

Contents page for Paper 2A

Item	Title	Page
1	Chair of the Enterprise and Learning Committee's response regarding Welsh-language Daily Newspaper	2
2	Response from the Deputy First Minister regarding Unadopted Roads	3
3	Response from Welsh Local Government Association regarding Unadopted Roads	4
4	Response from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council regarding Unadopted Roads	7
5	Response from the First Minister regarding a Welsh Honours System	19
6	Response from the Presiding Officer regarding a Welsh Honours System	20
7	Response from the Deputy First Minister regarding closure of the FlexSys plant in Cefn Mawr	21
8	Supplementary response from the Deputy First Minister regarding closure of the FlexSys plant in Cefn Mawr	24
9	Response from the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding Sleep Apnoea	25
10	Response from the Deputy First Minister regarding Road Safety in Llanspyddid	26
11	Response from the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding Abertillery and District Hospital	27

Pwyllgor Menter a Dysgu
Enterprise and Learning Committee
Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Val Lloyd AM
Chair of the Petitions' Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

9 February 2009

Dear Val

Petition P- 03-107 – Welsh Language Daily Newspaper

Thank you for your letter of 3 February 2009 requesting that the Enterprise and Learning Committee's rapporteur group on bilingualism consider a petition from Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg on a Welsh language daily newspaper.

We considered your request at a private meeting of the group on 5 February. We would be happy to provide you with evidence of good practice which we might uncover during the course of our work. However we felt that the petition might more appropriately be considered by the Communities and Culture Committee, which has the Welsh language within its remit.

Yours sincerely,



Gareth Jones AM
Committee Chair

Dr Kathryn Jenkins
Clerc y Pwyllgor/Committee Clerk
Kathryn.jenkins2@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 029 20 89 8501
Fax: 029 20 89 8021

Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00131/09

Val Lloyd AM
Valerie.Lloyd@Wales.gov.uk

30 January 2009

Dear Val

Thank you for your letter of 19 January 2009 regarding unadopted roads.

As your Committee appreciate, the issue of the adoption of an unadopted road into the local authority highway network requires a local authority to make use of the powers given to them under the Highways Act 1980. The correct interpretation and suitable enactment of these powers are not issues for Central Government to instruct or advise upon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ieuan'.

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

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

11th February 2009
Tim Peppin
029 20 468669
tim.peppin@wlga.gov.uk



WLGA • CLILC

Val Lloyd AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Ms Lloyd

Petition – unadopted roads

Thank you for your letter of 19th January to Steve Thomas which he passed to me for a response. Apologies for the delay in replying to you but I have been gathering feedback from our advisers.

A number of authorities have general information on their web sites about road adoption which can be accessed, for example from a search on 'unadopted roads'. I have attached an example.

The procedure available to a Highways Authority for improving unadopted roads to adoption standard is contained within the provisions of the Private Street Works Code of the 1980 Highways Act. The principles of the code are fairly complex but require owners of the property or land with a frontage to bear the majority of the costs of the improvement works. As a result some authorities will only consider works if a certain percentage of the land or property owners are in favour of a scheme being implemented and prepared to contribute.

In relation specifically to older, unadopted roads, some authorities have a policy of 'making up' and adopting older, unadopted roads as funds become available. This does not preclude requests for work to be done on these streets where there are parties willing to pay to accelerate the process. In some cases a priority list of streets will be drawn up based on criteria (e.g. does the street provide the principle means of access to premises?; does it provide a link between other elements of the highway network?). Such criteria will rule out work on rear lanes, alleyways etc, as these provide only a secondary means of access.

There are also authorities that do not have a set policy but will consider specific cases where adoption might be appropriate. Often,

Steve Thomas
Chief Executive
Prif Weithredwr

Welsh Local Government
Association
Local Government House
Drake Walk
CARDIFF CF10 4LG
Tel: 029 2046 8600
Fax: 029 2046 8601

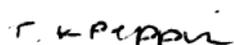
Cymdeithas Llywodraeth
Leol Cymru
Tŷ Llywodraeth Leol
Rhodfa Drake
CAERDYDD CF10 4LG
Ffôn: 029 2046 8600
Ffacs: 029 2046 8601

www.wlga.gov.uk

however, the streets where there is greatest pressure for adoption are those which require major work to bring them up to adoptable standards - in particular, where major structural work is needed to prevent roads from collapsing/slipping etc. To address such cases would require a disproportionate share of authorities' capital budgets and are therefore highly unlikely to be taken forward.

In a number of cases, the 'policies' will have evolved from decisions made over the years. However, hopefully the information in this letter helps to give a flavour of the issues and the approaches authorities take in response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Peppin". The signature is written in a cursive style. To the right of the signature is a vertical red line.

Tim Peppin
Director of Regeneration and Sustainable Development

POLICY FOR ADOPTING ROADS

An adopted road is one that the Council is liable to maintain.

The Highways Act 1980 empowers the Council to accept the maintenance liability for un-adopted roads. These can be either newly constructed development roads, or established roads, which have not been adopted previously.

The usual reason why the latter have not been adopted is that they neither comply with the Authority's specification for the construction of roads for adoption, nor the design guide criteria for the layout of adopted roads.

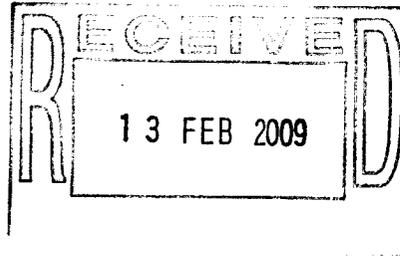
To contribute to the Corporate and Community Plan aims of improving quality of life, community safety and local services for local communities within the County Borough, the Council will:

- Adopt any road that meets the current requirements of both the specification for the construction of roads for adoption, and the nationally based design guide for the layout of roads for adoption.
- Enter into adoption agreements with the interested parties in accordance with current legislation to ensure adoption upon completion of the required works.
- Require that unadopted established roads will firstly need to be improved to meet the current standards at no expense to the Authority.

This policy has cross cutting themes which complement Corporate Objectives for: -

Environment & Transport
Confident Communities

Mr Mike Roberts Contact Cyswllt
PET-03-123 Your Ref Eich Cyl
MR/NLT Our Ref Ein Cyl



Val Lloyd AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Val Lloyd AM,

PETITION – UNADOPTED ROADS

Thank you for your letter concerning the above, received via the Welsh Local Government Association.

Please find attached an Information Note produced by the Department of Transport which you may find useful should it not have already been brought to your attention. I also enclose the Council's Policy concerning adoptions for your information.

The Council's policy deals specifically with adoption of unadopted but established roads which would firstly need to be improved to meet the current standards 'at no cost to the Authority'.

The context against which the Council has, by necessity, had to adopt its current policy is that there are 136 unadopted established streets with frontages in the County Borough having a total length of 21 kilometres. To make up to standard and adopt these unmade private streets would cost and estimated £18m.

There are also many other minor unadopted roads and lanes and if these were also brought up to standard the estimated cost would be in excess of £60m.

The Council's policy is that it will adopt any road that meets our current specification for both the highway construction and the nationally based design guide for the layout of roads for adoption. This means that private streets cannot be adopted unless they are

rebuilt from the road base to the wearing course. It also means that the highway should be composed , as a minimum, of a 5.5 metre carriageway and a footway 1.8 metres wide on either side. The roads must also be suitably lit and drained as appropriate. Many of the unadopted private streets either cling to hillsides or are laid out at a width that may only allow one car to pass between the forecourt walls or hedges and it is recognised that it may be very difficult to ensure that the required geometrical layout is achieved within the existing confines of the unadopted street. There may, in some circumstances, therefore be a case for deviating from a strict adherence to the minimum geometrical requirement which would need to be considered on an individual basis.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Roberts', written over a horizontal line.

Mike Roberts
Head of Streetcare

**Information
Note**

July 2008



Unadopted Roads

**Adoption of private streets and
possible funding sources**

Unadopted roads	3
Adoption of unadopted streets	4
Funding sources for works	5
Formula Grant	5
Prudential Borrowing	5
Capital Receipts	5
Local Transport Plan funding.....	6
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.....	6
Coalfield Communities	6
Home zones	7
Initiatives by some authorities	7
Doncaster	7
Leeds	7
Sewers and surface drainage	8

Unadopted roads

1. Unadopted roads are those roads not maintained at public expense by a highway authority, as defined by Highways Act 1980. The description covers a wide range of circumstances, including
 - streets without a public right of way (eg gated communities, industrial estates, farm access), where liability for maintenance rests with the land owner;
 - streets to which the public have access that are owned and maintained by private or public bodies eg. airports, MoD or NHS estates, Forestry Commission property;
 - streets with public right of way with the responsibility for maintenance resting with either owner of the street (private individual or company) or those whose properties front the streets (frontagers).
2. There is no reliable information on the current number of unadopted streets, estimates can be made on the basis of research in 1972 that estimated there were some 40,000 unadopted streets in the UK. Since that date some streets will have been adopted by a highway authority, while a number of others will have been built. Ordnance Survey has data that would allow all unadopted roads to be identified. This would include private streets (no public right of way), gated communities, streets on private land (eg industrial estates, airports, commercial developments, MoD estate, NHS estate, Forestry Commission roads), roads to farms, petrol forecourts, back alleys, etc. Most of these would not be considered for adoption by a highway authority. There will also be roads that have been built by private developers with the intention that they should be adopted by highway authority once the development has been completed and the roads brought up to standard for adoption. This may take several years for a large development, where properties are built and sold in phases that vary according to the local property market.
3. For most unadopted residential roads the duty to maintain it falls to the frontagers, ie the owners of the property fronting that road, which may include those where the side, or length, of their property fronts the unadopted road. Such streets may not have been maintained leading to potholes and may become unsuitable for those with disabilities or even, when very bad, the use of large vehicles (eg refuse lorries, delivery vehicles).
4. How a street came to be unadopted has a variety of causes, in some cases it is just a historical accident where the builder/developer did not make up the road to standards suitable for adoption. This may apply to residential or industrial developments.
5. In other cases the community was built by a private person or company. Initially, this owner maintained the streets, but when disposing of properties did not make arrangement for adoption of streets. This is the case with many former mining villages or towns, where the mine owners built the houses and the Coal Board acquired them on nationalisation.

When the coal industry was privatised these properties were in many cases sold or transferred to either tenants, usually former miners or their widows, or private landlords, along with liabilities for maintain streets.

6. Those buying property in unadopted street should be made aware of their liability for maintenance or the costs of making up the highway, should the highway authority wish to adopt.

Adoption of unadopted streets

7. Under Highways Act 1980, local highway authorities may adopt streets that they are not currently responsible for maintaining, but this is purely a matter for local decision. Adoption of highways brings with it liability for future maintenance including the provision of surface water drainage, or street lighting, as well as claims arising from the condition of the street.
8. For newly built streets, the developer should either provide a deposit or bond to cover the cost of ensuring the street was up to standard for adoption or enter into an agreement with the authority that subject to an inspection confirming that the street has been built to standard that it will be adopted. In either case there is a right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Transport. Under an agreement the developer may carry out the work himself, which may be less expensive, and is assured, that having been built to the authority's standards, which is confirmed by inspection, the street will be adopted once the works are complete.
9. As adoption of a highway carries responsibility for future maintenance, and liabilities should there be claims arising from the condition of the highway, most authorities will not adopt a highway until it has been brought up to standard. A street may only be adopted if a majority of owners agree in that street agree; many authorities prefer to have 100 per cent agreement. The frontagers (the owners of property fronting the street concerned) are liable for the cost of this work, which it has been estimated may average approximately £1,000 a metre. If the householders are unable to pay, the Highways Act 1980 provides for the authority to agree to payment with interest over a number of years or to place a charge on the property. Either approach means an authority incurs expenditure on behalf of others which may not be recovered for up to 20 years. The highway authority could, subject to decisions by its elected officers, agree to share the cost of bringing highway up to standard.
10. Decisions about adoption of streets are a local matter for local decisions based on the priorities within the authorities own programme of works.
11. When properties on unadopted streets are purchased, the searches should have revealed that the street is unadopted and the solicitor should have explained the potential liabilities to those purchasing such properties. For newly built properties, the purchaser's solicitors should establish whether there is an agreement to adopt the new highway or that a bond has been lodged with the authority.

Funding sources for works

12. The priority each local authority gives to spending resources on unadopted streets is for them to determine locally. There are a number of sources of finance available to authorities, which may be used to support work on unadopted streets.

Formula Grant

13. Formula grant, which comprises Revenue Support Grant, redistributed business rates and principal formula Police Grant, where appropriate, is an unhypothecated block grant ie authorities are free to spend the money on any service provided that they meet their statutory obligations.
14. The majority of the formula grant is distributed according to the **Relative Needs Formulae (RNF)**. There are different formulae for each of the different services for which authorities are responsible, for instance highways maintenance, fire or capital financing. The main determinants of the RNF for highways maintenance are the lengths of road of different types for which the highway authority is responsible, the relative costs of maintenance for these road types and the estimated unit costs per kilometre, which takes account of traffic flows, population, visitors and commuters and winter weather conditions. A cost adjustment is made to reflect differences in the costs of provision between areas.

Prudential Borrowing

15. Prudential Borrowing is not included in Revenue Support Grant. The Prudential system allows local authorities to raise finance for capital expenditure without Government consent. The system seeks to facilitate the use of borrowing for worthwhile capital projects, provided it is affordable ie that authorities can afford to service their debt without extra Government support. Decisions about debt repayment should be dictated solely by consideration of prudent treasury management practice.

Capital Receipts

16. Authorities have access to capital receipts from the sale of assets. Receipts from those assets that are not housing may be used as an authority sees fit for capital purposes or debt redemption. Receipts from housing sales have to be handled as follows:
 - Right to Buy receipts and receipts arising from other sales of dwellings to owner-occupiers - 75% paid to Secretary of State with remaining 25% available for any capital purposes;
 - Other housing sales (eg vacant housing land, shops, garages, playing fields, etc.), 50% paid to the Secretary of State, and the remaining 50% can be used for any capital purpose.

Thus authorities can avoid having to pool these receipts nationally, if they use them for affordable housing or regeneration projects.

Local Transport Plan funding

17. Local authorities already have the flexibility to prioritise their transport expenditure in line with their own locally determined priorities. Each authority's Local Transport Plan (LTP) is built around 5-year integrated transport strategies, devised at local level in partnership with the community and recognises that local problems require local solutions. Funding small-scale integrated transport and maintenance schemes, such as making up unadopted roads, is provided as block capital allocations, allowing authorities to spend it as they wish according to local priorities. Although Department for Transport does not ask for details of each scheme, it does ask local authorities to report in their LTPs on the number and type of schemes they are planning and delivering, and to show how these schemes contribute to wider aims and objectives.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

18. Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) is a special unhypothecated grant which has been made available to the most deprived local authority districts in England. The purpose of the NRF is to provide support to those areas to enable them, working through their Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to improve service delivery in their most deprived neighbourhoods and improve conditions for their most disadvantaged groups.
19. How those districts decide to allocate those resources is a matter for local determination between the individual LSPs and other partner organisations. The LSPs are expected to take a strategic view of their area, and NRF resources should be spent on priorities which address deprivation, national floor targets and narrowing the gap between the most deprived neighbourhood/groups and the rest. *If any NRF area were to identify unadopted roads as a strategic priority, then NRF resources can legitimately be allocated to address this issue.* From April 2008 the NRF will be replaced by the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, which will be focused on promoting work and enterprise in deprived areas.

Coalfield Communities

20. There is a particular problem of poorly maintained private roads in the former coalfield communities. The local roads in these communities had often been maintained by the National Coal Board before the NCB estates were disposed of. The affected estates are often in deprived areas, and still have private landlords unwilling to contribute to improvements to the roads. The Alliance (formerly the Coalfield Communities Campaign) has campaigned in the past for a programme to bring these roads up to an acceptable standard to allow them to be adopted. There are no official figures for the coalfield communities alone, but the Alliance is currently working with their membership to scope the problem and to suggest priority areas.
21. The Coalfields Regeneration Trust has funding of more than £150m for the social and economic regeneration of coalfield communities in

England but the Trust's funding agreement prevents the use of grant to replace or supplement local authority expenditure. Effectively this prevents the Trust undertaking work on unadopted roads.

22. English Partnerships is able to make improvements to local roads in coalfields (or elsewhere) where this connected to a wider regeneration project, but no specific funding is available for improvements to unadopted roads.

Home zones

23. One authority (Durham County Council), indirectly utilised LTP funds to complete two home zone schemes in their area, both of which had previously been unadopted streets. These schemes had the complementary funding from other sources including the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, and Single Regeneration Budget, urban and rural Renaissance programme, a Villages Partnership and the relevant Parish Councils.
24. Home Zones are residential areas where the streets are designed to meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists (including children), instead of simply being corridors for motor traffic. The aim is to change the way that streets are used to improve the quality of life in residential areas. Funding is provided from a variety of sources and a number of authorities have used LTP funding to support the creation of home zones.

Initiatives by some authorities

Doncaster

25. In Doncaster, the elected Mayor, has made a priority of tackling unadopted roads and bringing them up to standard to allow adoption. Doncaster Council has identified more than 600 unadopted roads, although most of these are back alleys or otherwise inappropriate for vehicular traffic. In 2003, following an assessment of all unadopted roads against set criteria, 63 were identified as appropriate for adoption. The owners of properties fronting these streets (frontagers) were surveyed and 17 streets were identified where the majority of frontagers favoured making up the street and adoption. The cost is approximately £2 million over five years and is funded from capital receipts from the disposal of land holdings.
26. The criteria for assessing whether to include a street in the programme included whether it was in a deprived area, the condition of street, and whether it would benefit the local road network with each factored scored and added together. Streets were then prioritised on the basis of the score so that those with lowest scores would be programmed first.

Leeds

27. In Leeds there is an on-going programme (private streets programme) to adopt streets, which has now been approved until 2011. Approximately £3.8m has been spent in the last three years with about 50 streets

benefiting. There is a further £1m a year available for the next three years, which should deliver a similar number of streets. Leeds has about 1,600 unadopted streets and the programme was established several years ago to tackle the position. A detailed programme of priorities was agreed several years ago and the council is working its way through the list with 22 streets adopted in 2007-08.

28. A street is eligible for inclusion in Leeds' Programme if it meets one of the following criteria:
- Streets which give access to public buildings or facilities
 - Streets providing a through route for the general public or service vehicles
 - Street which form the only link between an adopted street and the main highway network
 - Streets which give rise to environmental problems (e.g. flooding) affecting non frontage properties.
 - Streets with property generally pre 1930, substantial areas of the street unsurfaced and the street providing the only means of access to the adopted highway network.
 - Streets in an area that qualify for match funding.
29. All of the streets that meet the criteria for inclusion in a programme are then assessed and scored against ten technical criteria (eg condition of carriageway, footway, accessibility, level of use) to identify the appropriate order of priority for streets identified. The lower the score the higher the priority. Some 123 streets have been identified as meeting the criteria and a priority.
30. As each street is reached, the owner of the street and householders are approached and asked if they are content for the street to be adopted, so long as 50% of those approached do not object, detailed design work is then undertaken. This then forms the basis for detailed consultation, which may include public meetings. If the objections are less than 50% or the land owner does not object, the work is then carried out and the street is adopted. A number of streets have dropped out of the programme, when street owner or householders objected to adoption or technical difficulties associated with the specific street would delay further work.

Sewers and surface drainage

31. The position for sewers and surface drainage differs depending on whether the infrastructure is adopted by the water and sewerage company. A sewer is a conduit which serves more than one property and if built before October 1937 is most likely to be adopted. After October 1937 a new sewer that connects to the public sewage system was only adopted by request, and providing it had been built to prescribed standards. Therefore there exists many kilometres of unadopted sewers below adopted highways, as well as below un-adopted highways. The adopted/un-adopted status of the highway has no bearing on the adopted status of sewers. Those pipes that provide a

surface water drainage function only to the highway are classified as highway drains and are not adopted by the water and sewerage company. Section 115 of the Water Industry Act 1991 makes provision for highway drains, which are vested in the highway authority, to connect to the public sewer. However, highway drains may also connect into private sewers, other structures like soakaways, or discharge directly to receiving watercourses, none of which would be managed by the regional water and sewerage company.

32. Defra have consulted on the transfer to water and sewerage companies for unadopted sewers that ultimately connect to the public sewer system, or are surface water sewers discharging to a receiving watercourse. This transfer will occur on a date yet to be finalised.
33. As with new streets, developers, who are installing new water and sewer systems that are to be adopted, are expected to provide a bond should the new systems require work after adoption.
34. Defra is currently working on a build standard for new sewers that will enable automatic adoption.

[You are here](#) » [Home Page](#) » [Travel & Transport](#) » [Transport Plans & Policies](#) » [Transport Policies](#) » [Adopting Roads](#)

POLICY FOR ADOPTING ROADS

An adopted road is one that the Council is liable to maintain.

The Highways Act 1980 empowers the Council to accept the maintenance liability for un-adopted roads. These can be either newly constructed development roads, or established roads, which have not been adopted previously.

The usual reason why the latter have not been adopted is that they neither comply with the Authority's specification for the construction of roads for adoption, nor the design guide criteria for the layout of adopted roads.

To contribute to the Corporate and Community Plan aims of improving quality of life, community safety and local services for local communities within the County Borough, the Council will:

- ☉ Adopt any road that meets the current requirements of both the specification for the construction of roads for adoption, and the nationally based design guide for the layout of roads for adoption.
- ☉ Enter into adoption agreements with the interested parties in accordance with current legislation to ensure adoption upon completion of the required works.
- ☉ Require that unadopted established roads will firstly need to be improved to meet the current standards at no expense to the Authority.

This policy has cross cutting themes which complement Corporate Objectives for:-

- ☉ Environment & Transport
- ☉ Confident Communities



Ein cyf/Our ref FM/00068/09

Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

19 February 2009

Dear Val,

I am writing in response to your letter of 20 January about a petition for a Welsh Honours System. I explained in my letter of 28 August that the Welsh Assembly Government does not have the power to establish a separate Welsh Honours System but I do want to establish arrangements that enable us to recognise significant achievements by Welsh men and women.

We have been giving consideration to the best way of doing this and I hope to be in a position to say more about the arrangements in the near future. The current thinking would not involve nominations from the public but could evolve to include such nominations. The problem is the need to avoid an overlap between the UK Honours System and the scheme I hope to see established. There is no proposal for a scheme involving the bestowing of medals.

I will write to you when I have a firmer idea on what our proposed Scheme would involve.

Yours

Rhodri



Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

Val Lloyd AM
Chair of Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

Y Gwir Anrh yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AC,
Llywydd
The Rt Hon the Lord Elis-Thomas AM,
Presiding Officer

24 February 2009

Dear Val

Thank you for your letter of 20 January which detailed how the Petitions Committee hoped to contribute to the proposals for a joint project which was being considered by the Assembly Commission and the Welsh Assembly Government.

A project with the working title "Medal Cymru" was in the early stage of consideration. The basis of this proposal was an award to honour one individual per year to recognise exceptional service for someone who has brought credit to Wales. Although the Assembly Commission was aware that officials were developing ideas, it had not seen or considered any worked up proposals. At its meeting on 2 February, the Assembly Commission decided not to introduce such an award at this time.

I am aware that the Petition that you are have been considering relates to the broader issue of an honours system for Wales and calls on the National Assembly for Wales to introduce a Welsh honours system and having instituted such a system to honour the writer, Jan Morris. The Commission's decision has no bearing on consideration by the Petitions Committee of such an honours system and I note that your on-line discussion forum to gather views about this petition has now gone live. The Assembly Commission would be interested to see the outcome from that exercise in due course.

Yours Sincerely

**Y Gwir Anrh yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AC, Llywydd
The Rt Hon the Lord Elis-Thomas AM, Presiding Officer**

Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF99 1NA

Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Ffôn • Tel: 029 2089 8911
Ffacs • Fax: 029 2089 8117

Ebost • Email: Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@wales.gov.uk

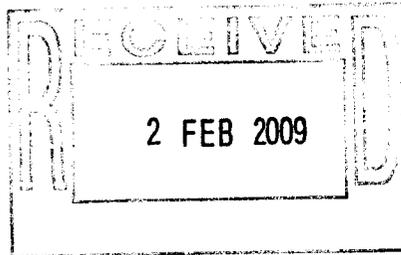
Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-152
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00108/09

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA



02 February 2009

Dear Val

I refer to your letter of 15th January regarding the Petitions Committee's investigation into the closure of the Flexsys chemicals plant in Cefn Mawr, Wrexham.

Flexsys, owned by Solutia of the US, was formed by a merger of operations between Monsanto and Akzo Nobel. Employment peaked at 400 in the 1990's on what was then a 160 acre site but there has been a steady decline in employment since that time. In April 2008, Solutia reluctantly concluded the site could no longer deliver in line with their corporate strategy and a decision was made to cease production. Latterly the company had sought to encourage other chemical businesses to locate on the site and utilise the established site services, but with very limited success.

My officials have a long-standing relationship with the business and this support has continued throughout. Several meetings have been held including a meeting with the company's senior management team and Wrexham County Borough Council; I also met with the company's Union representatives in June 2008. We are currently in discussion regarding the future redevelopment of the site. However, there is concern regarding potential site contamination which may impact on any such redevelopment. The site is currently regulated by the Environment Agency under an Environmental Permit and the local Environment Agency regulatory team, along with Wrexham County Borough Council and the company, are working together to manage any issues. Ann Weedy (who leads the local team) will be representing the Environment Agency at a meeting with the Local Public Health Director, HSE and Wrexham County Borough Council on 3rd February to further discuss.

There are contractual arrangements between Flexsys and co-producers on site (to which my officials are also offering support) which requires the company to provide site services for a further 2 years, with complete exit expected by 2011. We will continue to work closely with the Flexsys management team to further explore future options for the site.

Support has been offered to the workforce through the Early Response to Redundancy programme (the company has also appointed consultants to assist each individual with their

plans for the future). Redundancies have been phased, the last workers having left in December 2008 after being given 3 months notice.

Local views on the announcement were a mixture of concern for the livelihoods of those who have lost jobs, tinged with relief that operations are ceasing. There has been a long history of chemical production at the facility, which can be traced back over 100 years.

In terms of the Assembly Government's interaction with the chemicals industry, I can advise that officials have been engaged in various activities to highlight the deadline of 1st December 2008 for businesses in Wales to pre-register their chemicals under the EU REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals) Regulation, including the following:

- Working with staff from the UK REACH Competent Authority based in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to arrange, publicise and deliver five REACH events for businesses in Wales (a launch event in Cardiff, awareness-raising road shows in Ewloe, Newtown and Swansea, and a dedicated pre-registration event in Cardiff).
- Working with Business Sustain to deliver an additional awareness-raising conference on REACH targeting the automotive sector.
- Delivering talks on REACH at events organised by the Engineering Employers Federation.
- Publishing pages on REACH on the Welsh Assembly Government (<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/chemicalsradioactivity/chemicals/?jsessionid=mFcnJ5PG3XFCGV1GfFyJkTD4MhzWSHfLHJQ9rt9hn23QzqzLhptC!-1335101357?lang=en>) and Flexible Support for Business (http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk/news/news_items/reach_regulations_for_manufact.aspx) websites
- Cascading briefings on REACH internally to business-facing staff.
- Drafting communications on REACH for the waste recovery sector which have gone out to industry through Environment Agency (EA) Wales.

We will be working with the HSE and EA to deliver further information to businesses as REACH enters its next phase.

We hosted the October 2008 meeting of the UK Chemicals Stakeholder Forum in Cardiff, with a visit to the Dow Corning chemical works by Forum members the previous day. Jane Davidson, the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing gave the meeting's keynote address (draft minutes at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/chemicals/csf/081014/minutes-081014.pdf>) and issued a press release on REACH (<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/environment/2008/081014chemicals/?lang=en>). This was followed up in November with a written statement urging businesses to pre-register their chemicals (<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2008/reach/?lang=en>).

DESH's regular point of contact with the chemicals industry is currently through the UK Chemicals Stakeholder Forum (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/chemicals/csf/index.htm>), of which Wales Environment Link are a member, alongside UK-wide chemicals trade associations and NGOs.

To close, you may be aware of recent press coverage reporting cancer risks to workers exposed to chemical production at Flexsys - 2-mercaptobenzothiazole (MBT). The process that produced MBT ceased in 1997 but had been operating since the 1930s. Please be advised that the Health and Safety Executive are leading on this MBT issue as it relates to worker health and safety.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ieuan Wyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

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

Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-152
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00108/09

13 FEB 2009

Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

11 February 2009

Dee Val

I refer to my letter to you of 2nd February concerning the Petitions Committee's investigation into the closure of the Flexsys chemicals plant in Cefn Mawr, Wrexham.

In closing my letter, I referred to recent press coverage reporting cancer risks to workers exposed to chemical production at Flexsys - 2-mercaptobenzothiazole (MBT). I also advised that the Health and Safety Executive were leading on this matter. One of my officials has now made contact with Mr Ron DeCort of the Health and Safety Executive Hazardous Installation Directorate, who is leading on this matter at the request of the Director HSE Wales, Mr Terry Rose.

Mr DeCort advised that the press coverage was linked to a recent report undertaken by the University of Birmingham which related to the period 1975 – 1984. Mr DeCort also confirmed that the Health and Safety Executive were aware of the concerns centred on MBT. The HSE Epidemiology unit, together with other interested parties, is presently looking at the University's report, together with any other evidence which may be at hand, to ascertain whether a correlation between MBT and cancer can be proven. Once this is completed a decision can be made, although this may take some time. The HSE is reporting no proven link at present.

I do hope that the above additional information will be of use to the Petitions Committee in its investigation.

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

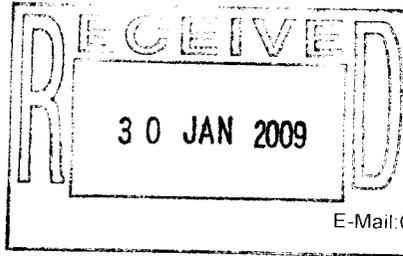
Edwina Hart AM MBE

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

Our ref: EH/00220/09

Your ref: PET-03-156

Val Lloyd AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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

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

Dear Val

30 January 2009

Thank you for your further letter of 20 January asking for an update on progress with the Service Development and Commissioning Directives for Respiratory Conditions and specifically those actions relating to sleep apnoea.

The Directives provide an outline improvement of respiratory conditions generally. The implementation of the actions contained in the document are a local joint responsibility for Local Health Boards (LHBs) and NHS Trusts, performance managed by the Regional Offices. LHBs were required to report on progress against each of the actions contained within the Directives by the end of September 2008. All LHBs returned a progress report and results indicate that they have all made progress in taking forward the actions, although there is some variation in progress of these across Wales on a number of the key actions which we are following up.

In the development of care pathways for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), cystic fibrosis respiratory infections and sleep apnoea, over half of LHB's had these in place, seven partially and the remaining were ongoing. We do not hold any figures centrally on the numbers of patients awaiting sleep assessment nor the length of wait for assessment. LHBs and Trusts have been tasked to work together however to address the numbers of patients awaiting sleep assessment and treatment. The National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH) will be continuing to provide support to this work.

[Handwritten signature]

RECEIVED
30 JAN 2009
GDZ

leuan Wyn Jones AC/AM
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00143/09

Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

February 2009

Dear Val

Thank you for your further letter of 20th January regarding petition PET-03-162, Road Safety on the A40 Trunk Road near Llanspyddid.

I can confirm that a review of safety through Llanspyddid has been included in the next round of funding and the work will be programmed to start early in the next financial year.

Draft speed limit guidelines are currently being reviewed, I will arrange for the committee to receive a copy once it has been completed.

*Yn
Dewi*

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

RECEIVED
10 FEB 2009
GAT

Edwina Hart AM MBE

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

RECEIVED
19 FEB 2009
HSE

Our ref: EH/00470/09

Your ref:

Val Lloyd AM
Chair
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

18 FEB 2009

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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

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

Dear Val

17 February 2009

Thank you for your letter of 4 February in respect of Abertillery and District Hospital.

I can confirm that the new guidance will come into force from 1 April 2009
The main point of this guidance is to reduce the amount that NHS Trusts can retain from sale proceeds to £500,000.

It is very difficult at this point in time, due to market conditions, to place an accurate valuation on Abertillery and District Hospital, but I am advised that the application of the new guidance is not likely to make a material difference in this instance.

[Signature]