next stage of design.

(c) Provision of Wide Single 2+1 Carriageway

We are satisfied that we could design the Orange Bypass Route to incorporate lengths of Wide Single 2+1 carriageway to increase the amount of overtaking available on the route. We would consider this in more detail at the next stage of design.

(d) Proposed Extension of the Glandulas Caravan Park

We have considered the implications of the proposed extension of the Glandulas Caravan Park on the Orange Route. We would consider this in more detail at the next stage of design.

## **6 REASONS FOR SELECTING THE PREFERRED OPTION**

- 6.1 There is significant support for an improvement to the traffic flow through Newtown, demonstrated by the overall support received for improving the traffic flow and for the provision of a bypass with the local transport measures.
- 6.2 Over three quarters of the respondents supported the Orange option for a Bypass. 13% supported the Brown option and 6% supported the Purple option.

6.3 There is significant support for the on-line and local transport improvement works and the improvement to services on the Cambrian Railway. The Preferred Option proposals are shown on the Plan in Annex B.

## **7 DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER'S DECISION**

7.1 Having taken into account the technical, social, economic and environmental aspects of this scheme and the outcome of the public consultation, the Deputy First Minister has decided to:

- Adopt the Orange Bypass Route together with local transport improvement measures within Newtown and on-line improvements of the A483 and A489 within Newtown as the Preferred Option to address the transport problems identified in the A483/A489 Newtown study;
- Publish a TR111 Plan (Annex C) to protect the entire Orange Bypass Route for planning purposes.

7.2 The TR111 shows the Preferred Route as a broad black line. This is indicative only and may change during the next stage of design.

## **8 PROTECTION OF THE PREFERRED ROUTE**

8.1 By publishing a TR111 plan, we protect the route under the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995. This means that the Local Planning Authority will refer to the Welsh Assembly Government all future planning applications that are near the Preferred Route. You may inspect the TR111 plan at Newtown, Ladywell House, at Powys County Council, County Hall, Llandrindod Wells, and at our Offices in Cathays Park, Cardiff.

8.2 In certain circumstances, any owner having difficulty selling property on the line of the route may apply for blight. If any case meets set criteria, we will purchase the property.

8.3 The protection of a Preferred Route does not commit us to the line of that route. We are only committed once the Line Order is made, described in the next section.

## **9 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

9.1 We will investigate further and design the scheme in more detail – known as Preliminary Design. In particular, we will be looking at the environmental and engineering issues in more detail, taking account of the comments made during consultation and looking at a junction strategy and options for side roads and accesses.

9.2 After Preliminary Design, the next key stage is publication of draft Orders under the Highways Act 1980 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981. The draft Orders comprise the powers to establish a line, modify the side roads, purchase land and put in place any other rights we need to deliver the scheme. There will be a period during which people who have an interest in, or might be affected by the proposals may object to the draft Orders and even suggest alternative proposals. If we cannot resolve these

objections, and depending on the issues raised and the weight of objection, we may hold a Public Local Inquiry. An independent Inspector would hear and consider the evidence and make a recommendation for the Deputy First Minister to take into account when deciding whether to make the Orders.

- 9.3 The scheme is a "relevant project" under Regulation 48 (1) (a) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994 (SI 1994/No 2716) in relation to Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. This means that we will carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment and produce an Environmental Statement. We will publish this at the same time we publish draft Orders.

**ANNEX A**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION BROCHURE AND QUESTIONNAIRE**

**ANNEX B**

**PREFERRED OPTION PLAN**

**ANNEX C**

**PREFERRED ROUTE PLAN - TR111**

This map is a reproduction from the original survey plan, which has been prepared at the expense of the applicant. It is not a substitute for a site plan or a site plan submitted to the relevant authority for approval. It is not a substitute for a site plan submitted to the relevant authority for approval. It is not a substitute for a site plan submitted to the relevant authority for approval.

**KEY**  
 PREFERRED ROUTE

**A483/A489 NEWTOWN STUDY**  
**TR111 ROUTE PROTECTED FOR PLANNING PURPOSES**



DRG No. 203 - TR111  
 AUGUST 2010



# Agenda Item 3.18

## **P-03-262 Academi Heddwch Cymru / Wales Peace Institute**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to investigate the potential for and practicality of Wales having a Peace Institute concerned with Peace and Human Rights, comparable with those supported by state governments in Flanders, Catalonia and elsewhere in Europe

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-262.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Welsh Centre for International Affairs, Cymdeithas y Cynod, Cynefin y Werin and CND Cymru

**Number of signatures:** 1525

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 10 November 2009, 8 December 2009, 19 January 2010, 23 February 2010, 27 April 2010, 25 May 2010, 28 September 2010, 12 October 2010, and 29 March 2011

**Update:** An update will be considered to this petition.

## **P-03-265 Include leaving home information and education in the National Curriculum – Shelter Cymru**

### **Petition wording**

We ask the National Assembly for Wales to apply pressure on the Welsh Assembly Government to include leaving home information and education in the national curriculum.

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-265.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Shelter Cymru

**Number of signatures:** 350+

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 8 December 2009, 1 February 2010, 23 March 2010 and 11 May 2010, 13 July, 30 November 2010, 1 March and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the petitioner.

June 27<sup>th</sup> 2011

Dear Chair,

**P-03-265 Include leaving home information and education in the national curriculum**

Thank you for the correspondence on April 5th 2011 in relation to our petition.

We appreciate the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning's consideration of our submission 'Making the Case for Leaving Home Education'.

Whilst we are disappointed that the Minister is unable to support the submission's recommendations, we recognise that there are no current plans to review the PSE curriculum. We will continue to collect evidence to support our call for including leaving home education in the curriculum. This evidence will be used as a lobbying tool when the PSE curriculum is reviewed.

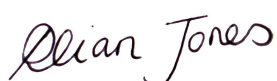
Furthermore we are fully aware that the delivery of the curriculum is delegated to schools working in partnership with the local authority. We will continue to promote leaving home education at this local level to ensure young people gain access to high quality and consistent information. We have completed a consultation exercise on the 2011-2014 Children and Young People's Plans across Wales and look forward to seeing the contents of the final drafts in due course.

We fully understand that including leaving home education in the curriculum does not guarantee that all young people will gain access to the necessary information. However we strongly believe that including it as a statutory requirement would ensure access to the majority of young people.

Our Education Service will continue to work with a range of partners across Wales to ensure we are also reaching hard to reach groups and targeting the information according to young people's specific needs.

May we take this opportunity to thank the Petitions Committee for considering our petition and to the Minister for responding to our evidence and recommendations. The young people involved in developing and promoting the petition found it extremely worthwhile. We recognise and appreciate the support of the National Assembly's Outreach Team during the entire process.

Your sincerely



Rhian Jones  
Education Coordinator  
Shelter Cymru

## **P-03-268 Accident and Emergency Department at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan**

### **Petition wording**

We, the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to provide an Accident and Emergency Unit at the new Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan – Blaenau Gwent Hospital.

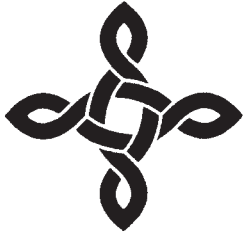
**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-264.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Rhianydd Williams

**Number of signatures:** 16 (In addition, an associated petition collected 302 signatures.)

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 8 December 2009 and 23 March, 29 June and 28 September 2010

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board.



GIG  
NHS

268  
PT 18  
Bwrdd Iechyd  
Aneurin Bevan  
Health Board

Our Ref: AG/RWJ/kj.eph Direct Line: 01495 765072

29 June 2011

Rhodri Wyn Jones  
Team Support, Petitions Committee,  
National Assembly for Wales,  
Cardiff Bay,  
Cardiff CF99 1NA

Dear Rhodri,

**Re: Petition: Accident and Emergency Unit at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan**

Further to your telephone conversation with Mrs Vanessa Price on 23 June 2011, I am writing to provide an update on the process that the Health Board has adopted to identify a safe and sustainable service model for Minor Injury Services across Gwent, which include Minor Injury Services provided from Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan.

You will recall that the Health Board, under the leadership of the Nurse Director, established a clinical Task and Finish Group to: -

- Set out the principles for safe and sustainable Minor Injury Services
- Agreed clinical viability thresholds, based on evidence of best practices, national reviews and professional guidelines
- Undertake detailed case mix reviews for each Minor Injury Services against the agreed clinical viability thresholds
- Develop options for safe and sustainable Minor Injury Services

The Task and Finish Group included lay membership and representatives from Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council.

I am pleased to report that this work is now nearing completion and will shortly be shared with a broader group of stakeholder representatives drawn from across the Health Board area. This event that takes place on the 13<sup>th</sup> July will be chaired by the Chief Officer of Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council.

Bwrdd Iechyd Aneurin Bevan  
Pencadlys  
Bloc A, Ty Mamhilad,  
Ystad Parc Mamhilad,  
Pontypwl, Torfaen, NP4 0YP  
Ffon: 01873 732732 (prif switshwrdd)  
e-bost: enquiries@aneurinbevanhb.wales.nhs.uk

Aneurin Bevan Health Board  
Headquarters,  
Block A, Mamhilad House,  
Mamhilad Park Estate,  
Pontypool, Torfaen. NP4 0YP  
Tel: 01873 732732 (main switchboard)  
e-mail: :  
enquiries@aneurinbevanhb.wales.nhs.uk



The work of the Task and Finish Group and outcome of discussion with stakeholders will inform the future service models and configuration of Minor Injury Services in our area. I expect that the Health Board will formally receive a paper on the future configuration of Minor Injury Services in September 2011, at which point a final decision will be made and plans put in place to implement the preferred service model.

I trust that I have answered the specific queries that you have raised. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Andrew Goodall**  
**Prif Weithredwr/ Chief Executive**

**Bwrdd Iechyd Aneurin Bevan**  
Pencadlys,  
Bloc A, Ty Mamhilad,  
Ystad Parc Mamhilad,  
Pontypwl, Torfaen, NP4 0YP  
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e-bost: [enquiries@aneurinbevanhb.wales.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@aneurinbevanhb.wales.nhs.uk)



**Aneurin Bevan Health Board**  
Headquarters,  
Block A, Mamhilad House,  
Mamhilad Park Estate,  
Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 0YP  
Tel: 01873 732732 (main switchboard)  
e-mail: :  
[enquiries@aneurinbevanhb.wales.nhs.uk](mailto:enquiries@aneurinbevanhb.wales.nhs.uk)

# Agenda Item 3.21

## **P-03-271 Business Rates in Narberth**

### **Petition wording**

We the business ratepayers of Narberth call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to conduct an impact assessment on how businesses in the town will be affected by the changes in rateable values. This assessment should include effect on jobs and business closures.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-271.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Narberth Chamber of Trade

**Number of signatures:** 91

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science.

## **P-03-286 Ceredigion Business Rates**

### **Petition wording**

We the business rate payers of Ceredigion, call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to conduct an impact assessment on how businesses in Ceredigion will be affected by the changes in rateable values.

This assessment should include effects on jobs and business closure.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-286.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Ceredigion Business Ratepayers

**Number of signatures:** 68

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science.

Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Busnes, Menter, Technoleg a Gwyddoniaeth  
Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/05195/11

William Powell AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

27<sup>th</sup> June 2011

Dear William

Thank you for your letter dated 5 April 2011 to Carl Sargeant. I am replying as I now have ministerial responsibility for non domestic rates.

The original rural rate relief scheme, which was introduced in 1998, was greatly enhanced in 2002 to complement the Rural Recovery Plan introduced by the Assembly Government to support the rural areas of Wales affected by the outbreak of foot and mouth disease. As a consequence of enhancing the scheme the cost of providing relief rose from £0.5 million in 2001-2 to £17.5 million in 2004-5.

Under the rural rates relief scheme scheme, local authorities designated boundaries of rural settlement areas, and they implemented discretionary relief schemes for businesses within these boundaries. Local authorities across Wales used different criteria when drawing up boundaries, and operated different relief schemes. Consequently, entitlement to rates relief in Wales depended on geographical location, and small businesses in many poorer areas, both urban and rural were not entitled to any relief. Some businesses paid no rates, but other, similar businesses paid full rates, depending on their geographical location and the policy of individual local authorities. The Assembly Government funded 90% of rural rates relief, but had no control over the cost as it depended entirely on the individual relief schemes operated by local authorities, and this was clearly unsustainable.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Correspondence [edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)

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When the foot and mouth outbreak ended we could have returned to the original scheme that was in place prior to 2002, but after extensive consultations with representatives from business and local authorities, the Assembly Government decided to fund a much fairer scheme in which all small businesses are treated equally, whatever their location in Wales. Under this scheme, the majority of business premises fall within the rateable value thresholds that could qualify for relief – only around 21% of businesses benefited from the rural rate relief scheme. This inevitably meant that some areas and businesses received less business rates relief, but businesses in other areas, particularly in poorer urban and rural communities not covered by the rural rate relief scheme, now receive relief.

I have no plans to re-instate a rural rates relief scheme, and am pleased that the independent research conducted last year found that the small business sector is generally supportive of the current scheme

The Local Government Finance Act 1988 gives local authorities the power to grant relief to businesses on real grounds of hardship if they believe that it is in the interest of the community generally (ie the council tax payers of the local authority). The Welsh Assembly Government funds 75% of hardship relief, and provision for this has been included in the cost envelope of this scheme. Local authorities also have powers to fund rates relief for small businesses with a rateable value up to £12,000, if they are prepared to fund it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. J. Jones', written in a cursive style.

# Agenda Item 3.23

## **P-03-273 Transportation of wind turbines in Mid Wales**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to issue guidance to Local Planning Authorities to ensure that communities are properly consulted on wind farm developments, that impact on road infrastructure is properly assessed and that the broader effects of traffic disruption on sectors such as tourism are properly considered before any development is approved to take place. We believe the only way this can be properly concluded is by way of a public inquiry.

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-273.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Welshpool Town Council

**Number of signatures:** 1

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 19 January 2010, 23 March 2010, 25 May, 13 July, 28 September, 16 November 2010, 25 January 2011 and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Local Government and Communities, the WLGA and the petitioner.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/05005/11

Naomi Stocks  
Clerk  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff  
CF991NA  
committee.business@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

13 June 2011

I am responding to your letter of 5 April 2011 regarding petition P-03-273, Transportation of wind turbines in Mid Wales, specifically that the findings from the industry trial runs be shared with the future committee responsible for this petition.

Renewables UK commissioned the report on behalf of several of their members. As such, it does not belong to the Welsh Government.

If you require a copy, please contact Mr Richard Evans, Regional Divisional Manager, RES UK & Ireland Limited, Beaufort Court, Egg Farm Lane, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire WD4 8LR.

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

Page 90

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Correspondence: Carl.Sargeant@wales.gsi.gov.uk  
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# WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL

Robert A Robinson FRICS AILCM

Town Clerk

Triangle House Union Street Welshpool SY21 7PG

Telephone 01938 553142

Email [wtcouncil@btinternet.com](mailto:wtcouncil@btinternet.com) Web site [www.Welshpooltowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.Welshpooltowncouncil.co.uk)

## **Appendix to the Petition (TAN8) – PET (4) -01-11 Agenda 21-06-2011**

### **Introduction**

Welshpool Town Council has been aware of the overall effects of TAN8 for many years and has taken the opportunity to take part in all the consultations at each stage regarding any matters affecting TAN8. A petition has been presented in recent times to the Welsh Assembly on the transport effects of these proposals affecting TAN8.

Although the announcement by the First Minister was welcome (limiting the TAN8 proposals to being the maximum development limit) this is not enough to stop the unacceptable effects on Mid Wales of the developments concerned.

### **Current renewable energy proposals**

The current renewable energy proposals are totally unacceptable (to any community) and the Association supports the objections to TAN8. The effect of the pylon line (50m high), electricity hub (the size of 20 football pitches) and the wind farms are beyond that which any community should be asked to take even in an urban area let alone a rural area. Indeed the transport, for all these parts of equipment (the subject of this petition) have not been considered fully and in a letter from Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Dept of Energy and Climate Change dated 25<sup>th</sup> August 2009) it is clear that an 'overall transport strategy' is to be prepared. To date this has not appeared to be the case.

The level of transportation proposed on poor substandard rural roads is attached.

### **Public consultation**

On 17<sup>th</sup> June 2011 the Town Council completed a door to door survey of all its residents and a copy of the survey results are attached.

### **Request**

Welshpool Town Council are seeking for the Welsh Assembly to review TAN8 through a public inquiry. Until such an inquiry is held taking into consideration all aspects of TAN8 (including transportation effects) the Council wishes to request that no further progress is made with regard to this policy.

RAR/June2011

**WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL**

**MID WALES – TRANSPORT SCHEDULE – TAN 8**

**INTRODUCTION**

The transport can be estimated and the following figures have been prepared on the following basis:

- 9 abnormal loads for each wind turbine and for each pylon**
- 1 abnormal load for each transformer required for the hub**
- 990 other vehicle movements per turbine and pylon**
- There has been no allowance for extra traffic to service the hub**

<b>ITEM</b>				
<b>WIND FARMS</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>
<b>PYLONS</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>TRANSFORMERS</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TIME PERIOD</b>	<b>3 YEARS</b>	<b>4 YEARS</b>	<b>5 YEARS</b>	<b>7 YEARS</b>
<b>ABNORMAL LOADS ESTIMATE</b>	<b>4507</b>	<b>4507</b>	<b>4507</b>	<b>4507</b>
<b>ABNORMAL LOAD CONVOYS</b>	<b>1507</b>	<b>1507</b>	<b>1507</b>	<b>1507</b>
<b>GENERAL TRAFFIC</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>
<b>ABNORMAL LOAD CONVOYS PER WEEK</b>				
<b>BYPASS</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WELSHPOOL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>NEWTOWN</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>

The general traffic of vehicles would be felt all over Montgomeryshire.

From the trials done through Welshpool it would take just about 30 minutes to get one convoy through the Town from the Station to Raven Square. The one single lorry which was trialled took 12 minutes.

# WELSHPOOL TOWN COUNCIL

17TH JUNE 2011

## WIND FARM, TRANSPORT, ELECTRICITY HUB AND PYLON SURVEY RESULTS

	WELSHPOOL	HIGH SCHOOL	OVERALL	
NUMBER OF ADULT RESIDENTS/SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	5207	372	5579	
NUMBER OF SURVEY FORMS RECEIVED	1348	372	1720	
NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY	2049	372	2421	
PERCENTAGE RETURN ELECTORS TO RETURNS	39	100	43	PERCENT

### NUMERICAL RESULTS

NO	ITEM	<u>WELSHPOOL RESULTS</u>			<u>HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS</u>			<u>OVERALL RESULTS</u>		
		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
1	SUPPORT WIND FARMS	308	1676	56	155	168	46	463	1844	102
2	CONCERNED ABOUT HUB	1746	257	23	159	145	33	1905	402	56
3	CONCERNED ABOUT PYLONS	1739	278	22	231	111	20	1970	389	42
4	CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSPORT	1695	296	42	210	130	21	1905	426	63
5	SUPPORT A PUBLIC INQUIRY	1480	351	195	173	106	83	1653	457	278

### PERCENTAGE RESULTS

NO	ITEM	<u>WELSHPOOL RESULTS</u>			<u>HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS</u>			<u>OVERALL RESULTS</u>		
		YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
1	SUPPORT WIND FARMS	15.03	81.80	2.73	41.67	45.16	12.37	19.12	76.17	4.21
2	CONCERNED ABOUT HUB	85.21	12.54	1.12	42.74	38.98	8.87	78.69	16.60	2.31
3	CONCERNED ABOUT PYLONS	84.87	13.57	1.07	62.10	29.84	5.38	81.37	16.07	1.73
4	CONCERNED ABOUT TRANSPORT	82.72	14.45	2.05	56.45	34.95	5.65	78.69	17.60	2.60
5	SUPPORT A PUBLIC INQUIRY	72.23	17.13	9.52	46.51	28.49	22.31	68.28	18.88	11.48

### ADULTS WARD BY WARD - 2010

POWYS WEB SITE	TOTAL	CHILDREN	ADULTS
GUNGROG	2597	449	2148
CASTLE	1563	311	1252
LLANERCHYDDOL	2109	302	1807
TOTALS	<u>6269</u>	<u>1062</u>	<u>5207</u>

This survey has been verified by Ewan Macleod (retired diplomat).....

**Our Ref/Ein Cyf:**  
**Your Ref/Eich Cyf:**  
**Date/Dyddiad:**  
**Please ask for/Gofynnwch am:**  
**Direct line/Llinell uniongyrchol:**  
**Email/Ebost:**

P-03-273/316 and P-03-316  
6<sup>th</sup> May 2011  
Tim Peppin  
029 20 468669  
[tim.peppin@wlga.gov.uk](mailto:tim.peppin@wlga.gov.uk)



Naomi Stocks  
Clerk, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA

Dear Naomi

### **Petitions Committee**

Thank you for your letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> April raising issues from two petitions, which I deal with in turn below.

#### **P-03-273 Transportation of wind turbines in Mid Wales**

The issues that Welshpool Town Council have raised are recognised by local planning authorities (LPAs). WLGA understands that discussions are to take place with WAG Planning officials on these matters in the near future. There are some existing ways that LPAs can seek to mitigate the impact of developments on road infrastructure – for example, they can refuse applications on access grounds; they can condition the submission of construction management plans where approvals deal with delivery routes; anything larger than standard vehicles can be controlled under abnormal load legislation. The discussions with WAG officials will look at whether there are ways that a firmer basis can be established for controlling activity on the highway network.

#### **P-03-316 School crossing patrols**

There are guidelines for the introduction and use of School Crossing Patrols produced by Road Safety GB (copy attached). These guidelines, which are widely used by local authorities, have been compiled on the basis of existing legislation, best practice, health and safety and case law. Decisions regarding capital works to improve safety and on the levels of school crossing patrols would be taken in light of these guidelines.

School crossing patrols are a non-statutory function. Authorities have to make assessments of road safety, based on the guidance and on studies and analysis they undertake. They will then apportion the limited resources they have where these are assessed to be in greatest need. Even where provided, however, parents remain

Steve Thomas CBE  
Chief Executive  
Prif Weithredwr

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Fax: 029 2046 8601

Cymdeithas Llywodraeth  
Leol Cymru  
Tŷ Llywodraeth Leol  
Rhodfa Drake  
CAERDYDD CF10 4LG  
Ffôn: 029 2046 8600  
Ffacs: 029 2046 8601

[www.wlga.gov.uk](http://www.wlga.gov.uk)

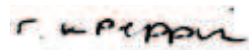
responsible for ensuring their children's safety.

Circumstances will change over time as a result of development and local authorities have to be able to add new sites where felt necessary and de-register others that can no longer be justified.

It should also be noted that there can be difficulties recruiting for school crossing patrols and, even if a site meets the criteria and funding is available, it may not always be possible to operate patrols.

I trust that this provides you with the information you need to submit for consideration by the future responsible Committee.

Yours sincerely



Tim Peppin  
Director of Regeneration and Sustainable Development

## **P-03-280 Cardiff Royal Infirmary**

### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned object in the strongest possible terms to the closure of the Cardiff Royal Infirmary. We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that the commitment to redevelop the hospital is carried out using public money, and that the redevelopment will lead to the refurbishment and re-opening of the Cardiff Royal Infirmary as a fully working hospital, including an Accident and Emergency Unit and an Intensive Care Unit for the ever increasing population of Cardiff and the surrounding area.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-280.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Mrs Breen

**Number of signatures:** 4071

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 23 March, 25 May, 13 July 2010, 11 January 2011 and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** An update will be considered.

# Agenda Item 3.25

## **P-03-283 NHS Charging for Alcohol Related Incidents**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to consider the introduction of charges for treatment and transport of patients to hospitals in those cases where the incident is alcohol related and wholly the fault of the individual or individuals concerned. We hope that these charges will help to reduce the number of calls and treatment by the NHS and as a consequence would hopefully reduce the amount of physical and verbal abuse towards NHS staff

**Link to the petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-283.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Derek Wynne Rees

**Number of signatures:** 116

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 27 April and 11 May, 16 November 2010, and 15 March.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the then Minister for Health and Social Services.

**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM**

Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

Our ref: EH/01014/11

Your ref: P-03-283

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
[petition@wales.gov.uk](mailto:petition@wales.gov.uk)



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Bae Caerdydd  
Caerdydd CF99 1NA  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg: 0845 010 4400  
Ffacs: 029 2089 8131  
E-Bost: [Gohebiaeth.Edwina.Hart@cymru.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Edwina.Hart@cymru.gsi.gov.uk)

Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA  
English Enquiry Line: 0845 010 3300  
Fax: 029 2089 8131  
E-Mail: [Correspondence.Edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Correspondence.Edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)

28 March 2011

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter dated 18 March about Petition P-03-283 Charging for Alcohol Related Incidents.

You have asked about discussions I have had with the UK Government in relation to the supply, availability and price of alcohol.

'Working Together to Reduce Harm: The Substance Misuse Strategy for Wales 2008-2018' describes how the Welsh Assembly Government will tackle substance misuse in Wales. In relation to alcohol, it sets out our determination to tackle the inappropriate availability of alcohol, including stricter rules on the promotion of alcohol and tackling the excessive availability of cheap alcohol through minimum pricing and increases in taxation. We also called for changes to the Licensing Act (including making public health a statutory objective of the Act), the strengthening or mandating of the code of conduct for the alcohol industry and better promotion of low strength alcoholic drinks (possibly through reductions in tax) and low priced soft drinks.

The strategy recognises the need to work with and lobby the UK Government on these non-devolved issues. Welsh Ministers have consistently lobbied both the previous and current UK Governments on these issues since the strategy was published in 2008 and whilst there is always more that can be done, I believe that our efforts have influenced the UK Government to begin to take a more robust approach to alcohol.

A mandatory code of conduct for the alcohol industry is now in place, which prohibits some of the most irresponsible promotion practices which encourage binge drinking. The UK Government has recognised that cheap alcohol is an issue: it is introducing a ban on below cost selling and increasing the taxation on alcohol, whilst seeking to reduce the levels of taxation paid on low alcohol beers. The Police Reform Bill currently before Parliament makes some significant changes to the Licensing Act, which will rebalance the Act in favour of police forces, local licensing authorities and local communities.

Nonetheless, we still believe that the UK Government could and should do much more. Although any initiative that seeks to tackle cheap alcohol is a positive step, the practical effect of the ban on below cost selling will in our view be very marginal and we continue to strongly support the introduction of a minimum price, set at a level that will impact on excessive alcohol consumption.

We are also disappointed that the UK Government has made no firm proposals for the inclusion of a public health objective in the Licensing Act, although UK Government Ministers have assured me that they are actively considering this. We would also like to see much tougher controls on the way in which alcohol is advertised and marketed, particularly to protect children and young people. Finally, it remains our view that powers in relation to alcohol licensing should be devolved, and we were very disappointed that the UK Government refused our formal request for such powers last year.

It is clear that there is now a strong consensus for tough action to tackle the harms associated with excessive alcohol consumption and this has been reflected in the representations your committee has received.

I remain committed to pursuing the strongest possible measures to address the excessive and inappropriate availability of alcohol and I am grateful for your continued interest in this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. M.', written in a cursive style.

## **P-03-291 Development of HIV and Sexual Health Information Services**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to develop a multi-platform resource for young people giving information on HIV and sexual health along the lines of the “Frank” drug campaign.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-291.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Speak Out Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil LGB Group

**Number of signatures:** 10

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 29 June, 13 July, 28 September, 16 November 2010 and 01 March 2011.

**Update:** An update will be considered.

# Agenda Item 3.27

## **P-03-296 Unfair Proposals on Student Loans**

### **Petition wording**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to resist the Russell Group of Universities' unfair proposals to force graduates to repay student loans at a faster and steeper rate.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-296.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Mr Cerith Rhys Jones

**Number of signatures:** 146

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 28 September 2010, 16 November 2010, and 15 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the petitioners.

23 MARCH 2011

**CYMRUX VIEWS ON WELSH GOVERNMENT'S  
APPROACH TO STUDENT FINANCE**

CymruX believes that the current Welsh Government's commitments to protecting Welsh students are right in terms of the Welsh Government's approach to higher education finance in Wales.

CymruX is pleased that Welsh students will be protected from higher education fees that students in England will unfortunately have to deal with. Maintaining fees at a lower level will make higher education far more accessible, and make it a realistic choice for young people all across Wales; that can only be applauded.

CymruX strongly believes that by ensuring that the lower fee threshold of £4,000 is implemented in Wales, students in Wales will not have to choose where they want to study purely on a financial basis. CymruX strongly believes that students in Wales should be able to choose where they want to study on the quality and provision of the course and institution they choose to study at, rather than the institution they can afford to study at.

Furthermore, our organization is pleased that Welsh students will be protected from higher fees wherever in the UK they study. CymruX believes that the Welsh Government is taking the right steps to ensure that young people in Wales can seriously consider continuing their studies.

In addition, CymruX would urge the Welsh Government to ensure that if universities in Wales are able to charge higher rates of fees, that this isn't taken for granted. CymruX would strongly urge the Welsh Government to ensure that there are stringent widening access clauses and robust financial and educational support mechanisms put in place if universities are able to charge higher fees.

However, CymruX continues to be of the view that education is indeed a right and not a privilege and should therefore be free. It is our belief that the Welsh Government is a perfect vehicle for effecting this change, and it would without a doubt be monumental, should higher education be made free in Wales. Therefore, CymruX would urge the Welsh Government to consider abolishing higher education fees in Wales when the public purse allows.

**Cerith Rhys Jones**  
Principal Petitioner

Non-portfolio Officer, CymruX National Executive Committee

*Authorized by the National Executive Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011*



# Agenda Item 3.28

## **P-03-301 Equality for the transgender community**

### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that the transgender community is given equal support and direct assistance, as given to comparable communities such as Sexual Orientation support groups, to promote equality and awareness for the transgender community.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-301.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Sophie Morris

**Number of signatures:** 113

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the petitioner.

# Transgender Wales



4<sup>th</sup> January 2011

Ref: JHB/WAG/0007

Christine Chapman A.M.  
Chair Petition Committee,  
National Assembly for Wales,  
Cardiff Bay,  
Cardiff.  
CF99 1NA

Dear Christine.

Many thanks for the update on our petition, there are several points we wish to raise relating to it. From the work we are doing with Welsh Health Specialists Services with the Gender Dysphoria Planning Strategy Project Board. It has become very clear to us that there are a number of points which need to be address by the respective members of various Committees and Ministers. The only part of Wales which has a Gender Identity Referral Pathway, this is in North Wales were there is a Consultant Psychiatrist but these patients have to wait six to eight months to get there first appointment, this is due to they have to be given appointments with other mental patients at the same time they do have an Endocrinologist working with them so they are the only part of Wales that have a service for any one having a referral from there general practice Doctor.

In South Wales Mid Wales and West Wales have no services within the area. They are first referred to a General Psychiatrist by there General Practice Doctor the first Psychiatrist then referrers the patient to a second psychiatrist the on to the Local Health Trust gatekeeper who the referred the patients on the Welsh Health Specialist Services Committee to be referred to the Gender Identity Clinic in London, this is time consuming plus a wait to get an appointment with the Gender Clinic. From my own information a patient referred to the clinic has to wait at for another six to eight month before an appointment with a Consultant Psychiatrist this is on top of the time to get the referral from the GP through the Local Health Trust at present for one person this has taken up to ten months

This is a service which would be much better if Consultant Psychiatrist were in post in other health Trust it would show a cost reduction on gender Identity patients across Wales and at the same time would make Wales self sufficient in this part of the patients as this is the longest part of the of the route to reaching there desired gender, working this way there would only be a need for a patient to go out of Wales for surgery

Working with a sister organisation is a two page document giving the General Practices Doctors, gives the doctor information on Gender Dysphoria that is very useful to them as it gives information that will help them with a patients it would be very good if this could be sent out to the GP in Wales this has been done in conjunction with GEIRS I have shown this to my own GP who has said that it is a most useful piece if information that can be kept in a desk draw and is ease to get out when required.

Please find the above mentioned two page document, if this was produced and then laminated.

Yours sincerely,

Julie H. Baker.  
Chair of Transgender Wales,

## GPs' brief guide to caring for trans service users

**1. Legislation:** In accordance with legislation and the NHS ethos, trans people - those proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone gender reassignment – are entitled to treatment that includes hormone therapy, surgery and psychological support; they have the right to prompt access to treatment, and to non-discriminatory delivery of services. Providers must have due regard for the equal treatment of trans people, their right to dignity and privacy, and their personal autonomy. This applies whether the treatment is for gender dysphoria, or for some unrelated health need.

Some trans patients may have Gender Recognition Certificates according to their post-transition gender status 'for all purposes'. The Certificate is granted on the basis that the recipient has lived for at least two years, and will continue living permanently, in the 'new' gender role; surgery is not a pre-requisite.

Regardless of legal gender status, names and pronouns should be consistent with the gender presentation, and accord with the wishes of the service user. Presentation may fluctuate so patient notes may need to record more than one name for unofficial use, until more final decisions are made about permanent name change. Deed Poll or Statutory Declaration of name change may be done, but this is not a legal requirement and treatment should not be made contingent upon it.

**2. Referrals:** The GP should make referrals as necessary to: a provider of gender care in the NHS (locally where possible) or in the private sector; to a provider of psychological support if required; and/or, where there are unrelated mental health concerns, to a local clinical psychologist or psychiatrist. The provider(s) may be in a specialist centre, or a local network. The GP has shared care, providing ongoing hormone therapy and monitoring under the guidance of the gender clinician and/ or an endocrinologist. A GP with 'special interest' may be the lead clinician.

**3. Patient choice:** treatment should be patient led; trans people may choose any combination of gender role adjustment and/or hormone therapy, and/or surgery (see points 4d and 4e below). Identities may be anywhere on a spectrum between 'man' and 'woman'; a few individuals will wish to neutralise their sex appearance, and some may not change their gender role continuously but will still require medical support.

### Typical treatment components:

#### 4a. Assessment and psychological support

Assessment with a view to making a diagnosis may be undertaken, provisionally by the GP, and confirmed by the gender specialist. This may be a GP with special interest.

(see page 36, [www.gires.org.uk/assets/DOH-Assets/pdf/doh-guidelines-for-clinicians.pdf](http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/DOH-Assets/pdf/doh-guidelines-for-clinicians.pdf)).

Diagnosis: there are no physical signs of gender dysphoria that can be measured with certainty. Diagnosis depends upon the service user declaring ongoing symptoms of persistent gender dysphoria that may lead to a wish to adjust the gender role, and it usually includes discomfort with primary and secondary sex characteristics.

It is important to identify any co-existing psychopathology that may require treatment in parallel with the gender treatments. As above, a referral to a local psychiatrist or clinical psychologist may be necessary where psychopathology is identified, or suspected. Local psychological support may be appropriate for many patients and can be undertaken, in tandem with the gender specialist provider.

Outcomes are better when families are supportive of the trans person. Some psychological support may be beneficial, especially for partners and significant others. This may be in the form of counselling.

**4b. Hormone therapy:** Typically, trans women have oestrogen therapy, sometimes accompanied by anti-androgens; trans men have testosterone therapy.

Eligibility: before starting hormones, an assessment leading to a working diagnosis should be undertaken, in association with a minimum of either three months psychotherapy (at least fortnightly), and/or a change of gender role for three months.

Pre-treatment blood tests, and ongoing monitoring are necessary, as determined by the supervising gender clinician. (UK guidelines at: [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/Standards%20of%20Care%20Draft%20v8%203b%20final.pdf](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/Standards%20of%20Care%20Draft%20v8%203b%20final.pdf))

Where service users are already self-medicating, a prompt referral to a gender specialist is advised, and the service user must be brought into a prescribed and monitored regime as soon as possible.

Hormone therapy is likely to continue throughout life with ongoing monitoring of potential long-term side-effects, and of service user's personal comfort.

#### **4c. Hair removal**

Hair removal on the face is invariably needed by trans women, usually by light based treatments or electrolysis; this may continue for months or even years; body hair removal will also be desirable in many. Genital surgery is usually preceded by hair removal from graft donor sites. Surgeons will advise depending on their surgical technique and the service user's choices.

#### **4d. Surgeries (non-genital):**

Trans men may require surgical chest reconstruction before or at the start of transition to enable them to live as men. Until then, they use breast binders. Surgeons should be specialists in the field (not those who are only accustomed to performing mastectomy in women). Until vaginal closure is undertaken, cervical smears should be offered for those at risk.

Non-genital surgeries for trans women may be undertaken at any time: facial feminising surgery; thyroid chondroplasty and voice modification. Breast augmentation is not recommended until oestrogen has had its optimum effect (18 months – 2 years).

#### **4e. Genital surgeries**

Genital surgery is not always desired. Continuous gender role change for at least one year precedes genital surgery. A few weeks before surgery, hormones are usually discontinued, meanwhile testosterone blockers may be taken by trans women.

Surgeries for trans men include: hysterectomy and salpingo-oöphorectomy, closure of the vagina; metoidioplasty or phalloplasty and scrotoplasty. Relatively few trans men undergo phalloplasty. Scrotal and penile erectile prostheses may be done later.

Trans women may have penectomy, orchidectomy, vaginoplasty, clitoroplasty and labioplasty.

#### **5. Post genital surgery**

Local nursing care may be needed to assist recovery. Trans women will need to continue dilating the vagina in line with their surgeon's instructions. Testosterone and oestrogen therapy continues.

Post-surgical depression can occur, especially in trans women, so further psychological support may be needed. Monitoring for prostate disease in trans women is advisable where hormone treatment started late in life. DEXA bone scans may be advisable if a patient has been agonal for a while and there is a risk of under-replacement of hormones.

For a full review: "Guidance for GPs, other clinicians and health professionals on the care of gender variant people" available at <http://www.gires.org.uk/assets/DOH-Assets/pdf/doh-guidelines-for-clinicians.pdf>

# TRANSSEXUAL POPULATION OF WALES COLATED BY TRANSGENDERWALES

STATS COLATED

PUBLICLY FUNDED

PRIVATE FUNDED

12/06/11

LOCATION	FORCE AREA	POST OPP	PER OPP	POST OPP	PER OPP	TOTAL
ABERAERON	DYFED POWYS	4	4	0	1	9
ABERDARE	SOUTH WALES	3	2	2		7
ABERDOVET	NORTH WALES	3	2	4		9
ABERGAVENNY	GWENT	6	4	2	1	13
ABERGELE	NORTH WALES	2	2	1	1	6
ABERPORTH	DYFED POWYS	2	1	3	2	8
ABERYSTWYTH	DYFED POWYS	9	8	1	1	19
AMLWCH	NORTH WALES			1	2	3
AMMANFORD	DYFED POWYS	2	2	4	1	9
BANGOR	NORTH WALES	4	3		1	8
BARRY	SOUTH WALES	7	8	3	2	20
BARMOUTH	DYFED POWYS	1		2		3
BETWS-Y-CODE	DYFED POWYS		1	3		4
BLAENGARW	NORTH WALES		1			1
BRECON	DYFED POWYS	3	3	2	1	9
BRIDGEND	SOUTH WALES	5	7	2	3	17
BUILTH WELLS	DYFED POWYS	4	1	3	1	9
CAEATHRO	DYFED POWYS	3		2		5
CAEGREILIOG	NORTH WALES	2		2	1	5
CAERNARFON	NORTH WALES	2	2	3	2	18
CAERPHILLY	GWENT	5	3	3	2	13
CALDICOT	GWENT	1	2		1	4
CARDIFF	SOUTH WALES	37	23	4	9	73
CARDIGAN	DYFED POWYS	1	2	1		4
CARMARTHEN	DYFED POWYS	6	5	2	2	15
CHEPSTOW	GWENT	4	5	2	2	13
COLWY BAY	NORTH WALES	14	8	3	3	28
CONWY	NORTH WALES	1	2		1	4
COWBRIDGE	SOUTH WALES	5	1	2	2	10
CWMBERAN	GWENT	3	3	3		9
GLNNEATH	SOUTH WALES	4	1		1	6
HARLECH	NORTH WALES		2	2	2	6
HAY-ON-WYE	DYFED POWYS	1	2	2	2	7

HOLYHEAD	NORTH WALES	6	4		2	12
HOLYWELL	NORTH WALES	4	1	1	1	7
LAMPTER	DYFED POWYS	4	2	1		7
LLANDRINDOD WELLS	DYFED POWYS	5	5	3	3	16
LLANELLI	DYFED POWYS	3	1	2	1	7
LLANHARAN	SOUTH WALES	2	4	2		8
LLANTWIT MAJOR	SOUTH WALES	3	2	1	1	7
MASTEG	SOUTH WALES	3	4	2		9
MERTHYR TYDFIL	SOUTH WALES	4	6	2	1	13
MILFORD HAVEN	DYFED POWYS	4	3	4	3	14
MOLD	NORTH WALES	5	4			9
MONMOUTH	GWENT	4	5	1	1	11
MOSTYN	NORTH WALES	1	1	1		3
MOUNTAIN ASH	SOUTH WALES	2	3	2		7
NEATH	SOUTH WALES	5	4	1	1	11
NEWPORT	GWENT	7	9	6	2	24
OGMORE	SOUTH WALES	1	1			2
PEMBREY	DYFED POWYS	2	1	1	1	5
PEMBROKE	DYFED POWYS	4	2	1	1	8
PENARTH	SOUTH WALES	6	2	1		9
PENCAER	DYFED POWYS	1	3	1	2	7
PENRHYD	NORTH WALES	3	1		1	5
PONTYPRIDD	SOUTH WALES	4	2	4	1	11
PORT TALBOT	SOUTH WALES	7	2			9
PORTCALL	SOUTH WALES	1	2	2		5
PRESTATYN	NORTH WALES	3	1	1		5
PONTYPOOL	GWENT	3	5		1	9
QUEENSFERRY	NORTH WALES	1	1	2		4
RHAYADER	DYFED POWYS		3	2		5
RHONDA	SOUTH WALES	2	2	2	1	7
RHYL	NORTH WALES	18	8	5	3	34
SANDERFOOT	DYFED POWYS	1	2			3
SKEWEN	SOUTH WALES	1	2			3
ST ASAPH	NORTH WALES	1	1		2	4
SWANSEA	SOUTH WALES	22	6	5	3	36
TALGARTH	DYFED POWYS		1	2		3
TEMBY	DYFED POWYS	2	2	1		5

TONYPANDY	SOUTH WALES	2	2	1		5
TROEDYRHIW	SOUTH WALES	3	2	2		7
WREXHAM	NORTH WALES	7	7	3	6	23
<b>TOTALS</b>		301	229	129	85	753

**WELSH POLICE  
FORCE TOTALS**

DYFED POWYS  
181

GWENT  
96

NORTH WALES  
194

SOUTH WALES  
282

753

**WELSH ASSEMBLY  
ELECTORAL REGIONS**

Mid & West Wales  
181

North Wales  
194

South Wales Central  
154

South Wales East  
131

South Wales West  
93

753

**WELSH AREA  
HEALTH BOARDS**

Abertawe Bro Morgannwg  
University Healyh Board.  
98

Aneurin Bevan  
Health Board  
96

Betsi Cadwaladr University  
Health Board  
194

Cardiff & Vale University  
Health Board  
116

Cwm Taf  
Health Board  
101

Hywel Dda  
Health Board  
112

Powys Teaching  
Health Board  
36

753

# Agenda Item 3.29

## **P-03-303 Against Homophobic Bullying**

### **Petition wording**

We, the undersigned, call on the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Government to issue compulsory guidance to all schools (faith, state or private) concerning homophobic bullying. We strongly urge that changes are implanted quickly and urgently.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-303.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Oliver Townsend

**Number of signatures:** 440

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 02 November 2010, 11 January 2011, 1 March 2011, and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Education and Skills

Leighton Andrews AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-303  
Ein cyf/Our ref LA/00878/11

Naomi Stocks  
Clerk  
Petitions Committee

10 June 2011

*Dear Naomi,*

**P-03-303 Against Homophobic Bullying**

Further to Rhian Atkinson's letter of 18 April, I wish to reply substantively to the points raised by the Petitions Committee, set out in your letter to me of 5 April.

The set of new anti-bullying guidance being developed by the Welsh Government will include stand-alone guidance on homophobic bullying, and reflects our commitment to tackling the relatively high incidence of homophobic bullying reported to the Welsh Government by children and young people in 2009.

I expect the new guidance to be published on the Welsh Government's website this summer, and in time for the beginning of the autumn term.

*Yours sincerely*



**Leighton Andrews AC / AM**

Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Correspondence: Leighton.Andrews@wales.gsi.gov.uk  
*Printed on 100% recycled paper*

# Agenda Item 3.30

## **P-03-304 Amendment to the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008**

### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Government to amend the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008, so that the definition of the nearest suitable school for the purposes of provision of free/subsidised transport includes a reference to the fact that it provides the Welsh Curriculum/Cwricwlwm Cymreig.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-304.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Arfon Jones

**Number of signatures:** 17

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 2 November 2010

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Local Government and Communities

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref : P-03-304  
Ein cyf/Our ref SFICS/044/11

Naomi Stocks  
Clerk, Petitions Committee  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

13<sup>th</sup> June 2011

**P-03-304 Amendment to the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.**

Thank you for your letter of 1 June regarding a petition from Councillor Arfon Jones, seeking an amendment to the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure.

The purpose of home to school transport is to allow children and young people to take part in learning without travel being a barrier to participation. Home to school transport policy should not be looked at in isolation and needs to complement Welsh Government's policy for education, and of course, it should be compatible with the law on admissions to schools, and any other legislation.

Admissions law entitles parents to express a preference for any school that they wish their child to attend, and if there are sufficient places at the school in question, there is a duty on admission authorities to comply with that preference in all but exceptional circumstances. As you would expect, therefore, there is some cross border pupil movement each year in both directions when parents obtain places for their children on the other side of the border from their place of residence.

The Welsh Government has no plans to change the legislation relating to the exercise of parental preference in Wales. If the Measure were to be amended as suggested, then there would be no obligation on a local authority to transport a child across the border if the parent were to choose a school in England and it was the nearest suitable school in all respects other than the delivery of the National Curriculum for Wales. If transport was not provided that parent might effectively be denied a right currently available under the law, and the effect would be to undermine the exercise of parental preference and place parents in Wales in a position of disadvantage as compared with parents living in England who obtain places for their children at schools in Wales.

There is no duty upon Welsh local authorities to ensure students resident in their area have access to the National Curriculum for Wales, but for the vast majority of pupils this is not an issue as they attend schools in Wales which are under a duty to deliver it. A number of local authorities have cross-border arrangements in place where it enriches the learning experience of pupils in Wales (for example in the area of 14- 19 provision) or enables education to be delivered more efficiently.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

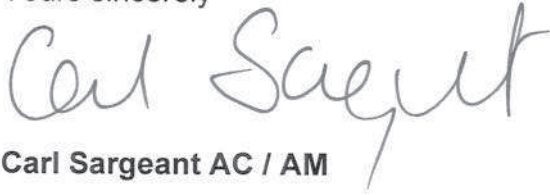
English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Correspondence: Carl.Sargeant@wales.gsi.gov.uk  
Printed on 100% recycled paper

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

The Welsh Government's home to school transport policy, reflected in legislation, is that children should attend the nearest suitable school to their home, and local authority or national boundaries are not a consideration in this. Consideration must also be given to how far a child or pupil must travel to access education. Limiting the nearest suitable school to those offering the National Curriculum for Wales may result in pupils having to travel much further to school than would otherwise be the case. This may well be in contravention of the EU Conventions on Human Rights and the Rights of a Child.

I am aware that a number of border authorities provide transport to the nearest school in Wales on a discretionary basis, should the nearest suitable school for the learner be in England. I am content with these arrangements, and therefore have no intention to amend the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure in the way proposed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl Sargeant". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**

Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities

## **P-03-305 Statutory School Libraries**

### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned, call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to accept in principle that it will make schools libraries statutory and run by suitably qualified staff, and to prepare the necessary legislation in consultation with the appropriate professional associations and trade unions.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-305.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Alison Bagshaw

**Number of signatures:**

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 16 November 2010, 11 January 2011, and 15 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the petitioner.

15 May 2011

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Dear Ms Chapman

### **P-03-305 Statutory School Libraries**

You wrote to me on 18 March 2011 seeking my views on the responses to the petition from the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, the Minister for Heritage, the Welsh Local Government Association and the School Library Association; my response is detailed below.

#### **Leighton Andrews AM letter of 28 November 2010.**

*"I believe that school libraries are a key resource for pupils and teachers which can help support literacy, the delivery of the curriculum and also introduce children to reading for pleasure. The Welsh Assembly Government recognises the valuable contribution that school libraries make to learning."*

This 'key resource', however, is not available to all pupils in Wales, so there is an inequality of provision and support for literacy, the curriculum and reading for pleasure. There are schools in Wales which do not have a school library with a suitably experienced and/or qualified Librarian, and therefore the pupils of these schools are missing out on vital support, both in primary and secondary schools.

*"The Welsh Assembly Government delegates funding to local authorities for all the services they provide, including schools. Local authorities then allocate funding to schools according to their priorities."*

As individual schools can choose whether or not to use that funding to provide a school library with a Librarian, some will choose not to do so, or may provide very little funding - and in some cases no funding at all - for the continual update of resources which is vital.

Mr Andrews also refers to the national education priorities as set out in the Schools Effectiveness Framework (SEF) which includes the improvement of literacy levels and reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment. He himself has stated that school libraries can help to support

literacy, yet this support is missing for many pupils in Wales; for some pupils, particularly those from a more impoverished background, the only access to a library may be the school library.

*“There are no plans to make school libraries statutory in Wales. It would require investment beyond the current budget allocation to ensure that all school libraries would be sufficiently resourced to be effective.”*

Without a plan to make school libraries statutory, we will continue to deny so many pupils in Wales access to this highly valuable resource. Whilst I appreciate that there are budgetary constraints, can we really continue to put a price on our children’s education to the extent that we are denying them? With a clear link between poor literacy levels and criminal behaviour, Wales could potentially save money by reducing the level of poor literacy, and therefore criminal behaviour and the need to spend money on incarceration.

*“We are developing a National Literacy Plan which will include an important role for school ...libraries.” “...I will expect this activity to establish a baseline of the current provision of school libraries in Wales.”*

This is a good starting point for establishing the provision available to all pupils across Wales; however, if the National Literacy Plan is to include an important role for school libraries, then surely every school should have one, rather than the current ‘luck of the draw’ situation.

In an article in TES Cymru, 26 February 2010, *Estyn Shake-Up Targets Literacy*, Estyn Chief Inspector of Education and Training Ann Keane is quoted as highlighting improving literacy as “an absolute necessity”, and she stresses the need for this to happen across the curriculum; surely the most efficient and cost-effective way of ensuring this is via the cross-curricular resource that is the school library, and in using the expertise of its staff as part of whole school strategies to improve literacy and promote reading for pleasure.

Numerous studies have indicated the relationship between reading enjoyment and higher student achievement. It is not only reading which makes an impact on achievement, but enjoyment of reading. This is something which underpins the work of school libraries, and which schools – if they are all required to have a school library with suitably qualified staff - could utilise more fully.

A survey of 17,000 young people was undertaken in 2010 by the National Literacy Trust for the School Library Commission. Their findings discovered that: “There was a very strong relationship between reading attainment and school library use, with young people who read below the expected level for their age being almost twice more likely to say that they are not a school library user. Conversely, those who read at or above the expected level were nearly three times more likely to say that they are school library users.” When questioned for the survey, students felt that this role could be carried out by no other place than the school library.

**Alun Ffred Jones AM letter of 2 February 2011**

*“Since their implementation the Standards [Maintaining a Valued Service: The Fourth Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2011-2014] have had a positive impact on library services in Wales with many library authorities across Wales demonstrating significant improvements in the areas of service assessed by the standards frameworks.”*

Standards could also be applied to school libraries to ensure a consistent provision of service to pupils.

*“It would seem that the most recent report specifically about school libraries in Wales is the Position Paper on School Libraries and Learning Resource Centres in Primary and Secondary Schools in Wales produced by Estyn in 2002.”*

As the last report into the position of School Libraries is dated 2002, more up to date research into this vital role would be most welcome.

*“This [Libraries for Life strategy] has resulted in more attractive and flexible children’s and teenage areas in many public libraries and has enabled more libraries to attract school visits to their libraries to promote reading activities and raise literacy levels.”*

What is the evidence to support this statement and in particular to show the number of public libraries that have more attractive children’s and teenage areas, and, more importantly, what has been the increase in school visits to local public libraries? Furthermore, school libraries particularly cater for the age range of the pupils in the school, providing access to subject resources specific to the curriculum as well as fiction specifically aimed at the pupils who attend that particular school and indeed, fiction chosen by the pupils for inclusion in *their* library.

#### **Councillor Peter Fox WLGA spokesperson on Lifelong Learning & Skills letter of 4 February 2011**

It is encouraging that the new Estyn Inspection Framework includes the requirement for inspectors to look at whether the school has a "*stimulating and well-maintained learning environment*", to look at "*enrichment of the curriculum*" and "*availability of learning resources, including library provision, and access by pupils & staff to an appropriate range of books, ICT resources, practical equipment and audio-visual materials to support learning & teaching during and outside of school hours*".

If, as Councillor Fox points out, however, inspection is "a statutory provision" and school libraries are "a subject of the inspection", what happens when a school without a library is inspected?

*"School libraries were last inspected by Estyn on a thematic basis in 2002, at which time 15% of schools had unsatisfactory arrangements."*

Both at the time Councillor Fox refers to in 2002, and now under the new Framework, according to what standards and criteria are schools being inspected when they *do* have a library and librarian?

In their recent 2010 survey of school libraries in the UK, the School Library Group (SLG) of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) highlighted patchy provision for pupils across the UK– Wales fares particularly badly – with, to cite only two examples, only 17% of

schools who responded rating their stock as good with regard to support for teaching, learning and student development (83% rated it adequate or poor) and 59% of respondents in Wales rating their provision of e-licences as poor. Considering that the survey is skewed towards responses from more professionally qualified staff, whose services are possibly more likely to be better, these are even more worrying statistics for Wales.

In addition to the inspection of resources, access and environment in schools noted in the new framework, effective inspection should also take account of the wider-reaching impact of the school library on learning. As Jonathan Douglas, Director of the National Literacy Trust, is quoted as saying in an article in the TES by Helen Ward: “it’s not simply about access; it’s about the quality of provision. To have in every school a room full of books is good. But it only gets exciting if the library is integrated with teaching and learning, and a good school librarian with quality resources can do that.”

In his recent speech, *Teaching Makes a Difference*, Leighton Andrews AM quotes Ann Keane referring to a deficit of employability skills mentioned to her by a head of a Welsh engineering firm – “the ability to present something logically in writing or orally, to read and understand, to synthesize different kinds of information, to analyse and interpret then communicate...”. These are the very information literacy skills that are taught by school librarians working in partnership within their schools. Indeed the recent School Libraries Commission report notes: “information literacy defines levels of educational success and the ability to participate economically and socially in society. As the hub of information flows within the school, the school library needs to be a central player in making pupils information literate.”

**Tricia Adams, Director, School Library Association letter of 27 January 2011**

*“Our concern is that students in schools without school libraries will not have access to a wide range of learning and reading resources to support their teaching and learning if there is no operable library.”*

This highlights the need for every school in Wales to have this provision so that every child in Wales has access to a school library to support their learning, to encourage reading for pleasure and to equip them with the necessary skills to become independent learners.

Tricia Adams refers to many publications to support the valid points that she raises in the need for school libraries to be statutory.

**33.** A library shall be provided in every prison and, subject to any directions of the Secretary of State, every prisoner shall be allowed to have library books and to exchange them.

Surely it is wrong that prisoners have the right, by law, to have access to a library but the young people of Wales have no such entitlement?

The CILIP School Libraries Group Wales and the School Library Association in Wales would welcome working with the Welsh Government and other partners towards helping Wales lead the way by ensuring that every school has a statutory library with suitably qualified staff. A more up to date position paper on school libraries could be one point for action, followed by drawing up a set of School Library Standards.

We recognise that there are implications and obstacles, but would assert that effective school libraries can in fact be more cost-effective than, for example, the catch-up reading programmes currently necessary to boost our children's literacy levels, or school leavers leaving school without qualifications and skills needed for the workplace.

As all the evidence for the impact of school libraries testifies, they can contribute directly to the forthcoming National Literacy Plan vision and implementation, to the Skills agenda, to the overall drive to raise achievement for all children and young people in Wales, and many other aspects of learning which are central to the Welsh Government's education policies.

The National Literacy Trust survey in 2010 for the School Library Commission "established a solid need for a well-run school library and for the impact it could have on pupils' literacy levels; enjoyment of reading; information literacy skills and access to knowledge; on their self-esteem, confidence, sense of safety and well-being in the school community".

Making school libraries statutory in Wales would also assert the right of **all** children to access education and reach their potential.

Yours sincerely

Alison Bagshaw (Mrs)

## References to reports referred to and further evidence of the need for statutory school libraries:

ANDREWS, Leighton. (2011) *Teaching Makes a Difference*. Cardiff: Welsh Government. Accessed 2 February 2011.

<<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/allsectorpolicies/ourevents/teachingmakesadifference/;jsessionid=zDkvNBbKs4NZHXYzTJswvTRTVpnjTx1SGVt6BXGBkC2PYQQ7Zv1b!1895062788?lang=en>>

CILIP. (2011) *School Libraries - A Right*. London: CILIP. Accessed 3 March 2011.

<<http://www.cilip.org.uk/news-media/Pages/news110209.aspx>>

CILIP (2007). *CILIP Statement on School Librarians*. London: CILIP. Accessed 31 December 2010.

<<http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/advocacy/learning/pages/SchoolLibrarians.aspx>>

CLARK, Christina (2010). *Linking Libraries and Literacy: Young People's Reading Habits and Attitudes to their School Library*. National Literacy Trust. Accessed 10 February 2011.

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ESTYN (2008). *Best practice in the reading and writing of pupils aged seven to fourteen years*. Accessed 6 January 2011. <[www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)>

NATIONAL LITERACY TRUST and MLA (2010). *School Libraries: A plan for improvement*. London: National Literacy Trust. Accessed 20 March 2011.

<[http://www.mla.gov.uk/news\\_and\\_views/press\\_releases/2010/~media/Files/pdf/2010/policy/SLC\\_Report](http://www.mla.gov.uk/news_and_views/press_releases/2010/~media/Files/pdf/2010/policy/SLC_Report)>

OECD. (2002) *Reading for Change: Performance and Engagement across countries. Results from PISA 2000*. New York: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Accessed 20 March 2011.

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STREATFIELD, David, SHAPER, Sue & RAE-SCOTT, Simon. (2010). *School Libraries in the UK: A worthwhile past, a difficult present - and a transformed future*. London: CILIP. Accessed 16 March 2011.

<<http://www.cilip.org.uk/get-involved/special-interest-groups/school/pages/school-libraries-in-the-uk.aspx>>

WARD, Helen. (2009) School Libraries: an endangered species? *TES Connect*, 18 September. Accessed 12 April 2011.

<<http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6023331>>

WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT. (2011) *Libraries Inspire: Draft strategic development framework for Welsh libraries 2012-2015*. Accessed 3 February 2011.

<<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/consultation/110131librariesinspireen.pdf>>

# Agenda Item 3.32

## **P-03-307 Design for Innovation in Wales**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to consider the potential significant role for design in future innovation, public service and social enterprise policies and programmes. This is in the light of increased commitment to design agenda by other nations around the world and in preparation for a new Innovation Policy due to be published by the European Commission. This imminent new policy is likely to include a broader definition of innovation that embraces services in the public & private sectors and social enterprise on equal terms with traditional research and development (R&D).

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-307.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Gavin Cawood

**Number of signatures:** 369

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 16 November 2010, 11 January and 1 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the petitioner.

### **P-03-307 Design for Innovation in Wales: Design Wales Response to the Petitions Committee**

Design<sup>1</sup> is gaining recognition around the world as a driver of innovation in industry, services and society. Design is a problem-solving process. It is an approach to innovation that is user-centred, creative and viable.

The European Commission strategy Innovation Union identifies design as a key discipline for innovation in the private sector for bringing products and services to market, in the public sector for making public services better correspond to citizens needs as well as for addressing social challenges:

‘Our strengths in design and creativity must be better exploited. We must champion social innovation. We must develop a better understanding of public sector innovation. Design is of particular importance as a key discipline to bring ideas to the market, transforming them into user-friendly and appealing products.’<sup>2</sup>

To raise awareness and understanding of this strategic role for design among politicians, policy-makers and the public in Wales, in October 2010, Design Wales launched a Manifesto and Petition. The Petition gained 369 signatures and called for the National Assembly for Wales and Welsh Government to consider the role of design in future policies and programmes for innovation, public services and social enterprise. The Manifesto recommendations were met with overwhelming support when on 5 October 2010 Assembly Members unanimously passed an amendment to the strategy Economic Renewal to ‘harness the power of design for innovation in industry, services and society’. In response to the Petitions Committee request to provide insight into where further action can be taken, Design Wales has identified how design can play a strategic role in contributing to the Welsh Government’s policy priorities:

- Creative industries
- Manufacturing and service industries
- Public services
- Education
- Social enterprise

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Design is a tool for the realisation of innovation. It is the activity of conceiving and developing a plan for a new or significantly improved product, service or system that ensures the best interface with user needs, aspirations and abilities, and allows for aspects of economic, social and environmental sustainability to be taken into account.’ Definition proposed in the European Commission consultation ‘Design as a driver of user-centred innovation’, DG Enterprise and Industry, April 2009. This definition was endorsed by 78% of respondents to the public consultation.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission. (2010) ‘Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovation Union’ SEC(2010)1161, Brussels pp. 3 & 18.

### ***Creative industries***

In 2008, the Creative and Cultural Skills (Sector Skills Council) published the economic 'footprint' of the creative industries revealing that the professional design sector in Wales accounts for the greatest proportion (22%) of Wales' creative industries. In addition, the creative industries contribute £465M to the Welsh economy, of which 36% is generated by design.<sup>3</sup> However, the strategic contribution of design to the creative industries was overlooked in the 'Heart of Digital Wales' review in favour of music and broadcasting. Since the Economic Renewal programme identifies the creative industries as a priority sector of strategic importance for the Welsh economy and as design constitutes a significant driver of competitiveness, design merits better representation in policy discussions. **Design Wales calls for design to have a representative on both the Digital Wales Board and the Economic Renewal Creative Industries Sector Panel to champion the role of design within the creative industries in Wales to support the development of this important professional sector.**

### ***Manufacturing and service industries***

In Economic Renewal, the Welsh Government encourages businesses, particularly the advanced manufacturing sector, to invest in design to develop new products<sup>4</sup>. While this commitment represents a significant step, the interpretation of design is limited to product development; this does not reflect the broader strategic role attributed to design in Innovation Union where design is also a driver of innovation in services. Service innovation has been identified by the European Commission as an area of increasing importance in the coming decade<sup>5</sup>. Those products proving most successful in competitive markets are those integrated into an advanced customer experience with intelligent services adding value to the product itself. The Welsh Government is already supporting the Service Design Programme delivered to the advanced manufacturing sector and could play a role in raising demand for innovation in services across Wales. **Design Wales calls for the Welsh Government to examine the role of design in service innovation and attribute a more strategic role to design in the Economic Renewal Programme.**

### ***Public services***

Design is proving itself as a process for delivering more efficient public services since it involves both the service provider and the service user (citizens) in an engaging process of identifying inefficiencies and proposing solutions that are creative, user-centred and viable. The Welsh Government is examining more effective public service delivery as part of the New Models of Service Delivery Work Stream. However, since design has not been articulated as a priority by the Welsh Government, design is not one of the models under consideration. **Design Wales calls for the New Models of Service Delivery Work Stream to consider the role of design in delivering more citizen-focused public services.**

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<sup>3</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills. (2008) 'Creative and Cultural Industries Economic and Demographic Footprint'.

<sup>4</sup> Welsh Government. (2010) 'Economic Renewal', p. 35 & 38.

<sup>5</sup> Europe Innova. (2010) 'Meeting the Challenge of Europe 2020: The Transformative Power of Service Innovation', Brussels.

### **Education**

The Dyson report identifies design as a bridge between the STEM subjects. 'To a large extent, the STEM agenda has also ignored the silent D (design). Used as a tool to make products a reality, design links engineering to business and the end-user. At school level, design and technology should receive the same priority status as science and maths'<sup>6</sup> as design is the subject that combines analytical and practical skills. **Design Wales calls for the Welsh Government to recognise design as the link between the STEM subjects and integrate design into the STEM curriculum.**

### **Social enterprise**

As a dynamic tool, design is a process for addressing social challenges. Social enterprises should be citizen-centred and the Welsh Government has made a commitment to further this agenda in the Social Enterprise Action Plan for Wales<sup>7</sup>. By involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders in creative processes, design can enable citizens to come up with their own solutions for social enterprises. **Design Wales calls for design to play a role in Social Enterprise Action Plan programmes.**

In order to make these ambitions for design a reality, Design Wales is supporting four Assembly Members in establishing a Cross-Party Group for Design and Innovation. The aim of the Design and Innovation Cross-Party Group is to raise and maintain awareness at a policy and programme level of the role of design in realising innovation within industry (for competitive advantage), public services (for greater efficiency and citizen focus) and social innovation (for greater public participation).

Design Wales are currently active in communicating the role of design in innovation policy by leading a European network of 11 organisations since 2008 called SEE. Speaking at the SEE project's Policy, Innovation and Design Conference in the Flemish Parliament in March 2011, Peter Dröll, Head of Unit the Commission's Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry stated that "Our vision would be that in 2020, design is a fully acknowledged, well-known, well-recognised element of innovation policy across Europe, at the European level, at the national level and at regional level".

Wales has the opportunity to be regional forerunners in championing the design for innovation agenda and Design Wales is committed to enabling the Welsh Government make this happen. **Design Wales calls for design to be recognised both horizontally across Welsh Government policies as well as vertically at policy, programme and project levels. Design Wales calls for the Welsh Government to develop a vision for design in Wales as has been articulated by the Danish Government<sup>8</sup>.**

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<sup>6</sup> Dyson, J. (2010) 'Ingenious Britain. Making the UK the leading high tech exporter in Europe', p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ourfutureplanet.org/newsletters/resources/Welsh%20Assembly%20Government%20The%20Social%20Enterprise%20Action%20Plan%20for%20Wales%202009.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.ebst.dk/publikationer/ER/The\\_Vision\\_of\\_the\\_Danish\\_Design\\_2020\\_Committee/index.htm](http://www.ebst.dk/publikationer/ER/The_Vision_of_the_Danish_Design_2020_Committee/index.htm)

# Agenda Item 3.33

## **P-03-310 Policies to Help Protect Pupils Needs and Rights**

### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned, call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to have a policy that only allows the closure of 6th forms, if there is consent and support in the community. There should be improvements to the consultation process to make them sturdy, strong and easier for the public to access and participate in. The consultation period should give the public enough time to get the information and act accordingly.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-310.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Mandy Howells

**Number of signatures:** 112 (a related petition collected 2,119)

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 30 November 2010, 11 January, 1 March and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Education and Skills.

Leighton Andrews AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref LA/00877/11  
William Powell AM  
Chair – Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

29 June 2011

Committee.business@wales.  
gsi.gov.uk

*Dear William,*

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2011, the then Chair of the Petitions Committee, Christine Chapman AM, wrote to me in connection with petition P-03-310 Policies to protect pupil's needs and rights, and asked that the Committee be notified of the outcome of consultation on potential changes to the school organisation process when it was completed. On 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011, the Committee's clerk wrote with a request from the outgoing Committee that the consultation outcomes be made available to the relevant future committee in due course.

In accordance with that request, I am attaching a completed summary of the consultation responses which will be published on the Welsh Government's website in the near future. Decisions on the next steps in relation to the potential changes set out in the consultation document will be taken in due course.

*Yours sincerely*

*Leighton Andrews*  
Leighton Andrews AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau  
Minister for Education and Skills

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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## **Introduction**

A full 12 week consultation on the potential changes to the school organisation process took place between 28 November 2010 and 18 February 2011.

A detailed consultation document was issued to a wide range of stakeholders including the WLGA and all local authorities, diocesan education authorities, the Children's Commissioner, all foundation school governing bodies and a 10% sample of all other schools. The document was also made available on the internet, and a press release was issued to coincide with the publication.

The document set out the current process and the rationale for change and gave a breakdown of the specific changes which are proposed. Consultees were asked a series of questions about particular aspects of the proposals in addition to being given the opportunity to comment more generally on the proposals. A separate questionnaire was produced for the use of children and young people.

In addition to the document, officials held seminars and meetings with representatives of the local authorities, the diocesan education authorities and the Children's Commissioner.

13 responses were received to the children and young people's questionnaire and 32 responses were received to the main consultation document – around half of which were local authority responses. Other responses were received from the WLGA, Welsh Language Board, teachers unions, Catholic Education Service, Governors Wales, representatives of foundation schools and members of the general public.

A list of respondents (where permission has been given to disclose this information) can be found on page \*\*

## **Next steps**

The Welsh Government is currently considering what legislative opportunities exist for the implementation of changes to the process of school organisation and will have due regard to the responses provided by consultees in drafting any resultant legislation.

## Summary of responses to the consultation document

**Question 1:** Is the current list of circumstances in which statutory proposals are required appropriate? If not, what would you want to add, remove or modify? [This question relates to paragraph 1 of part 2 and Annex C.]

Of the 26 responses to this question, 15 agreed that the current list of circumstances were appropriate. Strong disagreement was expressed by 2 parties who represented a foundation school, arguing that the proposed changes to disallow changes of category to foundation and to prevent the establishment of new foundation schools were inappropriate. Other responses called for clarification in regard to the prescribed alteration about provision reserved for children with special needs. There was a strong suggestion that research should be undertaken on the historical effect of the prescribed alteration relating to changes of language medium to ascertain whether this had restricted an expansion of Welsh medium provision. This contributor also suggested that future regulations might refer to the categories set out in WAG document 023/2007 such that proposals would be required if a school was to move from one category to another and Welsh medium provision were reduced.

It was suggested that a new alteration could be introduced to cover the merger of 2 schools, which might be more acceptable to local people than the current methods (involving the closure of at least one school). This suggestion was supported by the WLGA in the response based on input from several local authorities, as it would support the key principle of speedy and effective local decision making.

It was also suggested that the current limit on increasing the size of schools was too restrictive and that the replacement of temporary buildings with permanent was not appropriate as a prescribed alteration.

**Question 2:** Do you think that the following amendments proposed are suitable?

a) prescription about reduction in capacity; b) prescription about transfers of school site (for all schools including special); and if not, what would be preferable? [This question relates to paragraph 1 of part 2 and Annex C.]

Of the 27 responses to this question 16 agreed with both amendments and 3 additional responses agreed with (a) but not (b). Opposition to both amendments was expressed in 4 responses and felt that reducing the limit to 1 mile for permitted transfers was too restrictive, particularly in the light of limited availability of sites within a mile of an existing school serving a specific community. The WLGA response shared this view.

There were 4 suggestions for clarification and improvement, with one response suggesting differential distances for primary and secondary schools. A further response suggested that the point of reference for determining whether a reduction in capacity could be achieved without proposals should be by reference to projected numbers on roll rather than historical data.

Representing local authorities and ADEW, the WLGA advocated the removal of the need for statutory procedures when the nature of special needs provision is changing from one type to another, as this is a barrier to swift decision making.



**Question 3:** Do you agree with the current division of responsibilities in respect of making proposals for changes to school organisation? [This question relates to paragraph 2 of part 2 and Annex D.]

There were 27 responses to this question and 23 of these agreed with the current division of responsibilities. Two responses recommended that local authorities should also be able to propose prescribed alterations to voluntary and foundation schools. There was a query raised as to why the establishment of Foundation Special schools would still be permitted when no other foundation schools would be established if the 2011 Measure became law. The WLGA response suggested that governing body proposals should be subject to screening by the local authority, with evidence that the proposal had a strategic fit locally.

**Question 4:** Should proposers be required to publish a consultation document? [This question relates to paragraph 5 of part 2 and Annex E.]

None of the 28 responses disagreed with this proposal. Two emphasised the need to ensure that children and young people could access the consultation. One response suggested that the Welsh Assembly Government should produce a checklist of what should be included in documents. The WLGA supported the need for inclusive and meaningful consultation which provided proper opportunity for concerns to be voiced so that proposals command confidence. It supported the concept of a clear and consistent form of consultation document as it should help the decision making process, reassure key interests and can be used as a baseline document for a variety of purposes during the statutory process. It was suggested that there was good practice in a number of local authorities and there should be a logical and direct continuum through the report stages.

**Question 5:** If so, should the content of the consultation document (and other matters) be specified in a Statutory Code? [This question relates to paragraph 5 of part 2 and Annex E.]

There were 29 responses to this question and 23 agreed that the content of a consultation document should be specified in a statutory code. Opposition was expressed in 3 responses, all of which felt that such an arrangement would be overly bureaucratic and restrictive. There were 10 suggestions that whilst a Code should set out specification for content, this could be of minimum requirements and there should be room for local

authorities to add to this and to tailor documents for particular circumstances. A query was raised about what action should be taken if minimum requirements were not met. The WLGA response supported a Code specifying content with allowance for local flexibilities. This response suggested that there needed to be discussion on aspects of matters for inclusion as there could be practical difficulties with some currently proposed. Scope for local authority websites for consultation should be promoted.

**Question 6:** Is the list of matters to be included, as set out in the template document appropriate? Should anything else be included? [This question relates to paragraph 5 of part 2 and Annex E.]

There were 28 responses to this with 19 agreeing that in principle the list was appropriate and 2 disagreeing. Responses which made suggestions for additional or alternative content were made by a total of 13 individuals. Those who opposed the list included those who felt that there were often too many variables which were undeveloped at consultation stage that would make it difficult for local authorities to provide all information listed, whilst there would be other matters worth including, depending on the circumstances, such as

- Comparison of per pupil costs at named schools with LA average
- Data relating to cross catchment attendance
- Issues relating to suitability and condition of buildings
- Alternatives to closure

More than one response took the view that it was inappropriate to discuss staffing matters in consultation document and one response suggested that it was difficult to argue that the closure of a school would be of benefit to children.

Amongst those who made suggestions for what should be included, was a response calling for detailed impact on the Welsh language, others asking for more detail about the effect on the community, and those who argued for specific coverage on all equality issues. The suggestion in the sample document that interested parties should be able to request notification of the publication of a consultation report was not universally accepted, and alternatives put forward suggested that communication should be by means of regular web page updates and e mail where possible. A number of local authorities who responded indicated that they would add to and otherwise tailor the list to suit circumstances. Some thought it unnecessary to cover the benefits to children with reference to the UNCRC whilst another provided detailed suggestions to the contrary, which went far beyond what the template document advocated. This response also emphasised the need to engage children and young people appropriately through different media if necessary rather than by a written proforma. Other responses also drew attention to the need to take a flexible approach to the conduct of consultation.

**Question 7:** For promoters: Would the template document contained in Annex E be a useful tool in producing future consultation documents? [This question also relates to part 2.]

Whilst almost all of the 22 responses agreed that the template document would be a useful tool, a few suggested that it should be open to adaptation to suit local circumstances. Two

contributors felt strongly that it was overly bureaucratic to insist on specific content. Two contributors pointed to the need to produce a different style of template, or good practice for consultation with children and young people. A few responses suggested that their current documents already exemplify good practice, albeit at variance with the suggested template.

**Question 8:** Do you agree:

- a. consultation documents should only be published during term time?
- b. consultation should run for a minimum of 6 weeks, with at least half of the consultation period falling in term time?
- c. with the list of those who should be consulted?

If not what would you wish to change/add? [This question relates to paragraph 7 of part 2 and Annex E.]

All 27 of those who responded on point (a) agreed that consultation documents should only be published in term time.

In respect of question (b), 14 agreed with a 6 week period for consultation with at least half of the consultation period in term time, and a further 7 agreed with the length of the period for consultation but felt that a greater proportion should be within term time, with a few suggesting that all should be in term time. One suggested that a shorter coverage of term time would be sufficient. On the length of the period, 3 felt that it was too short and should extend to 8, 12 or more weeks. There were 2 contributors who felt that 6 weeks was not always necessary and that a minimum of 4 weeks should be set as some straightforward proposals could be consulted upon more quickly. The WLGA supported a 4 week period.

On point (c), whilst almost all of the 26 responses broadly agreed with the list, there were suggestions for change, including – add - Welsh Language Board and other Welsh language interest groups; school staff (rather than only teachers); Unions representing all staff; town and community councillors, school councils and pupils who may not have contact with families, parents with young children not yet in school; and cross border individuals/representatives. There were also a number of comments under this section relating to permissible methods of consultation, with the emphasis on electronic communication where possible in order to economise, with the option for individuals to contact the local authority for paper copies. One contributor suggested that if the consultation document were also be sent to the Welsh Assembly Government, this should be a substitute for the prescribed information that is otherwise required.

**Question 9:** Do you agree that the proposer should publish a consultation report setting out the issues raised and the response to them; Estyn's assessment; and recommending how to proceed? [This question relates to paragraph 7 of part 2.]

Out of 29 responses only 2 took the view that a consultation report was inappropriate, one because it would cut across existing council procedures and one because it was considered that it could add a layer of information that would detract from the clarity of the proposal.

There were additional suggestions or requests for clarification from 11 of those who agreed in principle. These included: the role of Estyn and the timing of their contribution, its relative importance, and whether this would increase the workload of Estyn.

One response suggested that the proposer should send the consultation report to every one of the statutory consultees, whether or not they have submitted observations, (or inform them that it is available) and also to every other individual or body that has responded to the consultation. One local authority expressed concern over the timing of contributions to the process by the Welsh Assembly Government and about the volume of responses that would need to be analysed on some occasions which might strain resources. There was a strong recommendation that proposers should highlight separately the consultation responses from children and young people in an accessible way, indicating that this would bring the process more clearly into line with article 13 of the UNCRC which provides the child with the right to information. There was a suggestion that in order to deal appropriately with the concerns of children and young people, a follow up meeting with the school council might be appropriate at the time that the consultation report was finalised. There were suggestions that the consultation report should be distributed widely to all those consulted, including school councils. A number of local authorities emphasised the need to carry out as much of this distribution by electronic means as possible. One response recommended that the consultation report should include an equality impact assessment.

**Question 10:** Should a time limit be set on deciding how to proceed? If so, should that limit be 3 months from the close of consultation? Should proposers be able to apply to Welsh Ministers for an extension of time? [This question relates to paragraph 9 of part 2.]

All but 1 of the 27 responses agreed with a fixed limit on the period after consultation at the end of which decisions should be taken on how to proceed. The contrary view expressed was that these were matters for local decision. A significant minority (41%) of the responses agreed with all aspects of the question, including 5 local authorities. Others agreed with a time limit but suggested that 3 months was too short, and alternative time periods ranged from 4-6 months, with a suggestion in one case that if a limit of 6 months were chosen, then it might be appropriate not to offer opportunity to extend the time available. Other responses emphasised the need to have a clear system for requesting an extension of Ministers, with clear criteria enabling speedy resolution. It was suggested in 2 responses, including that of WLGA, that Ministers and Estyn should also be obliged to respond to requests within a specific timeframe. Many responses welcomed a limit so as to reduce uncertainty for all parties.

**Question 11:** Are the proposed publication requirements appropriate? If not, what would you want to change? [This question relates to paragraphs 10 and 11 of part 2.]

Out of 23 responses, 9, including 6 local authorities, took the view that the requirements were appropriate. Five contributors took a substantially different view, with 2 suggesting that the objection period allowed should be 2 -3 months. A further contributor drew attention to the fact that suggested requirements did not make provision for pupils to be notified and considered this a substantial flaw not in keeping with UNCRC. One of the other substantially negative responses suggested that proposals should be publicised nationally. The remaining substantially negative response took the view that copies should not be distributed to the extent suggested. There were 9 suggestions, mainly from local authorities, and supported by WLGA, which recommended that there should no longer be a need to advertise in a local newspaper as this had become prohibitively expensive. One local authority offered costings for such advertising as compared with sending a copy to

each parent, with the latter costing only 3% of the cost of advertising in a newspaper. Most of these 9 contributors suggested that the internet, together with postings at schools and in other localities, coupled potentially with targeted distribution by post would be sufficient. Some of these contributors thought that the notices should be distributed to a greater extent than suggested, with all statutory consultees to be included. Others took the view that a wide distribution on the basis suggested would be overly burdensome. There was substantial emphasis on the use of electronic means where possible. There was an additional suggestion for a more flexible approach so that promoters had to make sufficient efforts to inform all those with an interest without being prescriptive, although judgements would need to be made about what was a sufficient or reasonable effort.

**Question 12:** Do you agree with the proposed content for statutory notices? If not, what should be added or removed? [This question relates to paragraph 12 of part 2.]

There were 24 responses to this section. There were 4 contributions that disagreed to a substantial extent, 2 on the grounds that the objection period should be longer than the month suggested. One response took the view that where proposals affected Welsh language provision the prescriptions would not allow sufficient information to be included. It was argued that, for a prescribed alteration affecting the change of medium of education, the statutory notice should include an explanation of the linguistic impact of the proposal (which is more detailed than the “description of the proposed alteration”) referring specifically to the impact of the change on the school’s category as defined in the Welsh Assembly Government’s Information Document No 023/2007. In addition, in respect of proposals to close a school, as well as the matters listed, it was suggested that details of the alternative school(s) should contain a clear statement as to the nature of the linguistic provision offered in the alternative school(s). This contributor suggested that statutory notices for alterations and closures should also contain a statement dealing with the effect of closing a school on the local community, both linguistically and in other ways. The remaining contributor who strongly opposed the proposed content took the view that statutory notices should be simplified not made more detailed as the inclusion of more information in the Notice than is currently required would create additional costs. Costs of publication in a local newspaper were particularly highlighted with the average cost for the recent statutory notices in the region of £3,000. It was felt that additional text would significantly increase this cost. The contributor took the view that the effect of not including the additional information in the statutory notice could be mitigated by requiring proposers to include the relevant information in the consultation document which, together with a detailed Consultation report, would provide key interests with the information necessary for them to come to informed view.

There were 19 positive responses, 12 of which were from local authorities, which agreed with the content on the whole. Suggestions for modification covered the following ground: notices should require objectors to identify themselves and state that if this information is not submitted then the objection is void; notices should invite supporters to submit comments; children and young people might require additional support in order to make an objection; there would be administrative effort in verifying the status of objectors and thought would need to be given to the processes needed in order to bring this about.

**Question 13:** Do you agree that in future all objections should be lodged with the proposer? [This question relates to paragraph 13 of part 2.]

There were 26 responses to this question and only 2 disagreed substantially. One took the view that proposers could choose to ignore objections and one took the view that the Welsh Assembly Government should deal with all objections in the first instance. The remaining 24 responses supported the proposal, including 12 local authorities. Suggestions for clarification and modification came from 5 contributors, including the WLGA, and covered the following:

Whether non local authority promoters have sufficient resources to deal with objections promptly;

where the proposer is not the local authority, it would be appropriate to share any proposal/objection with that authority;

There could be difficulties where a new school was being proposed by a promoter such as a diocesan authority and the local authority were the promoters for the closure of other schools that might be required in order for the new school to be established.

One response used this opportunity to query the basis of the legislative proposals and suggested that where funding is a pre requisite of any school proposal then the process should be simplified and linked into the funding bid process;

**Question 14:** Should the right to object be restricted to those groups identified in paragraphs 16 and 18? If not who should be added to or removed from the list?

Of the 29 responses to this question, most were in favour of restricting the right to object but there were varying views as to those for inclusion on the list. There was a welcome for the inclusion of children and young people, coupled with a suggestion that these parties needed an accessible means of expressing their position.

Potential objectors suggested for removal from the list were

- Staff of the school because of conflict of interest
- Governors because of vested interest, but a number of responses also suggested that individual governors should not be listed whilst the complete governing body should.
- Further Education Institutions, on the grounds that local authorities are not in a position to influence proposals relating to FEIs
- AMs, MPs and Diocesan Authorities on the grounds of non objectivity
- Pupils because they are often too easily persuaded by others to object.

Those suggested for addition to the list included

- the Welsh Language Board/Welsh Language Commissioner
- local elected members
- Staff of schools, not only teachers
- voluntary groups
- those with an interest in listed buildings when appropriate
- members of the local community on the grounds that schools were intended to play a part in the community and a community impact is required in the case of school closures, hence it appears somewhat contradictory to exclude community interests
- Unions representing school staff ( potentially instead of school staff hence avoiding conflict of interest)

One response suggested that Governing Bodies should be added to the first list (requiring Ministerial determination) along with Local Authorities and Diocesan authorities

Queries were raised as to whether would-be out of catchment pupils and their parents would be entitled to object and there was a suggestion that there should be a sliding threshold for objections, so that larger cohorts demanded a higher threshold.

Some concern was expressed as to what evidence would be required to prove that the objector fitted into the required category, and several took the view that this would be an administrative task of considerable proportions.

**Question 15:** Do you agree that the only proposals automatically determined by Welsh Ministers should be those attracting objections from a local authority, a diocesan authority or an FE institution? If not, who would you say should be included? [This question relates to paragraph 16 of part 2.]

There was a range of opinion on this question and a number, including some local authorities took the view that the Ministers should continue to determine all proposals where objections had arisen, regardless of source. Non local authorities who took this view felt that people were entitled to an objective appeal once local routes had been exhausted. Local authorities who took this view did not think that practicable local arrangements could be made in place of the Welsh Ministers. Nonetheless, 16 contributors, including 9 local authorities agreed with the list. Those who did not agree with the content of the list suggested that foundation schools should be added. Several took the view that Further Education Institutions had no more claim on Ministerial determination than other objectors, and that these should be in a category of objector but not in the category that triggered referral to Welsh Ministers. Two contributors recommended that governing bodies should be added to the list, and one that the Welsh Language Board could be considered as a potential addition. One response suggested removing Diocesan Authorities from the list as they play a lesser role in school organisation with fewer financial burdens. One contributor suggested that Constitutional bodies with Parent Teacher Associations of the schools affected and Local Community Councils should be included.

Some concerns were expressed that children have been used by adult campaigners and the Welsh Government could play a role in suggesting means of avoiding such situations as far as possible. It was suggested that there was also need for children and young people to have clarity over who would consider proposals when they decided to object.

**Question 16:** Should the trigger point for a local determination be an objection by an affected governing body, an MP or an AM; or a total of 10 objections from community/town councils, school staff, pupils or parents? If not, what do you consider the trigger point should be? [This question relates to paragraph 19 of part 2.]

This question led to a wide range of responses but in general 18 out of the 28 responses expressed support for the trigger point, and 11 of these were local authorities. One local authority expressed opposition to the principle of local determination in this response. A number of those who generally disagreed took the view that Further Education Institutions should be among the group of 10 and not accorded the higher level Ministerial involvement. One response stated that any objection should trigger the need for determination. One response queried a simplistic threshold and suggested it should be tailored depending on the population or size of the catchment area. One local authority dismissed the trigger for separate local determination, and whilst recognising that a few

proposals in the “top table” category would be referred to Welsh Ministers, took the view that all proposals not objected to at the highest level stipulated should be determined by the responsible executive, not a separate body. One response took the view that the threshold of 10 would have no effect and that such a threshold could easily be orchestrated by few objectors. One response suggested that School Councils should be included as objectors triggering the need for separate determination. Two responses mentioned the need to ensure that Community Councils/Town Councils and local councillors should be objectors enabling a local referral.

More than half of those who agreed with the principle set out in the question made a number of suggestions or requested clarifications. A few of these suggestions advocated that petitions should count as one objection, and that the governing body counted as one objection, an opposing view was expressed in respect of staff of schools, such that if staff or their representatives opposed, the individuals signing up to the objection contributed to the trigger. There was a suggestion that objections would have to be individual (i.e unique) in order to count, such that standard letters would not contribute. There was a suggestion that any letters of support could be allowed to balance out objections such that the number would be reduced if support were expressed. One response suggested that local decision makers might be unwilling to make determinations where objections had been lodged by Assembly Members or other local elected members.

**Question 17:** Do you agree that proposers should be required to prepare an objection report and submit it to the local decision maker within 4 weeks from the end of consultation? [This question relates to paragraph 20 of part 2.]

Twenty-five respondents (including thirteen local authorities) agreed, implicitly or explicitly, to the principle of producing an objection report. A further two responses indicated a degree of misunderstanding of the question, interpreting it as relating to objectors making a report of their objections within a 4 week timescale. None disagreed with the principle of producing an objection report as correctly interpreted. Of those who agreed, respondents had concerns about the ability to produce such a report in the four week timescale indicated; reasons cited for this included time constraints connected with the clarification of technical issues (one), consideration of large numbers of objections (one) or achieving the necessary clearance (one). Five respondents also expressed concerns that a four week deadline would not accord with local authority reporting/decision making cycles, potentially triggering the need to call extraordinary meetings. In light of this, it was suggested that two months would be a more reasonable requirement. One respondent, in agreement with the principle, was of the view that the requirement to produce an objection report would be excessive if coupled with a need to respond to individual objectors. Another respondent, likewise in agreement, asked for guidance on the content of the report, including possibly a template. One respondent raised the query ““Within that 4 week period proposers would we need to decide whether to go ahead with the proposal or whether to withdraw it” – is 4 weeks enough time and if it ... isn’t the consultation must be re-started.”

The Welsh Language Board suggested that Welsh Ministers should commit to publishing decisions within three months of receiving the proposer’s report in every case unless there are exceptional circumstances.



**Question 18:** Do you anticipate that local authority decision making cycles could be adapted so as to make a decision to proceed within 4 weeks from the end of the objection period? [This question relates to paragraph 20 of part 2.]

A little over half of those who responded viewed this as a suitable time frame, but only 6 local authorities viewed the timetable as sufficient, and several more than this did not. A few of those who agreed in principle argued for flexibility so as to avoid the situation where the procedure might have to begin afresh. There was also concern that truncating the process would lead to lesser consideration of the substance of objections, particularly when these were received in substantial numbers. It was believed by a few that the need to operate to such a tight timescale could impact seriously on other local authority services. A few responses indicated that some Executives did not meet during the summer holidays. Two local authorities pointed out that delegations of decision making might avoid the difficulty of arranging meetings of Executives, but this approach might not be viewed favourably when objections had been lodged. A few local authorities were strongly of the view that one month was inappropriate and unachievable. Overall, there was a clear concern that this proposal would truncate timescales too much (especially in cases where there were 1000+ objections to process.) A counter-proposal was made to the effect that the timescales should provide for 4 weeks to prepare a report, and then a further 2 weeks to make the decision to proceed. Others suggested that the period should be at least 2 months, if not 3.

**Question 19:** Do you agree that where there are local objections a decision making panel or committee should be established to decide whether the proposal should be implemented, modified or rejected? Should the committee consist only of those who do not have an interest in the proposal under scrutiny? [This question relates to paragraph 23 of part 2.]

Whilst an equal number of responses supported and opposed the proposal, amongst the 12 responses supporting the concept of a decision making panel, only 1 of represented local authorities. There was strong opposition from 14 of those responding, including 11 local authorities, the WLGA and Society of Welsh Treasurers, and a further 7 responses, including 3 local authorities, whilst not wholeheartedly opposed, identified substantial difficulty in operating such proposals. Those who supported the principle referred to the importance of ensuring that the panel was entirely impartial, including that decision makers also represented minority groups and considered all equality issues. Two responses supporting the proposal suggested that there might also be need to establish an appeal committee to which references could be made subsequent to the decision of the local panel or committee, such as in the planning regime. Those who opposed made strong arguments including reference to current

difficulty in obtaining members for admission appeals panels where it is difficult to attract members even for this lower level decision making. There was also a view that school organisation is a complex matter and it would be expensive and challenging to suitably train members. One local authority made the point that the fact that such a panel could be judicially reviewed would deter individuals from taking part. Several local authorities pointed out that planning of school places is a statutory duty and determination /decisions should be made by accountable, elected members who would also have knowledge of the broader picture within the authority. There was also a view that decisions should be made during the normal programme of council meetings in order to avoid additional costs in a climate of budgetary pressure. There was a general view amongst those strongly opposed, that the relevant executive should take decisions. There was general feeling that these would have considered the proposals several times and would be ultimately accountable in both financial and democratic terms. Some of those opposed suggested that Ministerial call in was sufficient safeguard. One of those opposed took the view that a panel within the Assembly might be an alternative decision making body, and 2 suggested that Ministers should continue to make decisions. Another opposing response pointed out that at local authority level, the decisions of its executive are subject to rigorous cross party Committee scrutiny. One fundamental objection to the proposal made reference to the fact that an independent Panel, whilst having power to decide the future of any proposal, would not carry responsibility for the budgetary consequences of its decisions or, indeed, responsibility for any resulting educational consequences. The decisions of such a Panel could result in a financial commitment or educational outcome that would be wholly unacceptable to the proposer (normally the local authority) which would result in the proposal being rejected. In such a case the view was advanced that the consequent delay could even result in a financial loss being incurred. This response pointed out that WAG and local authorities are legal entities with statutory duties and accompanying responsibilities relating to educational provision and public finance, and were therefore appropriate decision makers. One response opposing the principle suggested that an alternative would be for the Council (or Cabinet) to be the decision maker, which, though also the proposer, is democratically accountable and ensures that the process of decision making is transparent. It is already a legal body and Councils are subject to the democratic process and administrations and individual councillors can be voted out if the issue is of such sufficient import to enough people. A further response suggested that if a separate panel is deemed necessary, a more realistic option would be that established Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committees be delegated with this responsibility, since they could meet the membership requirements suggested in the consultation document, and any member with a conflict of interest could be excluded.

Some of those who opposed also believed that the proposal would add bureaucracy as well as cost.

The WLGA opposed the principle, expressing strong belief that responsibility for proposals should fall to the local authority's executive in all cases other than those automatically referred to Welsh Ministers. WLGA took the position that this was a fundamental principle of local accountability and the efficient use of public funds and resources, identifying the creation of a separate body as a breach of its basic principles and responsibilities.

The Society of Welsh Treasurers made the point that Councils have to take difficult decisions on school reorganisation in the context of their consideration of a package of service delivery options and prepare budgets and set Council Tax accordingly. It took the view that potentially, decisions taken by a local panel could impact against Council approved budgets and force them to revisit spending plans for schools and other services. In the opinion of the Society of Treasurers, this would lead to Councils effectively losing the responsibility for making decisions on local school provision, and having to live with the consequences of it.

Responses largely neutral included one which pointed out that and there could be conflict as a result of decisions being made independently of the body that approved school organisation strategy for an area.

A few responses suggested that decisions might be made on a regional basis with regions at a suitable distance from the area in question. It was also suggested that such panels should be supported by a legal officer from a local authority not involved in the proposals.

**Question 20:** Should the decision making panel/committee have membership broadly as set out in paragraph 23 or, alternatively, as in paragraph 25? If not, how should a decision making body be constituted?

Responses to this question largely reflected those to the previous question with 12, including 2 local authorities, in favour of an independent panel, constituted largely as suggested, and 12 against, including 11 representatives of local authorities. A further 4 responses were largely neutral.

Of those who agreed with one of the membership proposals, a large majority favoured the membership set out in paragraph 25, of members with no connection to the Council. Some strong views in favour of independence were advanced. One response agreed that any committee should not constitute any parties who have an interest in the proposal under scrutiny, on the grounds that in light of the local authority's dual role as the commissioner of school places but also a provider, there is an in-built potential for conflict and therefore concerns that the interests of other providers may not adequately and appropriately be taken into account. This response therefore suggested that representation of other providers in a regional area should be included in any panel arrangement. This response also suggested that a further route of appeal might be necessary so as to avoid a proliferation of judicial review proceedings.

Those who opposed either suggestion mainly re-iterated points made in response to question 19, and supported decisions being made by Council executives, with a few supporting a panel consisting of council representatives from other areas, potentially based on the regional consortia. However, generally, several local authorities had reservations about the ability of councils to field a large enough pool of councillors to ensure a panel which was both politically balanced and free of councillors with an interest. Amongst those who disagreed with a panel being made up of disinterested councillors of the local authority, there were reservations about the ability of individual local authorities to produce suitable pools of councillors sufficient to constitute a panel. In respect of suggestions to constitute panels on a regional basis, it was suggested that regional consortia could form the basis, noting that a North Wales regional consortium was already in place. Concern was expressed in a few responses about councillors determining proposal in other (especially contiguous) LA areas owing to the competition for C21 schools funding.

Where there was agreement that a panel be formed, it was suggested that 5 was a suitable number for a panel to ensure quoracy and avoid stalemates in decision making.

Those who did not strongly state a view either for or against the proposals were in favour of an independent panel and 2 responses were against any Welsh Assembly Government involvement. Other neutral responses pointed out that consideration would need to be

given to ensuring effective training for local decision making panel or committee members so that they fully understand the criteria which they will need to apply.

**Question 21:** Do you agree that the decision makers should have 4 weeks within which to make its recommendation? If this is not considered sufficient time, what timescale would be more appropriate? [This question relates to paragraph 26 of part 2.]

Equal numbers of responses agreed, and disagreed with this proposal, and a further 4 responses took a more neutral position. The timescale was supported by 3 local authorities and opposed by 8. A few of those in favour of the proposal indicated that the length of time it currently takes unfairly places uncertainty and anxiety on staff, pupils parents and others. A further response indicated that since the results of the consultation/objection process and related evidence would be recent and the decision taken would be up to date. This response suggested that a more protracted deliberation would undoubtedly result in unnecessarily prolonging a decision, which may be criticised as being out of date.

Most of those who opposed the proposal referred to their responses to question 19 which strongly opposed the establishment of a local panel, preferring the Council executive to take decisions. A few of those who opposed treated the question on its own merits. Responses suggested that 4 weeks may not be adequate time when considering the sum of documentation and evidence that can be received with some of it technical in nature within the field of education. Alternative time frames of 6 or 8 weeks were considered preferable so that the information is digested in order that the panel be able to make informed decisions. One response suggested that panels should be able to meet several times to discuss, evaluate and ask for additional information or explanation as required.

Those responses which agreed in principle agreed that there was a need for some finality so as to ensure that decision making processes were dealt with expeditiously. Some concerns were expressed that it was difficult to convene panels to consider admission appeals, which could compromise the proposed timetable. It was considered in some responses that the period would depend upon the panel and its composition; the indicated timescale might be more achievable if the local LA led, and if meetings were scheduled well ahead so that school organisation planning could then take account of them.

However the view was also expressed that a regionally-constituted panel, as suggested in some responses could pose challenges as it might prefer to consider proposals “chunked” together as set times, not necessarily coinciding with the timescales applying to a given set of proposals.

**Question 22:** Do you agree that if the proposer did not accept a recommendation to modify the proposal, then the proposal would be considered rejected? [This question relates to paragraph 27 of part 2.]

Out of 28 responses, 17 agreed with this suggestion, including 4 representing local authorities. There were 10 responses opposed, all representing local authorities, but most of these made reference to earlier responses and their fundamental opposition to a separate panel or committee.

Amongst those who supported the proposal, one remarked that this should be on the basis that there would be opportunity for the panel to consult with the proposer over the determination period e.g. as occurs currently between WAG officers and LAs. In these circumstances, it was believed that if a modification cannot be agreed then a rejection seems valid. One response supporting the suggestion stated that since the local decision making panel or committee would be using objective criteria set out in guidance, a rejection would be logical if their recommendation to a proposer was not accepted. Some responses supported the proposition subject to the caveats that the panel must not be able to modify the proposal to the extent that it substituted a proposal of its own for that before it, and that the decision must be objective rather than subjective.

Those who opposed the proposal largely referred to earlier responses. The single neutral response made the point that whether this is appropriate this will depend always upon the content of the actual modification recommended and in particular whether it substantially alters or amends the original proposal.

**Question 23:** Do you consider that if the decision makers failed to make a recommendation a proposal should lapse? [This question relates to paragraph 28 of part 2.]

Opinion on this question was divided with 12, including 3 local authorities in favour and 13, including 11 local authorities against. Arguments advanced by those in favour included reference to this being appropriate only when the decision makers have exhausted all avenues in trying to make a recommendation supported by evidence. One supportive response indicated that it would underline the importance of the panel being constituted to include an “odd” number so that decisions would be made.

Several of those opposed continued to view the question in the context of non- support of local decision making. A few viewed the question on its merits and opposed. One made the point that should the decision makers have a valid reason for failing to come to a decision, for example, not enough relevant information, then it should be ensured that they have a further opportunity to overcome the problem (even if that goes over the period of 4 weeks). If they were then unable to make a recommendation after that, the proposal would lapse. This response stressed that it is important that the Welsh Ministers’ proposed guidelines should be designed in such a way that the decision makers cannot act in a frivolous or vexatious manner and went on to state the view that it is difficult to see what justification there could be for decision makers to refuse to make a recommendation as that would be a breach of their duty. Should such a case arise, this response suggested that the proposal should be referred to an alternative set of decision makers. Most of others opposed seemed to suggest that such a provision would lead to proposals having to be recommenced which would be undesirable, and stressed the need to have a system to ensure that decisions would be made. There were some suggestions that the opposite should apply, i.e that if the panel was not convinced that the proposal should be rejected, it should be considered approved.

Two responses took a more neutral position which emphasised the need to ensure that local decision makers could not fail to make a recommendation on a proposal which has been referred for local decision making. One response took the view that if there was a possibility that a proposal could lapse because local decision makers could not reach a decision, there is a clear possibility that communities would feel disaffected

by the entire process. This would be against the Welsh Assembly Government aspiration to develop a system which leads to speedier and more efficient decision making. The other neutral response took the view that the committee discussing the proposal should have an odd number of members so as to lead to certainty of having a majority vote.

**Question 24:** For local authorities: What costs might be incurred by local authorities in establishing and supporting a decision making panel/committee for school organisation proposals? [This question relates to paragraphs 23, 25 and 29 of part 2.]

This question was only for local authorities and responses were affected by the negative light in which the proposition of a local panel was viewed. No local authority offered an estimate of what the costs of such a panel might be, but the items identified as leading to costs were as follows:

- Clerking
- Room hire/refreshments
- Agenda dispatch
- ICT
- Legal advice
- Travel expenses
- Administrative costs, photocopying printing and postage
- Training
- Attendance allowances
- Loss of earnings
- Advertising for elections/nominations
- Officer support time

One response pointed to difficulty in recruiting panel members for admission appeals and anticipated that this might be even more difficult for school reorganisation as school closures can be a emotive and sensitive issue

A number of responses made the point that any additional costs incurred would be very difficult to justify in the current financial climate. Several responses pressed the view that decisions should be made by Council members within existing democratic processes, hence with little or no additional costs.

**Question 25:**

- a. Should Welsh Ministers have a fall-back power to call-in proposals for determination?
- b. If so, should this only be used in exceptional circumstances?
- c. What do you consider those circumstances might include? [This question relates to paragraph 30 of part 2.]

An overwhelming majority of the 28 responses to this question supported the principle that Welsh Ministers should have a fall back power to call in proposals. There were varying suggestions to cover part c of this question, with several agreeing with the circumstances set out in the consultation document. Additional suggestions were as follows:

- Cases where Local Authorities are likely to damage educational achievement and standards by removing capacity from successful and high performing schools and by forcing it onto poorly performing, half full schools.
- Where decisions are unable to be made locally or where there is strong evidence that some stakeholders' views have been weighted unfairly.
- any proposal that would lead to a diminution in Welsh-medium provision

- Substantial number of objections and/or from key stakeholders, e.g. all governing bodies directly affected by the proposal.
- a proposer were acting outside its powers;
- a proposal that is unreasonable and if implemented would have a

detrimental effect on the education of children and young people, or

- would represent an inefficient and/or inappropriate use of public funds.
- Evidence of subversion of the democratic process and lack of due regard to the consultation and decision making process.
- should an objection raise concerns in relation to the UNCRC, which would be consistent with the Children and Young Persons Rights (Wales) Measure.
- Concerns about equality issues
- Where a governing body of a school makes a proposal that is unacceptable to the LA or is not consistent with school place planning policy to serve the interests of the local community.
- Yes, perhaps if evidence were to arise suggesting that some of the factual items presented in a proposal were not accurate or potentially misleading.
- Proposals not following due process set out in legislation
- Where there have been a significant number of objections to the proposals or where Estyn has raised issues with the proposals
- where there are concerns regarding the appropriate application of local determination

A few of those who supported the principle, suggested that call in should be exercised earlier than envisaged in the consultation, e.g. prior to the publication of the statutory notice. It was considered by those, that this would be more constructive and potentially more efficient. One response which was supportive made specific recommendations regarding Welsh language matters, and suggested that the Welsh Ministers should announce in advance what sort of matters would “raise significant concerns”, with the expectation that linguistic considerations would be one such matter.

Those against the proposition set out in the question included one local authority which seemed to take the position that the determination of proposals where objections are received should still reside with the Minister, in which case there would not be the need for a call in procedure. The same response indicated that should the new arrangement be implemented there should be no call in powers, as this would invalidate the local determination process. A further response echoed the latter sentiment.

**Question 26:** Should modified procedures be available for proposals for closure of mainstream small schools? [This question relates to paragraph 32 of part 2.]

Of the 28 responses to this question, 18 were favourable, including 10 from local authorities. Strong opposition was expressed by most of the remaining 10, which included 3 local authorities.

Those who supported the proposal included one which stated that reorganisation in its present form is a difficult and slow process which often has elements of high risk for politicians, especially concerning closure and reorganisation of schools in rural areas, which is often highly political. In the view of this individual, too many wider issues are taken into account as part of the objections to closure and reorganisation. This was viewed as ironic, in that there is a general consensus that the status quo is not an option but the present process of rationalisation is too cumbersome to ensure progress. The response stated that pedagogical aspect of the small school debate needs to take

precedence over all other considerations. One of the supportive responses suggested that clarification as to what a small school is would be needed first. A further supportive response observed that the pupil threshold option set out implies that the modified procedures relate specifically to primary schools since the suggested thresholds are far too small to have relevance at secondary school level. The response pointed out that Secondary schools, even small secondary schools, usually serve a wider community with a greater range of key interests than primary schools and that separate procedures would need to apply a secondary school level.

Those who did not support the proposal felt in the main, that to do so might be unjustifiably discriminatory. In a few responses, emphasis was placed on the need to consider must the need of the particular area and the community served.

More than one response expressed serious concerns regarding proposals to modify procedures in relation to small schools particularly since the rationale would appear to be based on pupil threshold, which might not be appropriate in each circumstance. One response suggest that what should be taken into account is sustainability including future projections and pupil numbers, and the fear was expressed that if regulations specify a specific number of pupils being an automatic trigger then this may override any other considerations. A further concern expressed was that the power might be used irresponsibly by local authorities, with a belief that the inclusion of this power would make it appear that small schools were being unfairly targeted and that this would engender suspicion and opposition. One response suggested that the application of such a power might result in perverse outcomes such as an increase in pupils flows from Wales to England.

**Question 27:** If so what should the pupil threshold be? Should it be 15 or 20 or higher?  
[This question relates to paragraph 32 of part 2.]

There were a wide range of views expressed on this matter with those opposed to the principle of setting a threshold and having different arrangements for very small schools, restating their views strongly.

The size at which a threshold might be set was suggested as 15 at the minimum. Several suggested 30 as the threshold, since it is in line with the Estyn definition of very small school as set out in their publication: *Small Primary Schools in Wales: Estyn 2006*. One local authority stated that it defines a small school as one with fewer than 57 pupils. When this figure was set (in 1996), it was the level at which a school could employ 3 teachers, have peer groups of about 8 pupils and allow some management time for the Head. One response suggested that the minimum threshold for secondary schools should be 200 and one allied its view with that of the Audit commission in relation to cost effectiveness suggesting a threshold of 90 for primary schools and 600 for secondary. A few local authorities suggested that they should be able to set thresholds depending on their own area. One response suggested that instead of a pupil threshold the % of surplus could be considered as an alternative e.g. >40%.

Those who opposed included one response stating that Local Authorities should not arbitrarily be able to decide these numbers, with safeguards put in place to stop Local Authorities closing small schools as a cost cutting measure based primarily on school numbers which have been set by them to fit in with their plans.

It was also pointed out by a further response opposing a certain threshold that the number of children in small rural schools tend to ebb and flow and that consideration should be given to future pupil population and whether children use the school's catchment local school or not.

**Question 28:** Should simplification take the form of omitting the statutory notices and objections stage? Or in the event of objections should the local review or determination by Welsh Ministers stage be omitted? Would any other modification of the full process be appropriate? [This question relates to paragraph 32 of part 2.]

Strong opposition was again expressed by those who opposed distinctive arrangements for small schools, almost half of those who responded to this question. Consensus amongst those who addressed the question was that the statutory notice step could be omitted on the grounds that the formal consultation process should provide all stakeholders with sufficient opportunity to express their views. The point was also made that the publication of notices is expensive. It was believed that little is likely to be raised in a formal objection which has not already been raised during the consultation period, so the Executive making the decision is unlikely to come to a different conclusion. A small minority took the view that publication should take place but the local review stage could be omitted. A minority took the view that governors should be able to object and trigger Ministerial determination.

**Question 29:** Should the requirement for statutory proposals for closure be removed when a school has no pupils, to be replaced by notification of closure by the local authority or governing body? [This question relates to paragraph 33 of part 2.]

All responses to this question were positive, although 5 out of the 28 responses were either qualified or requested clarification.

One response indicated that if that school provided Welsh-medium education the requirement should not be removed unless the proposers were able to show that children who live in the area are able to gain admission to a school that provides at least the same amount of Welsh-medium education. Concern that staff should have sufficient notification was expressed in 3 responses, and the final qualified response queried who the local authority or governing body would notify in such circumstances.

**Question 30:** Do you agree that proposers should be able to give notice of a change of timing of a proposal by up to 3 years or the abandonment of a proposal without reference to Welsh Ministers? [This question relates to paragraph 36 of part 2.]

Of the 25 responses to this question, all, including WLGA, agreed with the principle, but 6 responses expressed qualified support, and 5 of these were from local authorities. Two responses suggested that 3 years seemed rather long, and one of the 2 suggested a reduction to 2 years. One local authority had concerns about the reference to change of location, since if land has to be acquired and a school has to be built, it may take more

than 3 years to achieve this and the exact location may not be known at the time of the proposal. This local authority would prefer that circumstance set out in the consultation document to be removed. Two responses felt that this freedom should be only available where proposals had not been called in and determined by Ministers. The final qualified response recognised that these proposals would give local authorities and other proposers a greater level of flexibility but only to retime or reschedule proposals. This response wished to emphasise that there would need to be clear communication to the children and young people affected as changes to timescales can cause uncertainty for children.

**Question 31:** Do you agree that Welsh Ministers should continue to have fall-back powers to address rationalisation of school places for use in cases where local authorities or governing bodies have failed to take action to match supply and demand? If not, how would you suggest this problem should be addressed? [This question relates to paragraph 37 of part 2.]

Of the 25 responses to this question, 23 were supportive, including 12 local authorities and the WLGA and a further 2 expressed qualified support including 1 local authority. Only 2 (not representing local authorities) were opposed.

Those who supported observed that these powers had never been used but that they were an appropriate safety net. One local authority implied in its response that the power should be exercised with a view to ensuring that situations would be addressed more promptly.

One response from a local authority raised a separate issue and expressed the view that whilst some of the proposed changes to the approach to school organisation is welcome, there is a need for a further review of the process to link the process into the newly adopted business case model for 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding. The further qualified supporter made the point that the arrangements for using the fall-back powers should include ways of safeguarding Welsh-medium education in the area served by the schools in question. The two negative responses advocated that all decisions should be taken at local level.

**Question 32:** We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

The WLGA/ADEW response stressed that changes made to the process should result in speedier and more efficient decision making, and that unnecessary bureaucracy and costs should be eradicated, with as many decisions as possible being taken locally through a democratically elected body. This was essential in order that change should be progressive. The WLGA took the view that there must be certainty about how other contributors to the process such as WAG and Estyn adhering to timetables.

Three contributors took the opportunity to promote foundation schools and oppose legislation seeking to curtail growth, citing an inconsistency with the WAG approach to Further Education Institutions which have a greater degree of freedom and autonomy. One response set out reasons not to reduce the age range at a particular foundation school. These responses were against the local authority role of planning schools, preferring that this responsibility should rest with local communities.

One response advocated uniting the legal process with Welsh Assembly Government funding applications which were perceived to be currently at odds.

One response queried whether the changes proposed would really save time or money, and a few others responding under this general heading echoed that position. An alternative suggested might be that all objections were sent to the Welsh Assembly Government which would summarise points raised, with responses from local authorities then requested. This approach was perceived as reducing duplication and maintaining independent decision making.

The Catholic Education Service made a substantial response to this section, expressing concern over what is currently, in their view, an over-emphasis on savings rather on educational matters. The response stressed the need for local authorities, in exercising duties of supply and demand, to give full regard to denominational demand. The CES expressed the view that the interests of other providers might not be well protected in the absence of an independent review similar to that of the school adjudicator in England. The CES therefore took the view that it is essential that true independence is built into any decision making process and that there is an appropriate and effective means of appeal to avoid the necessity of legal proceedings through judicial review in the event that local determination is not carried out in an equitable manner.

The Children's Commissioner welcomed the consultation and its reference to the UNCRC, which would need full consideration as the legislative proposals developed, as would the recently made Children and Young Person's Rights ( Wales) Measure which introduces a requirement for Welsh Ministers to pay due regard to the UNCRC when developing new guidance, policy and legislation from April 2012 onwards. The Children's Commissioner response urged the Welsh Assembly Government to look at the provisions of the UNCRC holistically when developing any new legislation in school organisation.

The response from Stonewall Cymru made a number of recommendations about equality issues, and equality impact assessments, that needed to be considered at all stages, stressing that where equality matters were raised the higher level of determination should be triggered, and that consultees for statutory proposals must include relevant third sector organisations and those representing sexual orientation interests. This response suggested that decision making committees should include representatives from equality experts, including Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual representation.

The society of Welsh Treasurers made the point that costs of consultation should be proportionate and no greater than currently.

Diocesan Directors expressed the view that there would be merit in having a mechanism for ensuring that proposals by voluntary schools would require the prior support of the relevant diocesan authority.

## Responses to the Children and Young People's Questionnaire

**Question 1:** If only one person does not like the change proposed for a school and objects to it, the decision has to be taken by a Welsh Assembly Government Minister. This can take a long time. Do you think this is sensible?

Of the 13 responses, 5 thought it not sensible that just one person not liking a proposed change could result in a Welsh Assembly Government making the decision. Of these 5, 2 expanded that it should not take a long time to make a decision  
Just 1 response thought that the current process is sensible, stating that everyone is entitled to their opinion.  
One response noted that it would depend what the objection was regarding.  
The remaining 6 seem to have misread the question, stating that they believe more people should be involved, suggesting that they thought that just one person would be consulted.

**Question 2:** Do you think final decisions about school closures and openings should be taken by a Minister in the Welsh Assembly Government or by specially chosen local people

Of the 13 responses, none favoured Welsh Assembly taking the decision.  
Two believed that a decision should be made by a combination of local people and the Welsh Assembly Government.  
The remaining responses favoured specially chosen local people including the local community, local authorities and local Councillors. Although one response did state that decisions should be taken by local people instead of people high up in the Council.

**Question 3:** If there were proposals to open or close a school or a school's sixth form how do you think children and young people should be able to give their views? Do you think special meetings should be held for everyone to have their say or do you think it is enough for the school council to give everyone's views?

An overwhelming majority believe that all children and young people should be able to give their opinion and not just the school council. 4 of the 13 positive responses would also like to see Youth Sub Groups be given the opportunity to provide opinion, another suggestion was to utilise questionnaires.  
The three remaining responses, 2 explained that the school council should ask for the view of all pupils and then provide opinion. The other simply stated that the school council to give their view

**Question 4:** Have you ever been asked about changes to schools in your area? If so, did you give your views and how?

Just 2 of the responses had been asked about changes to schools in their area, giving their views at a meeting. Of the 11 who said that they had never been asked about changes to schools in their area, 7 did specify that they would like to be asked and given the opportunity to provide opinion.

**Question 5:** Do you think schools should be closed if there are only a few children left? Why do you agree or disagree?

Of the 12 people who responded, 7 agreed that schools should be closed if there are only a few children left. 4 of those 7 went on to explain that keeping the schools open is wasting money.

Three responses disagreed with the above statement, arguing that children should be able to attend a local school to maintain democratic communities, other schools would become overcrowded and that transport may become an issue.

Two responses both agreed and disagreed.

**Question 6:** Would you like to be told how the local council has taken your views into account? If so, how?

The majority of responses were in favour of being notified how the local council had taken their views into account. Of these positive responses, one response stated that any results should be put into an email, one stated that there should be feedback through meetings, another thought a letter to youth forum would be sufficient, one response suggested information sheets to houses and another simply suggested putting any results in a report. Just 2 responses felt that they did not need to know how the Council had taken their views into account.

**Question 7:** Other comments.

Just 2 responses contained additional comments.

One response felt that everyone should be involved in school organisation and not just the Council.

The other believed that the decision needs to be a joint one because parental choice alone can create division and lack of community spirit in small communities. If people were to travel further it would cause congestion and pollution. This response went on to explain that people need to make local decisions based on local demographics which the Welsh Assembly Government may not be aware of, however they did note that local decisions in rural communities may be more open to biased decisions.

## **Respondents to the consultation document**

Head of Cwmcarn High School  
Chair of Cwmcarn High School  
ATL – The association of Teachers and Lecturers  
Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authority  
Welsh Language Board  
Pembrokeshire Local Authority  
Caerphilly Local Authority  
Neath Port Talbot Local Authority  
Swansea Local Authority  
Bridgend Local Authority  
Vale of Glamorgan Local Authority  
Cardiff Local Authority  
One Voice Wales  
Powys Local Authority  
Governors Wales  
NUT Cymru  
Catholic Education Service for England and Wales  
Children’s Commissioner for Wales  
Denbighshire Local Authority  
Stonewall Cymru  
Brynmawr School Sixth Form Action Support Group  
Society of Welsh Treasurers  
Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC)  
Ceredigion Plaid Cymru Council Group  
WLGA/ADEW  
Gwynedd School Governor

plus 7 anonymous.

## **P-03-313 The Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs)(Wales) Reg 2011**

### **Petition wording**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to undertake further consultation with hobby breeders and not to implement the proposed Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2011 until this has been completed.

It is evident from the drafting of the proposed legislation there was a fundamental ignorance of the position of hobby breeders in Wales, many of whom have international reputations as breeders of sound healthy dogs that are fit for function. The composition of the committee who drew up this proposed legislation, was fundamentally flawed as it took no account of the numerous hobby breeders resident in Wales. All hobby breeders welcome any method to clamp down on unscrupulous puppy farmers. It is our contention that adding more legislation to that which is already there & not effectively enforced, is counter productive in the efforts to curtail the activities of unlicensed puppy farmers & their reprehensible practices.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-313.htm>

**Petition raised by:** Colin Richardson

**Number of signatures:** 825

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 25 January 2011 and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the petitioner.

Good morning Rhodri

We were happy with statement issued by the minister however we do have reservations as to whether they have taken on board the failure of the consultative process. We have formed a 'focus' group called Welsh Dogs Advisory Group which can call on the expertise of in excess of 2000 people in the matter of dog welfare.

It remains to be seen whether the Dept and the CVO Dept will take up our offer of consultation when further legislation is being considered, this will indicate to what extent they have reviewed and improved their processes.

It is with that corollary that we are happy with the Minister's statement. May I take this opportunity to put in writing our thanks for your teams help and assistance during the petition process.

Kind regards

Colin Richardson

A nation of sheep begets a government of wolves - Edward Murrow

## **P-03-315 New Dyfi River Crossing**

### **Petition wording**

We, the undersigned, are in favour of and support, any proposition to create a new crossing of the Dyfi River (or the re-routing of the A487) linking South Meirionnydd with Powys, Dyfed and Ceredigion, to accommodate and suite the demands of modern day traffic and urge prioritisation of funding and action. We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to create this crossing as a matter of priority.

**Link to petition:** <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-315.htm>

**Petition raised by:** South Meirionnydd Older People's Forum

**Number of signatures:** 3204

**Previously considered by the Committee on:** 01 March and 29 March 2011.

**Update:** Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Local Government and Communities

Carl Sargeant AC / AM  
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-315  
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/05004/11

Naomi Stocks  
Clerk Petitions Committee  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff  
CF991NA  
committee.business@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

13 June 2011

I am responding to your letter of 5 April regarding Petition P-3-315 New Dyfi River Crossing where you asked to be kept updated with the findings of the Pont ar Dyfi Options Development Report.

I can confirm that we have sent the draft report to CADW for comment. Once they respond, we will complete the report and forward a copy to you.

**Carl Sargeant AC / AM**  
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau  
Minister for Local Government and Communities

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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## **P-04-324 Say No to Tan 8 - Windfarms & High Voltage Power Lines Spoiling our Community**

### **Petition wording**

The Welsh Assembly Government Technical Advice Note (TAN) 8:- Planning for Renewable Energy (2005) document provides advice and guidelines which without doubt result in the desecration of our beautiful Mid-Wales Countryside. Following these guidelines, will spoil our beautiful landscape, increase health risk from electro-magnetic radiation, damage tourism which is one of the main employment sectors, devalue properties and cause major environmental damage.

When the technical advice note popularly known as TAN 8 was issued by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2005, the local population did not truly grasp the scale of what it meant to the inhabitants of Mid Wales.

The Technical Advice Note TAN 8 will allow hundreds of huge wind turbines to be built upon wind farms within our communities.

As a result of the construction of these wind farms the National Grid will be obliged to construct power transmission lines to carry the power to where it is needed, although it is recognised that the National Assembly for Wales are not involved in the decision to route these power lines.

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to undertake a major review of the TAN 8 policy to include more public consultation.

### **Link to the petition:**

<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/documents/s1270/P-04-324%20Say%20no%20to%20TAN8.html?CT=2>

**Petition raised by:** John Day

**Number of signatures:** 3249 signatures. Associated petitions collected over 13,500 signatures.

**Update:** An update will be considered.