

Petitions Committee

PET(3) 11-09 : Minutes

Date: Tuesday 7 July 2009

Time: 09:01 - 10:43

Venue: Committee Room 1, Y Senedd, Cardiff Bay

Assembly Members in attendance

Sandy Mewies AM, Delyn (Temporary Chair)

Andrew RT Davies AM, South Wales Central

Mike German AM, South Wales East

Bethan Jenkins AM, South Wales West

Officials

Alun Davidson, Clerk

Sarah Sargent, Acting Deputy Clerk

Joanest Jackson, Legal Adviser

Presenters

Dr Ted Coles, lead petitioner, No Ely Valley Airport Road

Peter Fox, No Ely Valley Airport Road

Chris Franks AM, South Wales Central, Local Assembly Member

Sian-Nia Davies, Save Wenvoe Village

Paul Fulgoni, Save Wenvoe Village

Dr Fred Rose, Save Wenvoe Village

1. Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

No apologies were received.

2. Evidence session: P-03-190 No Ely Valley Airport Road

The Committee took oral evidence from Dr Ted Coles, the lead petitioner, and Peter Fox, from the group No Ely Valley Airport Road (NEVAR).

Chris Franks AM spoke in support of the petition in his role as one of the regional Assembly Members.

3. Evidence Session: P-03-218 Save Wenvoe Village

The Committee took oral evidence from Sian-Nia Davies, Paul Fulgoni, and Dr Fred Rose, from the group Save Wenvoe Village.

Actions

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Deputy First Minister seeking clarification as to the disparity of information released regarding the intended purpose of the access improvements to Cardiff International Airport, with specific reference to his letter of 13 January which refers to the planned Defence Academy at St Athan.

Make a recommendation to the Deputy First Minister that the communities affected by improving access to Cardiff International Airport receive a full de-brief as to why decisions were made.

Seek clarification from the Deputy First Minister on the use of traffic models and any subsequent decisions made regarding improving access to Cardiff International Airport, drawing his attention to his letter of 20 May 09.

Make a recommendation to the Deputy First Minister that traffic models are obtained for all options listed in the public consultation and not just the preferred option.

Write to the Environment Agency requesting information on the models used to identify flooding risks in the Ely Valley, noting the concerns of the petitioners that these models have resulted in incorrect information. The Committee also agreed to request information on maximum levels of air pollution.

4. New Petitions

(i) P-03-222 National Osteoporosis Society

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Actions

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Health and Social Services to ask for her position on the universal provision of Fracture Liaison Services (FLS) across Wales by linking every hospital that receives fragility fractures to a FLS.

(ii) P-03-223 Section 6, Welsh Language Act

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Actions

The Committee agreed to:

Ask the Assembly's legal service to investigate the feasibility of the petitioner's request, and ascertain whether the proposed National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Welsh Language) Order may provide any implications, with the aim of updating the Committee in the Autumn term

(iii) P-03-225 Gorseinon College

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Actions

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to ask whether any additional funding could be made available to Gorseinon College in order to keep courses and classes open.

Write to the Principal of Gorseinon College to inquire whether they have been able to find any alternative sources of funding to keep courses open at the College.

Write to Fforwm to seek their view on the matter.

Write to the Deputy First Minister to ask if he is aware of any European funding that may be available

(iv) P-03-226 Sands - the stillbirth and neo-natal deaths charity

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Actions

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Health and Social Services to ask whether she:

Has any views on the 'Saving Babies' Lives' report published by Sands

Is planning to, or is in the process of, developing a strategy for reducing neo-natal deaths

Has any plans to fund further research into stillbirths and neo-natal deaths

Has any plans to work with Sands to improve public awareness of the issues raised by the petition.

(v) P-03-231 Proximity of wind turbines to residential dwellings

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Actions

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing to ask for her view on changing the minimum distance of wind turbines to residential dwellings from 500m to 2km, and the reasons why there are differences in the minimum distance in Scotland and Wales.

(vi) P-03-232 Ffynnone and Cilgwyn Woods

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Actions

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Rural Affairs to ask for her view on commissioning an independent inquiry into the purchase of the Ffynnone and Cilgwyn Woods by Calon yn Tyfu / Growing Hearts Ltd.

Write to the Forestry Commission Wales to ask for its view on the matter.

Write to the Auditor General to ask whether his office has undertaken any investigation of the administration of the Cydcoed scheme by the Forestry Commission.

Write to Calon yn Tyfu to seek its view of the matter.

5. Discussion of evidence

The Committee discussed the evidence on the No Ely Valley Airport Road and Save Wenvoe Village petitions.

6. Updates to previous petitions

(i) P-03-081 Student Support Regulations

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Await an update from the Minister for Health and Social Services on the work being carried out by the Modernising Pharmacy Careers Programme Board.

Ask the petitioner for an update on his campaign and for his views on the recent correspondence the Committee has received in relation to their petition.

(ii) P-03-099 Multi-user pathway at Talybont-on-Usk

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Urge the Deputy First Minister to provide an update on the progress made so far.

(iii) P-03-137 Hypothyroidism in Wales

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Await a response from The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE).

(iv) P-03-144 Guide Dogs for the Blind

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Deputy First Minister to ask when the research by the Department of Transport will be published.

Consider the petition again once the outcome of the Department for Transport's research study has been published.

(v) P-03-153 Body piercing

The Committee agreed to:

Await a response from the Minister for Health and Social Services.

(vi) P-03-170 Mencap employment

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to Mencap Cymru to ask whether they are content with the action outlined in the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning and Skill's letter, and whether they believe that further action needs to be taken - for example, should some of the policy focus be on supporting potential employers to employ people with a learning disability?

(vii) P-03-181 Pernicious Anaemia

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the petitioners to seek their response to the Minister's letter.

(viii) P-03-183 Improving rail services in Aberystwyth

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to TraCC with a summary of the issues raised by the pupils, and to ask of one of their officers could meet with the pupils to discuss their concerns and experiences with a view to this helping inform TraCC'S work in the future.

Write to the Deputy First Minister asking for an update on the business case referred to in his letter of 15 December 2008.

(ix) P-03-187 Abolish the Severn Bridge Tolls

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Deputy First Minister to inform him that the Committee's next meeting is on 22 September 2009, and that it would appreciate an update in time for that meeting.

(x) P-03-197 Save the Vulcan

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Await the response of the WLGA.

Keep the petition open.

(xi) P-03-207 Support for the unemployed in Monmouth

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to Jobcentre Plus to ask that it considers the points raised by the petitioners.

Write to the Welsh Government asking them their views on the matter, and also asking if they have held any discussions on the subject with the relevant UK Minister.

(xii) P-03-220 Lower the speed limit on the A40 near Abergavenny

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Deputy First Minister to ask that he:

Provides the Committee with the updated guidance on speed limits as soon as it becomes available.

Outlines the circumstances under which he would consider ordering the review of speed restrictions on a stretch of trunk road.

7. Any other business

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Look into issues which have arisen with regards to the ICT provisions on the National Assembly's website which enable members of the public to start or add support to a petition.

Committee Service

July 2009