

Petitions Committee

Minutes (PET(3)-12-09)

Date: Tuesday 22 September 2009

Time: 09:30-10:35

Venue: Committee Room 1, The Senedd, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay

Assembly Members in attendance

Val Lloyd AM, Swansea East (Chair)
Andrew RT Davies AM, South Wales Central
Mike German AM, South Wales East
Bethan Jenkins AM, South Wales West

Officials

Alun Davidson, Clerk
Dan Collier, Deputy Clerk
Andrew Minnis, Deputy Clerk
Joanest Jackson, Legal Advisor

Item 1: Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

Item 2: New Petitions

(i) P-03-204 Public Accountability and Consultation in Higher Education

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills requesting details of the level of public consultation required for changes to higher education institutions and the mechanisms that exist for ensuring quality assurance and accountability in the higher education sector;

Write to the Chair of the Enterprise and Learning Committee asking if their forthcoming report on higher education addresses oversight scrutiny of Higher Education and if any further work is planned in the area.

(ii) P-03-215 Prohibition of political events in schools

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to ask for details of:

how political engagement with schools is currently managed and regulated

how political engagement with schools should be managed and regulated in the future

progress in meeting the recommendations made by the Second Assembly's Local Government and Public Services Committee's report 'Electoral Arrangements in Wales'; specifically those that relate to engaging young people

the part political engagement plays in PSE lessons

Write to the Welsh Local Government Association asking how the issue of political interaction in schools is managed by Local Authorities across Wales and whether any guidelines exist.

(iii) P-03-234 Coed Cadw (The Woodland Trust)

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Rural Affairs to ask for an update on progress toward creating 1,500 hectares of new woodland in the next three years including details of the action plan implemented to meet the target.

(iv) P-03-237 Welsh Countryside

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing to ask for details of the action the Welsh Government is taking to:

preserve the countryside:

encourage industrial development to take place on brown field sites:

ensure industrial developments are environmentally friendly:

ensure that industrial developments are not 'an eyesore'.

(v) P-03-238 Pollution of the Burry Inlet

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing to identify what guidance is available in relation to management of sewage, who is responsible and what action is being taken to manage it

Write to the Sustainability Committee to highlight the issue which may have wider concerns throughout Wales for possible consideration in their future work plan.

(vi) P-03-239 Lifelong Learning in Welsh Universities

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to ask for details of any requirements that are placed on Welsh higher education institutions to provide lifelong learning programmes.

(vii) P-03-240 Improvements to the A40 in Llanddewi Velfrey

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economy and Transport to request the latest information in relation to the improvements planned for this stretch of the A40 trunk road, and in particular asking what interim traffic calming measures are planned in the interests of safety in the period before completion in 2014.

(viii) P-03-241 Save Our Sewers - Llanelli Star

The Committee considered this petition for the first time.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Consider this petition alongside petition P-03-238 and take the same actions as for that petition.

3. Updates to previous petitions

(i) P-03-088 Rural Bus Services in Taliesin

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Close the petition as it has taken it as far as it can

Write to the local Community Council to notify them of the work undertaken by the committee.

(ii) P-03-098 Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfelen

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Close the petition as it has taken it as far as it can

Write to the Enterprise and Learning Committee to inform it of this decision

(iii) P-03-099 Multi-user path at Talybont-on-Usk

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the DFM asking him to provide the Committee with:

a copy of the Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency's report, referred to in his letter, as soon as it becomes available

confirmation of his decision in terms of including these works in next year's budget

(iv) P-03-137 Hypothyroidism in Wales

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Close the petition in the light of consideration by NICE.

(v) P-03-157 Coleg Ffederal Cymraeg

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Close the petition as it cannot progress it any further.

(vi) P-03-170 Mencap Cymru

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills to ask whether she is prepared to review of policy and strategy relating the employment of people with a learning disability in the light of the additional concerns raised by Mencap Cymru;

Write the Enterprise and Learning Committee to ask if it is planning to undertake any work in this area;

Write to the Equality of Opportunity Committee to ask if it is planning to undertake any work in this area

(vii) P-03-172 Restore the Swansea-Cork Ferry

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the lead petitioner, to ask for an update on progress with his campaign;

(viii) P-03-179 Post 19 students with additional learning needs and P-03-203 Further education for young people with complex impairments

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Close the petition as the issue has been fully investigated by the Enterprise and Learning Committee;

(ix) P-03-181 Pernicious Anaemia

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Minister for Health and Social Services to make her aware of the petitioner's response and ask that the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer provides an update on progress towards licensing Hydroxocobalamin for sub-cut use.

(x) P-03-182 European Funding

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the petitioner to identify whether recommendations in the Enterprise and Learning Committee's inquiry into the Welsh Assembly Government's response to the international economic downturn adequately address the aims of the petition.

(xi) P-03-183 Coleg Ceredigion

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the petitioners informing them of the intention to close the petition, now that consultation on the National Transport Plan is underway, and to seek their views

(xii) P-03-188 Special Care Baby Unit

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the chair of the Health and Wellbeing Committee notifying them of the issue and the latest update received;

Write to the Minister for Health and Social Services to ask that she forward details of the policy and procedures for recruitment of medical staff from overseas

(xiii) P-03-197 Save the Vulcan

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Collate the evidence gathered to date and prepare a report on the issues around local listing that consideration of this petition has revealed.

(xiv) P-03-200 The Glamorganshire Canal

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the petitioner seeking views in response to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing's letter.

(xv) P-03-202 Education Maintenance Allowance

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Close the petition as the Committee is unable to take the matter further;

Request an update from Enterprise and Learning Committee before the next summer recess to permit to monitoring of progress on implementation of recommendations.

(xvi) P-03-206 Free all year-round swimming for children and young people

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Produce a short video to summarise the responses received and asking for the petitioners' response.

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

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Ask the petitioner to respond to the contents of the letters received from Job Centre Plus and the Deputy Minister for Skills.

(xviii) P-03-209 Abolish tuition fees (Cymru X)

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Ask the petitioners to provide the Committee with a written response to the Minister's letter.

(xix) P-03-212 Traffic relief for St Asaph

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Close the petition as the Committee has taken it as far as it can;

Recommend that the petitioners direct their efforts at Denbighshire County Council.

(xx) P-03-213/235 Abandon the badger cull (Secret World Wildlife Rescue and RSPCA petitions)

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Revisit these petitions once findings from the Intensive Action Study Area are available.

(xxi) P-03-217 National Library of Wales - Saturday Opening

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Communities and Culture Committee to ask whether it will be considering the issue of funding for the National Library as

part of its budget scrutiny.

(xxii) P-03-220 Lower the speed limit of the A40 near

Abergavenny

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Deputy First Minister requesting a copy of the 'Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales' guidelines which were to be available by the end of summer 2009.

(xxiii) P-03-221 Improved NHS Chiropody Treatment

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Forward a copy of the petitioner's report to the Minister for Health and Social Services for comment;

Forward a copy of the petitioner's report to Cwm Taf NHS Trust for comment;

Write to the Head of Podiatry and Orthotics at Cwm Taf NHS Trust asking her to consider meeting with Cynon Valley 50 plus Older People's Forum to discuss its concerns.

(xxiv) P-03-224 Stepping Stones Nursery

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the petitioner asking if they wish to feed into the Review of Childcare Sufficiency Audits;

Write to the Deputy Minister for Skills to request a timeline for the commencement and implementation of the review.

(xxv) P-03-226 Sands - the stillbirth and neo-natal death

charity

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to SANDS asking it to provide the Committee with a response to the Minister's letter.

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

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Scottish Government to seek its reasoning for maintaining a minimum distance of 2KM between wind turbines and residential areas.

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

The Committee considered an update to this petition.

Action

The Committee agreed to:

Write to the Wales Audit Office asking it to inform the Committee of the outcome of its investigation of Forestry Commission Wales's handling of this case and details of when it expects to report.