

Petitions Committee – Briefing Paper

PET(3)-15-10: 30 November 2010

Part 1: New petitions

This section provides brief background information on petitions to be given initial consideration by the Committee on 30 November 2010.

1. P-03-266 Re-open Mold Railway

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to consider the closed Mold railway, linking the town of Mold to the rail network, for reopening.

Background

This petition was raised by Reopen the Mold Railway Campaign and collected 220 signatures. In accordance with Committee procedures the Chair has written to the Deputy First Minister. A copy of this letter is included below along with additional information provided by the petitioner.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Petitions Committee

Ieuan Wyn Jones AC / AM
Deputy First Minister
Welsh Assembly Government
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-03-266

22 November 2010

P-03-266 Re-open Mold Railway

The Petitions Committee has received the following petition, submitted by the Mold Railway Campaign, which has collected 220 signatures:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to consider the closed Mold railway, linking the town of Mold to the rail network, for reopening.

Additional information provided by the petitioner is included below. The committee would welcome your views on the issues raised by the petition, and whether you would consider reopening the Mold Railway.

To help us manage our agendas and ensure that we are able to progress petitions before the dissolution of the Assembly, we would appreciate a response by Monday 20 December, to enable us to consider it at our first meeting of the spring term on 11 January.

Thank you for your help in this matter, I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Christine Chapman AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

Enc. Additional information provided by the petitioners

Ailagorwch Reilffordd yr Wyddgrug

GWYBODAETH YCHWANEGOL (Darparwyd gan y deisebydd yn Saesneg yn unig)

Re-open the Mold Railway

FURTHER INFORMATION (Provided by the petitioner – English only)

Mold is one of the most important towns in the region, and yet, it lies some five miles from the nearest railway station. Road congestion is heavy around the town and particularly towards Wrexham, and a rail link would help alleviate this problem, as well as providing better public transport for people to access the area, which would help rejuvenate the local economy. Driving is the only realistic mode of transport for most people in Mold, and a rail link would provide a service which the town needs. Much of the old trackbed still survives and such a scheme could therefore be completed with relatively modest investment.

2. P-03-288 National Strategy on Independent Living

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to introduce a National Strategy on Independent Living that recognises the equal right of all disabled people to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and to ensure that this is facilitated through effective and appropriate measures.

Background

This petition was raised by Disability Wales and collected 719 signatures. In accordance with Committee procedures the Chair has written to the Deputy Minister for Social Services. A copy of this letter is included below along with additional information provided by the petitioner.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Petitions Committee

Gwenda Thomas AC / AM
Deputy Minister for Social Services
Welsh Assembly Government
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-03-288

22 November 2010

P-03-288 National Strategy on Independent Living

The Petitions Committee has received the following petition, submitted by Disability Wales, which has collected 284 signatures:

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to introduce a National Strategy on Independent Living that recognises the equal right of all disabled people to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and to ensure that this is facilitated through effective and appropriate measures.

Additional information provided by the petitioner is included below. The committee would welcome your views on the issues raised by the petition, and whether you would consider introducing a national strategy on independent living as suggested.

To help us manage our agendas and ensure that we are able to progress petitions before the dissolution of the Assembly, we would appreciate a response by Monday 20 December, to enable us to consider it at our first meeting of the spring term on 11 January.

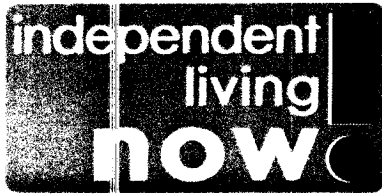
Thank you for your help in this matter, I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Christine Chapman AM

Chair, Petitions Committee

Enc. Additional information provided by the petitioners



24 November 2010

Dear Christine Chapman AM,

We are pleased to present to you, as Chairperson of the Petitions Committee, 719 signatures to Disability Wales' petition for a National Strategy on Independent Living, which we have gathered from disabled people, allies and supporters across Wales.

The petition calls upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to introduce a National Strategy on Independent Living that recognises the equal right of all disabled people to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and to ensure that this is facilitated through effective and appropriate measures.

Independent Living enables us as disabled people to achieve our own goals and live our own lives in the way that we choose for ourselves.

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) enshrines the right to Independent Living for disabled people. To date, the Welsh Assembly Government has introduced strategies and frameworks that focus on people with specific impairments such as mental health conditions, learning difficulties, arthritis and heart disease.

Disability Wales believes that an overarching national strategy is needed to build on existing policy and legislation, and provide a collective vision and action plan to make Independent Living a reality for all disabled people in Wales, regardless of impairment.

Given that Wales has the highest number of disabled people in the UK, many of whom are in receipt of benefits and public services, a pan-impairment national strategy is vital to tackling the exclusion, limited opportunity and lack of choice and control over their lives that many disabled people continue to experience.

The national strategy should set out a programme of work to achieve, as a priority:

1. Improved access to information, advice, independent advocacy and peer support services for all
2. Improved availability of accessible and supported housing to meet individual requirements
3. A comprehensive range of options and genuine choice and control in how personalised care and support is delivered
4. Improved access to Person Centred Assistive Technology (aids and equipment)
5. A barrier free transport system, including all modes of transport
6. Access, involvement and social, economic and cultural inclusion for all disabled people.

We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to be proactive in fulfilling its responsibilities under the UNCRPD by introducing a National Strategy on Independent Living, rooted in a right to Independent Living for all disabled people.

Yours sincerely



Rhian Davies
Chief Executive
Disability Wales

Strategaeth Genedlaethol ar Fyw'n Annibynnol

Gwybodaeth ychwanegol

Mae byw'n annibynnol yn ein galluogi ni fel pobl anabl i wireddu ein nodau ein hunain ac i fyw ein bywydau ein hunain yn ôl ein dewis. Mae Confensiwn y Cenhedloedd Unedig ar Hawliau Pobl ag Anableddau (UNCRPD) yn egluro ymrwymiadau a dyletswyddau cyfreithiol Taleithiau i barchu ac i sicrhau mwynhad cydradd o bob hawl ddynol gan bob person anabl. Mae Erthygl 19 yn nodi bod yn rhaid i bobl anabl allu byw'n annibynnol a chael eu cynnwys yn y gymuned. Mae amryw o bolisiau Cynulliad Cymru'n cefnogi egwyddorion cyffredinol Byw'n Annibynnol, e.e. Cymru'n Un, Bywydau Bodlon, Cymunedau Cefnogol, Cynllun Oes a Chreu'r Cysylltiadau. Fodd bynnag, nid oes yr un ohonynt yn darparu gweledigaeth gyffredinol o sut i wneud Byw'n Annibynnol yn realiti ar gyfer pobl anabl. Rydym yn galw ar Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru i fod yn rhagweithiol o ran cyflawni ei chyfrifoldebau o dan yr UNCRPD trwy gyflwyno Strategaeth Genedlaethol ar Fyw'n Annibynnol, wedi ei gwreiddio mewn hawl i Fyw'n Annibynnol ar gyfer pob person anabl.

National Strategy on Independent Living

Additional Information

Independent Living enables us as disabled people to achieve our own goals and live our own lives in the way that we choose for ourselves. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) clarifies the obligations and legal duties of States to respect and ensure the equal enjoyment of all human rights by all disabled people. Article 19 states that disabled people must be able to live independently and be included in the community. Several Welsh Assembly policies support the general principles of Independent Living, e.g. One Wales, Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities, Designed For Life and Making the Connections. However none provide an over-arching vision of how to make Independent Living a reality for disabled people. We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to be proactive in fulfilling its responsibilities under the UNCRPD by introducing a National Strategy on Independent Living, rooted in a right to Independent Living for all disabled people.

3. P-03-308 Save Gwent Theatre

Petition wording

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure funding is continued for Gwent Theatre. The removal of this highly valued resource from the communities it has served for over thirty years deprives young people of a significant opportunity to engage with the Arts.

Background

This petition was raised by George Davis-Stewart and collected 1118 signatures. In addition, the petitioner collected approximately 3700 signatures for an associated petition. In accordance with Committee procedures the Chair has written to the Minister for Heritage. A copy of this letter is included below along with additional information provided by the petitioner.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Petitions Committee

Alun Ffred Jones AC / AM
Minister for Heritage
Welsh Assembly Government
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-03-308

22 November 2010

P-03-308 Save Gwent Theatre

The Petitions Committee has received the following petition, submitted by George Davis-Stewart and which collected 1118 signatures:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure funding is continued for Gwent Theatre. The removal of this highly valued resource from the communities it has served for over thirty years deprives young people of a significant opportunity to engage with the Arts.

In addition, the petitioner collected approximately 3700 signatures for an associated petition. Additional information provided by the petitioner is included below. The committee would welcome your views on the issues raised by the petition, and whether you would consider acting to ensure funding for the theatre continues.

To help us manage our agendas and ensure that we are able to progress petitions before the dissolution of the Assembly, we would appreciate a response by Monday 20 December, to enable us to consider it at our first meeting of the spring term on 11 January.

Thank you for your help in this matter, I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Christine Chapman AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

Enc. Additional information provided by the petitioners

Achub Theatr Gwent

Gwybodaeth ychwanegol:

Ceir sôn bod llai o alw am yr hyn a gynigir gan Theatr Gwent, sef profiad o theatr byw a chyfle i gymryd rhan mewn gweithgareddau sy'n gysylltiedig â drama fel ffynhonnell o fwynhad a modd o feithrin hunan-ymwybyddiaeth. I'r gwrthwyneb, mae'r galw am waith y cwmni wedi parhau i gynyddu ar draws ystod oedran y sector addysg; nid yw'r rhai sy'n honni bod y galw wedi lleihau wedi ystyried ffactorau fel y gwahaniaethau yng nghyfradd genedigaethau, rhesymoli lleoliadau ysgolion a'r gwasgedd ar gyllidebau awdurdodau lleol. Bydd cael gwared ar gyfraniad gwerthfawr Theatr Gwent, a'i gwerth am arian, yn gollod fawr i'r gymunedau y mae wedi eu gwasanaethu ers dros ddeg ar hugain o flynyddoedd.

Save Gwent Theatre

Additional information:

It is reported that demand has waned for provision such as Gwent Theatre offers, through experience of live theatre, and participation in activities rooted in drama, as a source of enjoyment and self-discovery. On the contrary, demand for the company's work has continued to grow across the entire age-range of education; the assertion that there has been a decline fails to take account of such factors as variation in birth-rate, the rationalisation of school locations, and the many pressures on local authority funding. The loss of Gwent Theatre's value, and its value-for-money, will be hard felt in the communities it has served for over three decades.

4. P-03-309 Cardiff Against the Incinerator

Petition wording

We, the undersigned, call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to intervene to stop the incinerator scheme being proposed by Virador. As residents of Wales, we believe this scheme will be detrimental to the health and well-being of ourselves and our children.

Background

This petition was raised by Rick Newnham and collected 2203 signatures. In accordance with Committee procedures the Chair has written to the Minister for Environment Sustainability and Housing. A copy of this letter is included below.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Petitions Committee

Jane Davidson AC / AM
Minister for Environment,
Sustainability and Housing
Welsh Assembly Government
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-03-309

22 November 2010

P-03-309 Cardiff Against the Incinerator

The Petitions Committee has received the following petition, submitted by Rick Newnham and collected 2203 signatures :

We, the undersigned, call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to intervene to stop the incinerator scheme being proposed by Virador. As residents of Wales, we believe this scheme will be detrimental to the health and well-being of ourselves and our children.

The committee would welcome your views on the issues raised by the petition, and whether you would consider intervening to stop work on the proposed incinerator.

To help us manage our agendas and ensure that we are able to progress petitions before the dissolution of the Assembly, we would appreciate a response by Monday 20 December, to enable us to consider it at our first meeting of the spring term on 11 January.

Thank you for your help in this matter, I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Christine Chapman AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

5. 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 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.

Background

This petition was raised by Mandy Howells and collected 112 signatures. The petitioners collected 2,119 signatures for a related petition. In accordance with Committee procedures the Chair has written to the Minister for Children. A copy of this letter is included below along with additional information provided by the petitioner.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

Petitions Committee

Leighton Andrews AC / AM
Minister for Children, Education and
Lifelong Learning
Welsh Assembly Government
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: P-03-310

22 November 2010

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

The Petitions Committee has received the following petition, submitted by Mandy Howells and which collected 82 signatures:

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.

Additional information provided by the petitioner is included below. The committee would welcome your views on the issues raised by the petition, and whether you would consider introducing such a policy on the closure of 6th forms, and amending the consultation process.

To help us manage our agendas and ensure that we are able to progress petitions before the dissolution of the Assembly, we would appreciate a response by Monday 20 December, to enable us to consider it at our first meeting of the spring term on 11 January.

Thank you for your help in this matter, I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Christine Chapman AM

Chair, Petitions Committee

Enc. Additional information provided by the petitioners

Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF99 1NA

Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Ffôn / Tel: 029 2089 8998
E-bost / Email: petition@wales.gov.uk

POLISI'AU SY'N HELPŪ I DDIOGELŪ ANGHENION A HAWLIAU DISGYBLION

Gwybodaeth ychwanegol:

Pam fod cymaint o ysgolion lleol yn y gymuned dan fygythiad o gael eu cau – gan ladd ein cymunedau – tra bod arian yn cael ei wario ar gynlluniau adeiladu newydd, y mae nifer ohonynt tu allan i'n cymunedau ac yn costio miliynau o bunnau, yn hytrach na gwella'r hyn sydd yn ein cymunedau eisioes a chyfoethogi ein cymunedau? Pam fod y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol yn ceisio rhoi cynifer o ddisgyblion â phosibl mewn un adeilad? Ai dull o arbed arian yw hyn? Pam fod Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn rhoi pris ar addysg disgyblion drwy gymryd hawl rhieni a disgyblion i ddewis oddi arnynt?

POLICIES TO HELP PROTECT PUPILS NEEDS AND RIGHTS

Additional information:

Why is it that so many local schools in the community are under threat of closure killing our communities and money is then put into brand new builds, many of which are not in our community and costing millions of pounds instead of improving what we have already got in our communities and therefore enriching our communities? Why is it that the National Assembly seem to want to pack in as many pupils into one building as they possibly can and is this due to cost? Why is it that the National Assembly are putting a price on a pupils education by taking their freedom of choice away from parents and pupils?

Additional information provided by the petitioner (English only)

Dear Rhodri

Here is the letter i mentioned to you and is written to provide some background information for the committee. I would be grateful if you could ensure that it is circulated to Members ahead of the committee's next meeting where our petition will be considered.

Our petition is entitled "Policies to help protect pupil needs and rights".

This petition seeks to review and challenge current Assembly Government policy and guidelines on the reorganization of schools and specifically in this case any reorganization of post-16 education. We have already presented a petition to the Assembly Government focused upon saving the sixth form in Brynmawr Comprehensive School. This petition titled -We the undersigned appose against the close of brynmawr foundation schools 6th form-we want a choice-and it contained 2119 names this clearly demonstrates the depth of feeling in the local community.

We fully support the Assembly Government's ambitions as set out in the recent legislation on extending education and training options. We also fully support the Assembly Government's transformation agenda which, as we understand it, seeks to ensure that schools and colleges work far more closely together in order to extend the range of options available to children and young people. In terms of Blaenau Gwent we also support the new Learning Campus which we believe will certainly enhance the learning opportunities for the population of the borough.

Our concern is that our children and young people have a choice of options available to them for post-16 education. All too often the Assembly Government's policies appear to force the closure of sixth forms which in turn remove the element of choice from the options for continuing education from 16 onwards. We feel strongly that young people should have the right to stay on at school if that is their wish and that a sixth form education provides an excellent option for some people. Clearly some will choose to attend a sixth form college and we would support their right to do so.

Recently in Wrexham and in Rhondda Cynon Taff proposals to close sixth forms have been defeated and we believe that this reflects the wishes of parents and the local communities. We hope that this petition will help focus political attention on these matters and will persuade the Assembly Government to re-write its current guidelines and policies for post-16 education options. We want to see a level playing field between schools and colleges that will enable all young people to have a choice of options at 16 and onwards.

At the same time we have significant concerns about the robustness of local authority's consultation processes. Our experience is that a local authority regards consultation as simply a box-ticking exercise. There need to be minimum standards set and expectations for local authorities to reach in terms of consultation exercises.,and has mentioned in the epetition they need to be made more sturdy, strong and easier for the public to access and participate in. .

The consultation period should also give the public enough time to get the information and act accordingly

Thank you or your help on this matter. We are very grateful for your support.

Kind regards,

Mandy Howell's

Part 2: Updates to previous petitions

This section provides brief background information on updates to petitions to be considered by the Committee on 30 November 2010.

1. P-03-085 Surgeries in Flintshire

Petition wording

We, the doctors at the Laurels Surgery, Eyton Place Surgery and Allt Goch Medical Centre are frustrated (as we are sure you are) by our difficulties in offering enough appointments for our patients.

As you will be aware, we are totally constrained by the size of our building and desperately need to move to larger premises — preferably in a new Primary Care Centre.

Progress towards this has stopped following the recent appointment of the new Health Minister and we wish to bring our concerns to her notice.

We would ask that you sign this petition to support our efforts to have this process speeded up;

“As a patient at a GP Surgery in Flint, we would ask that our Assembly Member, Mrs Sandy Mewies, applies pressure at the Welsh Assembly Government for the development of a new Primary Care Centre as a matter of urgency.”

Link to petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-085.htm>

Petition raised by: Gillian Robinson

Number of signatures: 412

Previously considered by the Committee on: 21 February 2008, 10 April 2008, 22 May 2008, 27 January 2009 and 27 April 2010, 13 July 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board.



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Betsi Cadwaladr
University Health Board

Ty Matthew/Matthew House
Llys Edmund Prys,
Parc Busses Llanelwy/St Asaph Business Park,
Llanelwy, St Asaph,
Sir Dinbych/Denbighshire, LL17 0JA

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

Ein cyf / Our ref: GL/yel
Eich cyf / Your ref: P-03-085
☎: 01978 725283
Gofynnwch am / Ask for:
Geoff Lang

E-bost / Email:
Yvonne.Ellamie@wales.nhs.uk
Dyddiad/Date: 02 November 2010

Dear Mrs Chapman

PETITION: P-03-085 Surgeries in Flintshire

I refer to your letter of 16th July 2010 addressed to the Chairman regarding the above Petition.

The Health Board has been in recent discussions with Flintshire County Council regarding the potential development of our health and social care resources in Flint. This will include the potential inclusion of the GP surgeries referred to in the petition.

We do not have a defined timescale for this work at this point in time but envisage this commencing within the next three months. We will ensure that there is early dialogue with the Practitioners who have raised these concerns.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Lang
Executive Director
Primary Care, Community & Mental Health Services

2. 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 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Health and Social Services and is included below along with a summary of responses received from Local Health Boards (LHBs) The responses received from LHBs are included at annex 1.

Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM

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

Our ref: EH/02098/10

Your ref: P-03-150

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



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

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

5 July 2010

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your further letter dated 21 June asking how National Cancer Standards performance information is communicated to the public.

The Cancer Services Co-ordinating Group (CSCG) has developed a summary document of the original technical report on cancer standards compliance. This was put on the CSCG internet site on 4 June 2010. The link is:

[http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/322/National_Cancer_Standard_Report_on_Compliance_2009 - Summary for Patients %26 Public.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/322/National_Cancer_Standard_Report_on_Compliance_2009_-_Summary_for_Patients_%26_Public.pdf)

This report is intended to provide the public with an informative picture of cancer services across Wales in the light of the 2009 self assessment process by providing a contextual narrative. Following the end of September this year, there will a further round of self assessment against the National Cancer Standards and CSCG is currently looking at how best to present these results in a way that is meaningful to the public and the NHS.

[Signature]

National Cancer Standards

Report on Compliance 2009

Summary for patients and public

1. Overview

This should be considered as a formative report in the sense that it is not judgemental in approach, but one that aims to support improvement by defining the weak spots as well as the evidence of good practice. North Wales should be commended for good practice over all. The level of data has improved considerably over the last 4 years and now provides evidence that multidisciplinary team (MDT) working is firmly established. All patients receive care from an MDT and these teams are increasingly participating in clinical audits to benchmark their practice with others. Access to cancer trials across Wales is also good when benchmarked with England but more needs to be done to ensure equity across Wales.

2. The purpose of this report¹

The Cancer Services Co-ordinating Group (CSCG) have written this first full report on compliance with the National Standards because;

- The single objective of the National Cancer Standards is to improve the quality of care and clinical outcomes for patients.
- We want to give the Assembly Government, patients and public in Wales an overview of how the NHS in Wales is meeting the National Cancer Standards which were launched in 2005.
- It is important for those working in the NHS to have a clear view of how well they are doing in relation to other cancer service providers.

The information from the report will inform the next stage of independent validation of the self assessment process; Peer Review².

The data were submitted by all Trusts who host specialist cancer clinical teams including specialist palliative care. Data were submitted online using software devised by CSCG and Health Solutions Wales.

¹ The full report is available at:

http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/322/National_Cancer_Standards_Compliance_Report_2009.pdf

² Peer review is a method by which clinical peers assess how the submitted evidence is working in practice and real time. Health Inspectorate Wales will be piloting peer review visits in 2009.

This year we have seen a high level of support with all except two Chief Executives signing off the data submitted.

3. The evidence base for the Standards

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is commissioned by the Department of Health and the Welsh Assembly Government to provide evidence based guidance on how cancer services should be delivered. A series of Improving Outcomes Guidance was published by the Department of Health in the late 1990's with the program subsequently being incorporated into the NICE service guidance programme. The cancer standards require MDTs to work in-line with NICE service guidance and to have a programme of audit to confirm that clinical practice follows this.

4. The focus of the Cancer Standards

The standards concentrate on the processes and structures that are necessary to support patient centred care and best clinical outcomes.

The standards self assessment process does not require detailed evidence of clinical outcome because these are reported and published by other agencies. The NHS Information Centre³ reports on national England/Wales clinical audits and the Wales Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit (WCISU) regularly reports on incidence, mortality and survival data within an international context. It is important to recognise that the information obtained through the self assessment of standards compliance sits within this wider context.

All the questions asked as part of this self assessment process have been considered in great detail and are considered important either from the clinical, patient, or governance perspectives. For these reasons, a failure to comply with a standard should ensure that the underpinning reason is investigated and addressed.

5. Working to achieve outcomes on a par with the best in Europe

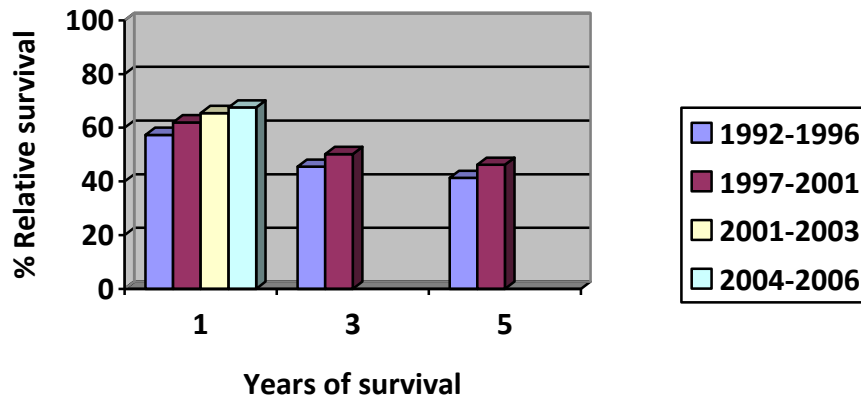
It is important that Wales looks at its quality of care and clinical outcomes in comparison with other countries but this can only be done when data are collected for the same populations. In the UK cancer data relates to the whole population but this is not always the case in the rest of the world. For European countries the UK countries can make comparisons with Sweden, Iceland, Austria, Finland, Norway, Malta, Denmark and Slovenia.⁴

Most importantly we can see in the Chart below that the 5 year survival rate achieved in Wales is improving year on year.

³ <http://www.ic.nhs.uk/services/national-clinical-audit-support-programme-ncasp/cancer>

⁴ Countries not registering cancers for their whole population are Switzerland, Italy, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Czech Republic and Poland.

Chart 1. Relative survival for all cancers excluding non melanoma skin cancer for persons at 1, 3 and 5 years for two 5 year time periods



The Eurocare4 survey showed that on comparison with 12 countries that do collect data on their whole population, Wales was ranked 6th highest for our 1 year survival rate and 7th highest for our 5 year survival rate.

The quality of cancer registration provided by WCISU is excellent as is the data supplied by NHS Wales to the national clinical audits. This has been a result of our long standing commitment to cancer information and the development of an all Wales system known as the Cancer Information System Cymru (CANISC).

6. The key findings in the report

6.1 Data quality

Data quality has improved but still more can be achieved. Between 5% and 18% of standards failed to reach compliance solely because of missing data.

6.2 Overview of level of compliance

Summary of aggregated percentage compliance to the National Cancer Standards by Trust.

	NORTH WALES	NORTH WEST WALES	CARDIFF & VALE	CWM TAFF	GWENT	VELINDRA	ABMU	HYWEL DDA
	NWCN		SEWCN				SWWCN	
Generic standards⁵	71%	71%	57%	61%	57%	64%	51%	41%
Cancer standards⁶ specific	69%	70%	49%	44%	46%	42%	37%	38%

⁵ This category includes standards that are common to all cancer sites, and delivered in a way that one set of data covers all cancer sites (organisation at board level for example)

Development of a numeric scoring system is not an exact science. The percentages above reflect an aggregation of a 'pass/fail' assessment for each standard and do not reflect how near or far an organisation was from achieving compliance to those individual standards. In a number of instances, data that were assessed as a "fail" were very close to full compliance. There has also been no distinction made between standards that may have a direct impact on patient outcomes and those that would contribute to the patient experience. It should be noted that whilst no organisation has achieved 100% for all standards all organisations have reached compliance for specific standards or groups of standards.

7. Compliance to the generic standards.

7.1 Patient centred care

Both breast and skin cancer MDTs reached compliance for 70% or more of this set of standards with the other teams reaching 60% on average across Wales.

There are still gaps in the provision of psychological support and Trusts need to audit their policies to ensure that proper account is taken of those with learning difficulties or special needs.

7.2 Service Planning, Organisation, Communication and Cancer Information

The highest level of compliance was found for these standards which is reassuring as these aspects are fundamental to providing good services.

7.3 Imaging and Pathology

Accurate information on diagnosis and the spread of the cancer is important to both manage the patient and assess and compare outcomes. To address this, a standardised reporting format is required and some Trusts had difficulty in achieving this even though a limited number of pathological data fields are available in CANISC. There is a national project underway that will, in the near future, provide a direct flow of pathology information into CANISC and save time and improve accuracy. A direct data feed from radiology systems will also be achieved in the future as part of Informing Healthcare's programme.

7.4 Radiotherapy

Compliance with these standards was lower than for other generic standards with waiting times having been a concern for some time. Additional evidence comes from the CSCG report on capacity and demand in radiotherapy published in 2006 and reports of the Royal College of Radiology. Recent investment from the Assembly Government for replacement and additional linear accelerators and extending the working day will result in bringing down the waiting times to the required standard. All three radiotherapy centres are accredited with the relevant Inspectorate.

⁶ This category includes standards that are unique to each cancer site, and also those that are common to each cancer site but require data from each different team.

7.5 Chemotherapy

The importance of clinical audit and an electronic chemotherapy management system in chemotherapy was highlighted by the report 'For better, for worse?' published by the National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcomes and Deaths in 2008⁷.

In NHS Wales clinical audit of major toxicity has been a requirement since the standards were published in 2005. All seven chemotherapy providers had undertaken the required audits. Non compliance was often because of a failure to share audit findings with the Cancer Network.

Intrathecal chemotherapy, where chemotherapy is delivered directly into the spinal fluid, requires particular safety procedures that are monitored nationally. All Trusts providing this form of chemotherapy participated in the required national audit.

Steps are being put into place to introduce a chemotherapy management system across Wales as required by Designed to Tackle Cancer by 2011.

7.6 Palliative Care input to cancer MDTs

Compliance with these standards was generally high.

8. Cancer site standards

8.1 Multi-disciplinary team working

Multidisciplinary team working (MDT) is a central component to the cancer standards. Low compliance does not necessarily indicate the absence of a specialist team but it does show that there may be room for improvement in how the team works.

The standard requires each MDT to provide details of its core members which are then assessed against a number of criteria geared to test whether the MDT has a team approach. For example, each core member must attend at least half the team meetings that are held and have a named person to provide cover when they are away. Each specialty must make sure that during the year no more than 10% of team meetings occur without a representative from that specialty present and less than 10% of team meetings should be cancelled because of lack of input from a specialty. Attendance can be via video conference or in person.

Only breast cancer MDTs have all (100%) specialities represented on the team closely followed by lung (86%), colorectal (85%) and urological (83%) cancer MDTs. These data are important in informing Trusts where there are shortages of specialists which could have a direct impact on MDT working.

⁷ For better, or worse? The National Confidential Enquiry into Patient outcomes and Death. 2008.

8.2 Referral pathways

This set of standards cover referral guidelines dealing with urgent referrals with suspected cancer; when up/down grading can occur; and informing the GP of a diagnosis of cancer within 24 hours of the patient being informed. In addition written care pathways are required for use by GPs and MDTs. Compliance was achieved for a number but not all this set of standards. Informing the GP of a diagnosis of cancer within the timeframe was found to be challenging for some cancer MDTs.

8.3 Palliative care

Most of the palliative care standards are included in the generic standards however each cancer MDT is required to be able to access specialist palliative care services. This standard had a high level of compliance with a number of organisations being compliant across all their cancer MDTs.

8.4 Working to best clinical practice

For less common and rare cancers that require complex surgery NICE guidance is to develop specialist Network or Supra network surgical teams to maintain the specialist skills and resources required. In 2005 following the launch of the National Cancer Standards, Regional Cancer Networks were required to develop action plans to achieve compliance with these requirements. Since then much work has been undertaken. The upper GI oesophago gastric cancer MDT is in place and providing specialist surgical services for residents in North Wales, Merseyside and the Wirral. Similar oesophago gastric network level specialist MDTs are in development in South Wales. In addition, across Wales, work is in progress to develop head and neck, anal, urological and gynaecological cancer network level MDTs with additional supra network MDTs for pancreatic cancer and testicular cancer. This work is dependent on local input of clinicians, patients and service planners and therefore takes time and whilst similar work is further advanced in the English cancer networks it should be noted that this is not yet completed for all cancer sites. As a first step, in Wales, a number of these MDTs have established joint MDT meetings with clinical input supported by video conference facilities however full compliance will take more time to achieve.

8.5 Clinical Trials

The standards require all patients to offered access to trials where they fit the entry criteria. As this is difficult to assess objectively the CSCG use the number of patients actually entered into trials as a proxy measure. Data are provided by the Wales Cancer Trials Network. Compliance is measured at the Network level rather than locally as not all trials are available in all hospitals. This is to be expected. Patient recruitment overall in Wales, and in comparison to England, is excellent with the agreed target met in two of the three cancer networks.

APPENDIX

Recommendations for the NHS

- i. Each Health Board (HB) should designate an executive lead for cancer to be responsible for achieving compliance across the MDTs hosted by the HB.
- ii. A short term Implementation Group should be established in the Assembly to actively monitor and report progress to the Minister. This should be chaired by a member of the Executive Director's Team and we would suggest the Director of Strategy and Planning. Membership should include each HB designated executive lead along with the Lead Adviser and Lead Clinician for Cancer. Deputies should not be accepted.
- iii. There should be quarterly reports on progress throughout 2010 to the Implementation Group.
- iv. Each HB executive lead should, supported by their Regional Cancer Network Core Team/Cancer Programme Group, work together to prepare an action plan by the end of December 2009 that details how they will achieve compliance to all standards by September 2010 for their health community. The September deadline allows for six months of data to feed into the 2010/11 self assessment process and provide the necessary evidence of compliance. Any expected longer term non compliance, such as waiting times for radiotherapy and major surgical service re-configuration, should be flagged with the implementation Group.
- v. Action plans should be endorsed by the relevant CSCG Clinical Advisory Group to ensure consistency across Wales. This does not mean a one size fits all approach but rather that the key recommendations of NICE guidance are implemented and a sound service base established for new service developments which is particularly important in relation to maintaining future recruitment of specialist staff and the ability to participate in national and multinational clinical trials.
- vi. The CSCG should repeat the self assessment process to monitor standards compliance for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 with summary national reports provided to the Minister and LHBs to confirm progress against action plans and to continue to feed into the planned national peer review process.

P-03-150 NATIONAL CANCER STANDARDS

SUMMARY OF LOCAL HEALTH BOARD RESPONSES

1.0 Purpose

The Committee agreed to write to all LHBs in relation to the National Cancer Standards petition. This paper provides a summary of these responses. The full responses are provided as annex **(DN Insert annex reference)** to the Committee papers.

	Aneurin Bevan	Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	Betsi Cadwaladar	Cardiff and Vale	Cwm Taf	Hywel Dda	Powys
Will the LHB met the standards by September 2010?	Not specified, but states that they are endeavouring to meet the standards by September 2010. They have detailed action plans in places for each speciality, and additional investment has been provided to ensure compliance. Reviews by the National Cancer Standards Co-ordinating Group indicate good progress and that compliance is improving.	Yes, subject to the successful appointment of Consultant Oncologist.	No, but expect to be between 95-99% compliant. The LHB highlighted that the Cancer Standards 'are far from comprehensive and the committee should be aware that in order to provide good quality cancer services for the population of North Wales, and indeed Wales, a considerable amount of work and activity is required over and above that implicated by the Cancer Standards'.	Detailed action plan has been provided, on how they will seek to achieve the standards by September 2010. It doesn't state though whether this is on track. Although they do state that some outstanding actions have financial implications which the Health Board cannot support in the current financial situation (for example LINAC Business Case)	No, some will be met by September (implementation of guidelines, protocols and audit programmes).	Expect to meet those related to communication, information, access to services and structure and format of multi-disciplinary meetings. However, they are unlikely to meet 100% of standards because of difficulties in filling vacant consultant posts in key support areas such as pathology.	No explicit answer given, but action plan indicates the actions that are needed to ensure compliance. Most actions were scheduled to be completed by July.
If not, what action is being taken to address non-compliance	n/a	n/a	Plans are in place to address areas of non-compliance.		Work is on-going to substantially re-design the patient pathway for GI, Head& Neck and Urology to ensure compliance. To achieve full compliance, there is a need for structural changes, which will not be implemented before September.	Considering service consolidation and options for the future clinical strategy, with the aim of creating larger service mass to improve stability and sustainability. Additionally, the HB is seeking opportunities to work with neighbouring HBs on a case by case basis to address these areas.	Not given
When will the standards be met?	n/a	n/a	By the end of 2010/11/	Not specified.	Compliance levels will be improved by September 2010m, but plans for full implementation will not be fully achieved. No detail given on when they will be.	Timescale dependent on the specific service, supply of available consultants and capacity within neighbouring Health Boards.	Not given.

3. P-03-200 The Glamorganshire Canal

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly of Wales to support the creation of a Glamorganshire Canal historical trail from Merthyr to Cardiff Bay, indicating the major locations en route and other historical sites in proximity to the Canal e.g. Hamadryad Hospital Ship, as a means of encouraging interest in the regional history, tourism and providing an interesting and challenging walking and cycling trail.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-200.htm>

Petition raised by: John Williams

Number of signatures: 14

Previously considered by the Committee on: 19 May 2009, 22 September 2009, 25 May and 13 July 2010, 12 October 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Cardiff Council. These are included below.

13



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE

RHONDDA CYNON TAF

TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR

Environmental Services

Cyfadran y Gwasanaethau Amgylchedd

The Pavilions, Cambrian Park

Clydach Vale, Tonypanydy CF40 2XX

Y Pafiliynau, Parc y Cambrian

Cwm Clydach, Tonypanydy CF40 2XX

Christine Chapman AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardif
CF99 1NA

Tel/Ffôn: 01443 424147, Fax/Ffacs: 01443 424027

My Ref/Fy Nghyf:
DGJ/CB

Your Ref/EichCyf:
P-03-200

Date/Dyddiad:
25 October 2010

Dear Ms Chapman

Re: P-03-200 The Glamorganshire Canal

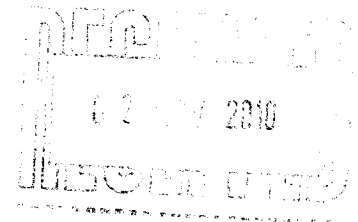
I refer to your letter dated 15 October 2010, requesting further information on our discussion with SEWTA.

The SEWTA Walking and Cycling group have agreed to promote The Glamorganshire Canal as a walking and cycling scheme. The bid then progresses through the various bodies within SEWTA for ultimate endorsed by the SEWTA Board, to be included as part of the bid for 2011/12 funding to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). We will know what scale of bid WAG is inviting towards the end of the year, probably in December and would anticipate that the bid will be submitted during January. The scale of the bid allowed will determine whether the scheme is prioritised for inclusion or not. I would expect WAG to confirm actual funding for 2011/12 during March 2011.

If we are successful, I see no problem in including the petitioners in any consultation, from which their thoughts and ideas can be considered.

Yours sincerely

George Jones
Group Director Environmental Services



EXECUTIVE OFFICE
SWYDDFA WEITHREDIAETH



County Hall
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Tel: (029) 2087 2000

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

My Ref / Fy Cyf: EM16067
Date / Dyddiad: 9th November 2010

Christine Chapman AM
The National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear / Annwyl Christine

Petition For The Glamorganshire Canal Ref: (P-03-200)

Thank you for your letter regarding the petition for the Glamorganshire Canal (P-03-200).

It has been explicitly requested that the creation of the Glamorganshire Canal historical trail will be considered as part of the development of the Strategic Cycle Network plan for Cardiff. The development of the network will be based on extensive consultation with local communities. In addition to identifying strategic cycle routes, this plan will incorporate a 5 year prioritised programme of works. The prioritisation criteria have not as yet been developed but are likely to include the opportunities and benefits of the scheme, the barriers, the costs of the scheme, the potential to increase cycling and the potential to improve cycle safety. This network plan will be an ambitious scheme to reduce congestion, pollution and provide accessible alternatives to using the car and will be fundamental to ensuring that the proposed investment in cycling facilities and initiatives over the coming years is spent wisely. Thus the development of the Glamorganshire Canal will be dependant on the merits of the scheme within the strategic cycle network, and therefore its development within the current budget can not be guaranteed. However I can assure you that as a result of the petition it has been put forward as a route to be considered as part of the network.

I would welcome the involvement of Mr John Williams, the petitioner in the consultation process for the development of the plan. Mr Williams, name has been added to those wishing to be involved, however if for any reason he would like his name removed, then please let me know.

Otherwise officers will be in touch soon with the first of our community engagement initiatives.

Yours sincerely,
Yn gywir,

COUNCILLOR / CYNGHORYDD DELME BOWEN
EXECUTIVE MEMBER TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION
AELOD GWEITHREDOL TRAFFIG A THRAFNIDIAETH

PLEASE REPLY TO: Executive Office / Swyddfa'r Weithrediaeth
Room / Ystafell 283, County Hall / Neuadd Y Sir,
Cardiff / Caerdydd, CF10 4UW
Tel / Ffon (029) 2087 2598 Fax / Facs (029) 20872691



4. P-03-207 Support for the unemployed in Monmouth

Petition wording

We, the undersigned urge the Welsh Assembly Government to investigate how to provide support and effective information to people in Wales, who are looking for employment, training or trying to initiate a business enterprise, locally.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-207.htm>

Petition raised by: Monmouth Town Council Community Affairs Committee

Number of signatures: 286

Previously considered by the Committee on: 31 March, 19 May, 23 June, 7 July, 22 September, 10 November, 8 December 2009, 19 January 2010, 15 June 2010.

Update: The committee will consider an update to this petition.

5. P-03-211 Care facilities for dementia sufferers

Petition wording

The GMB – Britain’s General Union calls upon the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that there is sufficient and appropriate provision of specialist EMI [Elderly Mentally Infirm] /Dementia Care & Homes/Centres across Wales

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-211.htm>

Petition raised by: GMB Union

Number of signatures: 13

Previously considered by the Committee on: 5 May 2009 and 15 June 2010, 13 July 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from petitioners and Welsh Local Government Association. These have been included below.

Our ref: MJR/RG

27 October 2010

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

Dear Minister

Re: P-03-211 Care Facilities for Dementia Sufferers

Further to your letter of the 26th July 2010, please accept my apologies for not responding sooner.

It is the view of the GMB that the Committees will address the vast majority of the issues of importance but we remain unconvinced that at a time of financial crisis, these Committees will challenge sufficiently the needs of those suffering from Dementia and for the specialist staff that care for them.

Again, I should reiterate that the GMB is fully on board with allowing people, who wish to do so, to remain in their own homes for as long as possible, however, we do not currently believe that the balance of care is correct. The number of visits and the duration of those visits is too short and fails to allow home carers the opportunity to spend time and to motivate the elderly, leaving them vulnerable and for long periods of the day or night alone.

I have often posed the question, what is the difference to a person becoming 'institutionalised' in their own home as opposed to a Registered or Nursing Home. My view, for what it's worth, is at least those who are in a Home have 24 hour support and interaction with staff and other residents. Perhaps one of the expert groups could consider how this matter is dealt with. If you do feel it appropriate, I am more than happy to attend one of these sessions to discuss possible solutions.

Cont/d

Christine Chapman AM
27 October 2010

In addition, I do believe that the Assembly Government and Welsh Local Government need to consider how the elderly are cared for and I would suggest that a strategy is developed which caters for the deterioration of the elderly through the stages of frailty and/or dementia, potentially moving forward with the concept of a 'Home for Life' run jointly with Health on the basis of collaboration and in line with the principles of a 'Welsh Public Services'.

Yours sincerely

Mike Payne

Mike Payne
Membership Development Officer

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

25TH October
Beverlea Frowen
(029) 2046 8681
Bev.frowen@wlga.gov.uk



WLGA • CLILC

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

Dear Christine,

Re: Petition P-03-211 Care Facilities for Dementia Sufferers

I write in response to petition P-03-211 Care Facilities for Dementia Sufferers and your request for further information on how local authorities plan service provision for the elderly.

All councils are aware of the specialist demands on their services for an appropriate range of residential and community based services for the elderly with dementia. It remains the responsibility of the local authority as a sovereign body to assess need and commission services for their locality. At a political level each local authority has a lead politician with responsibility for adult social services, supported by a statutory Director for Social Services.

There are currently 37,000 people with dementia living in Wales, and by Year 2021 this number will have increased by 21%. According to the Alzheimer's Research Trust, one in three people over the age of 65 will die as a result of some form of dementia.

Both WLGA and ADSS Cymru have worked in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and the Voluntary sector to develop an All Wales Dementia Action Plan, the intention of which is to ensure the provision of the appropriate, necessary and high quality services for those suffering with Dementia. To support the implementation of the plan discussions are underway with WAG officials at the present time.

Steve Thomas
Chief Executive
Prif Weithredwr

Welsh Local Government
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Tel: 029 2046 8600
Fax: 029 2046 8601

Cymdeithas Llywodraeth
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Tŷ Llywodraeth Leol
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Ffôn: 029 2046 8600
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www.wlga.gov.uk

The Plan identifies what changes are required at local and regional levels in order for individuals suffering from dementia to get the best possible care. Local authorities continue to plan and deliver against this national strategy so that individuals with dementia and their carers can have services designed around their individual need. Underpinning services for people with dementia are the values of empowering users to have better control of their lives. Specialist services and the modernisation of residential and community support packages is a priority for all councils and we are working with the independent and voluntary sector to actively plan for the future. Close partnership working with the Care and Social Service Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) is critical to ensuring that the level of care for those experiencing early onset of dementia are also appropriately cared for in settings commensurate with the level of dementia being experienced. In addition we have a Memorandum of Understanding between the WLGA, the ADSS Cymru and the providers which at a strategic level will be examining future demand and trends as part of its collaborative work programme.

The WLGA remain concerned that cuts to budgets in both health and social care may lead to adverse impacts on vulnerable people who depend on such care, however at a local level local government remain committed to working in partnership with both the Assembly Government, NHS, and the voluntary sector.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Frowen', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Beverlea Frowen
Director of Social Care and Health Improvement
WLGA

6. P-03-226 Sands – The stillbirth and neonatal death charity

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to:

1. Take note of the new Saving Babies' Lives Report 2009, published by Sands in support of its Why 17? Campaign
2. Develop a strategy for reducing levels of stillbirths and neonatal deaths in Wales
3. Fund further research to improve understanding of why stillbirths and neonatal deaths happen
4. Develop gold standard antenatal care provision in all NHS Trusts in Wales
5. Work with Sands to improve public awareness of these issues

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-226.htm>

Petition raised by: Sands – The stillbirth and neonatal death charity

Number of signatures: 816

Previously considered by the Committee on: 7 July 2009 and 22 September 2009

Update: The committee will consider an update to this petition.

7. P-03-231 Proximity of wind turbines to residential dwellings

Petition wording

We ask the Assembly to review the current position on the proximity of wind turbines to homes, which is now 500m. (see para. 3.4, Annex D of TAN8).

We would ask that the minimum distance be 2KMs as in Scotland.

Besides problems of noise, there have been many accidents and the closeness to homes affects the visual amenity of residents.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-231.htm>

Petition raised by: Glyncorrwg Action Group

Number of signatures: 171

Previously considered by the Committee on: 7 July 2009, 22 September, 24 November 2009 and 1 February 2010, 12 October 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing and is included below.

Jane Davidson AC/AM

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-03-231
Ein cyf/Our ref: JD/02301/10

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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

8 November 2010

Dear Christine,

I refer to your correspondence of 15th October on the issue of TAN 8 revision and the proximity of wind turbines to residential dwellings.

In my previous recent reply to you on the matter of planning for renewable energy I indicated that our intention to revise planning policy was set out in my Cabinet Statement of 8th June. A public consultation exercise on the proposed changes to Planning Policy Wales was undertaken over the summer and finished on 8th October. We have checked our list of responses received in respect of the consultation and it would appear that the petitioners in this case did not make any representations.

Our guidance in respect of separation distances remains unchanged and is contained in Technical Advice Note 8 which states that "500m is currently considered a typical separation distance between a wind turbine and residential property to avoid unacceptable noise impacts, however when applied in a rigid manner it can lead to conservative results and so some flexibility is advised". The issue is less to do with distance than the need to limit noise from wind farms to 5 decibels (dBA) above background noise for both day and night-time.

The separation distances between wind turbines and residential properties should be examined as part of the refinement work by local planning authorities on a case-by-case basis, taking into account topography and orientation, when decisions on planning applications are taken. Any proposed development of more than 2 wind turbines or of a development where the hub height of an individual turbine exceeds 15m will require an Environmental Impact Assessment which should consider in more detail the exact environmental consequences of any proposed development.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Ffacs * Fax 029 2089 8129
PS.minister.for.ESH@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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The Scottish Government's policy on windfarms, as contained in Scottish Planning Policy, is broadly similar to the Welsh Assembly Government's approach. Paragraph 190 of Scottish Planning Policy refers to a separation distance of up to 2km between areas of search (not individual turbines) and the edge of cities, town and villages (not individual residential dwellings) but this distance is simply a guideline and as in Wales, Scottish policy states that "decisions on individual developments should take account of specific local circumstances and geography".

I remain of the opinion that the impacts of proposed wind turbines are best considered on their merits by local planning authorities who are properly placed to consider the localised effects including topography rather than by issuing a blanket separation distance which bears no relation to local circumstances.

Yours,



Jane Davidson AM

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

8. P-03-234 Wales Needs More Native Trees

Petition wording

Wales needs more native trees!

We, the undersigned, welcome the Forestry Commission Wales target to create 1,500 hectares of new woodland over the next three years and call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government and the Forestry Commission to fulfil this target, as the first step towards a doubling of native woodland cover by 2050.

Wales is one of the least wooded countries in Europe. We support the ambition outlined in the Woodlands for Wales Strategy to create more woodland to benefit people and wildlife, to help avoid flooding, to absorb CO2 from the atmosphere and also provide a sustainable supply of timber for the future.

Link to petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-234.htm>

Petition raised by: Coed Cadw / The Woodland Trust

Number of signatures: 2165

Previously considered by the Committee on: 22 September 2009, 10 November 2009, 19 January, 1 February and 15 June 2010, 28 September 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the petitioner.



Christine Chapman
Chair
Petitions Committee
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

Afallon
Tanygrisiau
Blaenau Ffestiniog
Gwynedd LL41 3RH
Ffôn 08452 935 738
Ffôn symudol 07760
171174

19 November 2010

Dear Ms Chapman

P-03-234 Wales needs more native trees

Many thanks for your letter of 5 October regarding this petition, and the enclosed letter from Elin Jones. I apologise for the delay in replying.

May I begin by thanking the Petitions Committee for the very thorough and effective way in which you dealt with this petition. In my view, this petition is an excellent example of how the Committee can work to empower those who have signed a petition, and to raise important, long-term issues with the Welsh Assembly Government, with ultimate success.

Turning to the Minister's letter, Coed Cadw is both heartened and optimistic about the recent developments in native woodland creation in Wales.

In terms of targets, while the Welsh Assembly Government's target of creating 100,000 ha of new woodland over the next 20 years is not precisely what our petition called for, most particularly because the trees planted will not necessarily be native, it does certainly represent a massive step in the right direction, and Coed Cadw has been active in encouraging farmers and other landowners to take up the opportunity.

In terms of delivery, Coed Cadw was heartened by the recent announcement of the details of the Glastir Woodland Creation Grant scheme. We welcome both the grant levels being offered, which we judge to be both generous and realistic, and also the simplification of the application process, which has been made possible through the creation of a woodland creation opportunity map.

Coed Cadw always hoped that the setting of an ambitious target for tree planting would be followed by the provision of realistic grants which would allow this to be delivered. This has now happened, broadly, and the uptake of the scheme now depends crucially on decisions

taken by individual farmers and landowners. In this sense, we agree with the Minister's point that: "The amount planted each year will vary in line with the availability of land and other resources."

Clearly, the delivery of the target will depend on continued commitment and effective promotion and the Welsh Assembly Government's success in this will be judged according to results. Coed Cadw will continue to make the case for the value and importance of native tree planting, while also shining a spotlight on the Government's success or otherwise in delivering this.

The one point in Elin's letter which concerns Coed Cadw slightly is the reference to dropping of the First Steps scheme that had previously been proposed. In one respect, the First Steps scheme offered something important that Glastir Woodland Creation Grants (GWCG) will not. GWCG requires that strips of new woodland should be at least 10m wide. First steps would have lowered this threshold to 5m. As we said in our response to the First Steps consultation in February this year: "We support this [the change to 5m]. The minimum width of 10m incorporated in the BWW scheme effectively excludes narrow shelterbelts, which nevertheless offer significant benefits in terms of flood alleviation, wildlife habitats, wood supply etc."

The Pontbren scheme in Powys, often seen as a model for what GWCG is seeking to achieve, includes many shelterbelts less than 10m wide, as indeed does Clynblewog Farm, at which the GWCG was launched last month. We hope, therefore, that GWCG can be modified in future to allow farmers the benefit of shelterbelts which offer real benefits in terms of land management, even if the shelterbelts they plan to create are only 5-10m wide.

Yours sincerely

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

Rory Francis
Public Affairs and Press Officer

9. P-03-237 Welsh Countryside

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to prevent the destruction of the Welsh countryside by making sure that large industrial buildings such as power plants and factories are built on brown field sites, are environmentally friendly and are not an eyesore.

Link to petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-237.htm>

Petition raised by: Sion Gilbey

Number of signatures: 43

Previously considered by the Committee on: 22 September 2009, 10 November 2010.

Update: The committee will consider an update to this petition.

10. P-03-241 Save Our Sewers – Llanelli Star

Petition wording

We support the Llanelli Star's campaign to sort out the sewers, paving the way for hundreds of jobs to come to the area and stopping sewage spills wrecking our environment.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-241.htm>

Petition raised by: Llanelli Star

Number of signatures: 425

Previously considered by the Committee on: 22 September 2009 and 10 November 2009, 19 January 2010 and 23 March, 11 May and 29 June 2010, 28 September 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing and is included below.

Jane Davidson AC/AM
Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-03-241
Ein cyf/Our ref: JD/02247/10

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

8 November 2010

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter dated 5 October. I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made in addressing this important issue. The Environment Agency (EA), Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC), Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) and The Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) are working together under a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to reduce the environmental impacts on the Burry Inlet. The MoU summarises the jointly agreed intention to reduce the effects of excessive surface water entering the combined sewerage system in Llanelli.

The MoU is a "live" document reviewed periodically to ensure any significant issues are captured and addressed as part of the review process.

DCWW and a team of engineers from Morgan Sindall, Arup, Metoc and Carmarthen County Council are constructing detailed hydraulic models of the Llanelli and Gowerton sewer networks. This is the most comprehensive study ever undertaken in this area; with in excess of 350 flow monitors installed and 570 manholes and 130 Pumping stations and combined sewer overflows surveyed.

The flow survey and modelling exercise will help identify areas where surface water can be removed from the sewer network, support targeted capital investment and support solution development for any network deficiencies identified. Solutions for each of the surface water reduction schemes identified will result in a reduction flow within the sewer system. Surface water reduction will amongst other things reduce spills from combined sewer overflows to the Loughor Estuary and reduce the likelihood of flooding during extreme storms. This modelling exercise will be completed in early 2011.

To date this working group has identified over 60 individual engineering schemes where a reduction in surface water entering the combined sewerage system can be achieved. This information is detailed in a desktop study completed by the Llanelli Technical Group at the beginning of August 2010. Some schemes have already been completed and further ones are being considered.

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

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Furthermore, any new development in Llanelli will have to comply with the recommendations of their report, in that no surface water from that development will be permitted to enter the sewer system. More importantly, the developer will also have to provide betterment by removing existing surface water from the system at a rate of twenty times the anticipated foul flow from his proposed development.

This will free up capacity for future development and is consistent with the Welsh Assembly Government's recent "*Economic Renewal: A New Direction*", which emphasises the importance of infrastructure in enabling economic growth in Wales.

A key development has been the enactment of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and once the relevant provisions have been implemented, there is likely to be tighter control on the escape of surface water from both new and re-development. In future, the aim will be to utilise sustainable drainage systems for surface water as fully as possible. This will be a big step forward, but it does not address existing drained areas, so there will remain a considerable amount of work to do not only to directly reduce surface water flows to sewers from existing drained areas by investing in sustainable drainage schemes, but also to encourage existing property and land owners to redirect surface water flows out of public sewers.

The work described above will release system capacity and this will enable the planning authority to allow development in the area to continue, but only if significant savings in surface water can be achieved as part of the development. The conditions relating to betterment are documented in the MoU.

A register, managed by the Local Planning Department, is now in place that records surface water reductions against all developments.

Major developers in the area are in agreement with the principles of the MoU. Positive discussion with these developers is ongoing. This will ensure that the maximum surface water reduction is obtained as part of any new development in Llanelli.

Welsh Assembly Government officials also sit on the Llanelli Gowerton Steering group along with representatives from the EAW and DCWW. This group meets regularly to ensure consistency and to deliver a unified approach to solving the problems in the area.

This work demonstrates that, by working together, the professional bodies responsible for the drainage infrastructure, are making good progress on surface water reduction in the town, and that by continuing this work a reduction in the environmental impact to both the residents of Llanelli affected by flooding, and also the wider environmental impact on the Burry Inlet can be achieved.



Jane Davidson AM

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

11. P-03-243 Withdraw from the West Cheshire / North-East Wales Sub-Regional Strategy

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to formally withdraw from the West Cheshire/North East Wales sub-regional strategy.

We the undersigned view the West Cheshire/North East Wales sub-regional strategy as ill thought out, extremely damaging and a subversive plan. The implications are huge, affecting many aspects of life in North Wales

- Identity and human rights (in terms of Welsh identity, language, culture, character and expression),
- Environmentally (in terms of sustainability, ecology, natural habitat and the built environment); and
- Societal sustainability (in terms of demographics, economics, politics and communities).

Link to petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-243.htm>

Petition raised by: Cyngor Pobl Gogledd Cymru

Number of signatures: 15220 (In addition, the petitioners have collected a further 4500 signatures since submitting the petition)

Previously considered by the Committee on: 8 December 2009, 19 January, 1 February, 23 February, 23 March and 15 June 2010, 28 September 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Business and Budgets and the petitioner. These are included below.

Jane Hutt AC/AM
Y Gweinidog dros Fusnes a'r Gyllideb
Minister for Business and Budget



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-243
Ein cyf/Our ref JH/00377/10

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

26th October 2010

Dear Christine,

Thank you for letter of 5 October. I can confirm that the Mersey Dee Alliance Strategy Group of senior officers from each partner organisation met on 14 September and considered the options for reviewing the West Cheshire / North East Wales Sub Regional Spatial Strategy.

In the context of the financial squeeze and significant changes in regional administration in England, their conclusion was to recommend to the MDA Board that it focus its limited resources on a small number of partnership work programmes, drawing a line under the Strategy rather than reviewing it.

Without wishing to pre-empt the Board's decisions at its Annual General Meeting, the key work programmes are likely to focus around the Green Infrastructure framework and action plans, the Knowledge Industries business network, and Make It In Manufacturing, an initiative to encourage young people in North East Wales into a career in high tech manufacturing.

I will be happy to update the Committee following the MDA Annual General Meeting in January 2011.

*Yours,
Jane*

Jane Hutt AM
Minister for Business and Budget

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

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Dear Petitions Committee Members,

We write to provide a response to the comments made by councils in relation to population projections. However, we feel that up to now the committee is not really in tune with what we're asking for with the petition. There seems to be confusion and a lack of clarity. It seems that this is partly due to the lack of discussion between ourselves and the committee, we also feel that time has been wasted on evidence gathering from the wrong sources. In fact the only relevant evidence is actually presented in the Sub-regional strategy itself and the new upcoming Local Development Plans in the local authorities affected. Of course it is clear to anybody who lives in North East Wales that there are many thousands of unaffordable houses across the area and thousands more with planning permission that are yet to be built. This does not seem to have been discussed at any length.

We believe that one point that has clearly been confirmed through the evidence gathering is that, as we have stated, there was no public consultation what so ever about the West Cheshire/North East Wales sub-regional strategy.

We do feel strongly that it's vital that the committee actually discusses the situation with us to gain an understanding of what the issues are and what we are asking for. I refer back to the petition question where we specifically ask for WAG to withdraw from the sub regional strategy (not review it, as has been suggested by the Minister). A review will in no way affect or mitigate the damage being done to our environment, communities and identity. It is important for the committee to understand that the tens of thousands of unaffordable houses proposed in the plan have actually either already been built or already have planning permission.

Also in our petition we specifically asked for a committee/body to be set up to discuss the whole situation, although a year has passed there has never been any mention of this. We feel as do our 5000 members that this has been ignored. For example, we have not been offered the chance to respond to evidence given by the Minister Jane Hutt and her officers, which was completely inaccurate and showed a complete lack of understanding about the plan and its effects. In her evidence, the Minister stated that the reason for large scale housing development in North East Wales was due to people wishing to downsize their homes. Quite frankly this is ridiculous and is certainly not evidenced in any way. We would in fact suggest that the appearance of so many 3 story, 5 bedroom executive homes across the area tends to dispute this claim (again, the reason for high levels of housing development is clearly outlined in the sub regional strategy itself).

Also, the officer giving evidence along with the Minister stated that people simply "do not understand" these strategies. We would remind members that two of those who attended to present evidence to the committee on our behalf are Councillors in Wreccsam, both are members of the County's Planning Committee and one a member of the Wreccsam's Planning Policy Panel currently preparing the areas Local Development Plan. To suggest that we do not understand the strategy is condescending and completely incorrect. Further, statements by the Minister and her officers are contradictory to what is set out in the plan itself.

We would also like to point out to members that the committee has to date spent no more than 15 minutes speaking to us directly about our petition and under two hours in total discussing the issue as a whole. Given the growing level of support for the petition itself (24,000+ to date) and also the scale of the plan and it's impacts on North East Wales, we do not feel this is satisfactory.

Considering all the above, we would again like to request on behalf of the 24,000 signatories and our 5000 members that we are given the opportunity to discuss the sub-regional strategy and what

withdrawing from the plan actually entails. We would appreciate an official response to this request.

Diolch yn fawr

Pol Wong (on behalf of Cyngor Pobl Gogledd Cymru)

Evidence from North East Councils.

As the responses from Denbighshire and Flintshire are relatively brief, we will concentrate our comments on the response received from Wreccsam council.

The response from Wreccsam council clearly highlights several issues with the calculation of population projections and the general use of this formula. The chief executive confirms that the projections issued by WAG would be unsustainable for the County Borough and not in line with local needs.

We would again highlight the fact that these calculations are based on 50% past in migration trends and also that the formula does not take into account issues such as affordability. This means that the vast majority of housing projections are not based on local need and in fact cater in the main for housing demand from the North West of England.

Although it is stated that the council intends to deviate from WAG figures in their upcoming LDP for the reasons outlined above, it is not by any significant amount and clearly they have not done so in the past. The result has been a 60% housing overshoot in the councils previous Unitary Development Plan. Although the council claim this level of development has been sustainable as it has been accommodated on brownfield sites, we would stress the point that this does not mean it has been sustainable in terms of service provision, community cohesion, identity or the environment. The vast majority of local people have not been able to afford to buy within the general housing market and council reports we have previously referenced confirm that the level of development in Wreccsam has encouraged further in migration into the area and also served to push local house prices to unnaturally high levels. Council publications during the UDP period also state that the councils aim has been to encourage in migration into the county.

It is also important to consider the longer term planning issues associated with such high levels of growth, an extremely high amount of development that has not been based on the local needs within the county has been sanctioned over the past decade. The resulting development on brown field sites means that there will be issues concerning the availability of land to provide for the affordable housing needs of the county. It is acknowledged that in future years, the county will have to look at accommodating the thousands of affordable houses that are known to be needed on green field sites. Clearly we do not agree that that this method of planning or the use of these population projections can be described as sustainable.

The Chief Executive states that the council has not felt pressurised by WAG to implement population projections within their LDP. There would seem to be a differing opinion from local Councillors directly involved with the formation of the upcoming plan:

“ Whilst discussing the overall level of housing growth for the Boroughs LDP, members of the councils Planning Policy Panel (responsible for recommending policy within the plan) were told repeatedly by the chief planning officer that there was pressure from the Welsh Assembly Government to implement official population projections (translating as housing numbers for the purpose of the LDP). We were warned that deviating from these figures to any great extent would mean the plan would be found unsound by the planning inspectorate.

In a meeting just last month we were informed by the councils Planning Policy Manager that WAG had also taken issue with our 100% affordable policy on windfall sites and that we had been instructed to amend it to a 30% threshold, in line with our overall affordable housing threshold. The result of this is a substantial reduction in the amount of affordable houses likely to be provided over the LDP period and also an increase in the amount of general market housing.”

Cllr Carrie Harper, 19:11:10 (Member of Wreccsam County Borough Councils Planning Policy Panel)

Population projections have indeed been implemented in all 3 North East counties in recent years. Although there may be some minor deviations for Wreccsam's upcoming plan, the main thrust in terms of the level of growth remains the same. We again make the point that there is no actual 'need' for this development, the level of housing development is based in the main on in migration figures and not on local need. The vast majority of housing to be provided within the borough over the LDP period will be general market housing and therefore out of the reach for the majority of local people.

The council reiterates our concerns in terms of the unsustainable nature of the current population projection formula. We feel it is not fit for purpose as it is not based on the genuine local need within our communities in North Wales. The use of this formula over the last decade has led to unnaturally high levels of unaffordable housing development which have cumulatively encouraged large levels of in migration into North East Wales.

It is our view that this formula is fundamentally flawed, completely unsustainable and also that its use has caused a great deal of damage across North East Wales in terms of community cohesion, environment and identity. The use of this formula has actually created a housing market and has been used as the basis for the West Cheshire/North East Wales sub regional strategy.

To summarise, it's clear that WAG have in fact issued population projections to local authorities which translate to housing figures in Local Development Plans. It is also clear that local authorities in North East Wales are using these projections in the formations of their LDP's and have been for some time. What is unclear is whether or not WAG have pressurised local authorities to use them or whether authorities have chosen to use them, however the end result is the same regardless. Because of the need to consider these figures as a material consideration and the obvious need to have LDP's deemed 'sound' by the planning inspectorate, it is extremely difficult for any local authority to deviate from these figures to any great extent without risking their local plan. It is certainly impossible for councils to ignore the main driver of these figures which is the projected housing demand due to in migration.

Additionally, authorities must also have regard to statutory strategies such as the Wales Spatial Plan while forming their LDP's. In terms of North East Wales this document is based on the West Cheshire/North East Wales sub-regional strategy, adding yet further pressure on local authorities to keep housing figures in line with WAG's official projections. Although the West Cheshire plan itself is non statutory, its inclusion in the Wales Spatial Plan and the need to have regard to all relevant strategies in forming LDP's creates a chicken and egg situation for local councils, giving them very little freedom to deviate from official projections even though these may be contrary to the genuine local need of the area.

The result is very plain to see for anyone living in North East Wales, which has seen a huge increase in the amount of unaffordable, unneeded housing development since these figures have been in use.

If WAG do not want to enforce these projections, why are they issued in the first place and why are they a material consideration in the preparation of LDP's?

12. P-03-263 List Stradey Park

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Minister for Heritage to grant listed status to Stradey Park, in order to protect the heritage of this world famous rugby ground and cultural icon for the people of Wales.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-263.htm>

Petition Raised by: Mr V Jones

Number of signatures: 4383

Previously considered by the Committee: 11 May, 15 June and 28 September 2010

Update: Correspondence has been received from the petitioner and Carmarthenshire Council. These are included below.

Dear Rhodri,

Thank you for your email advising of the forthcoming Petitions Committee Meeting and providing links to the meeting documents.

Having read the documents relating to the Stradey Park petition I would like to respond to the misleading and what I can only interpret as an unseemly letter directed at me received from Mr Lyn Thomas, Head of Administration and Law Department at Carmarthenshire County Council.

I hope that the Petitions Committee can be made aware of the points below as soon as possible as I am concerned that the information supplied by Mr Thomas may persuade the Committee to undertake actions which, without this rebuttal, may be inappropriate.

I am very disappointed that, rather than answer the question posed by the Petitions Committee to Carmarthenshire County Council, Mr Thomas has used his reply as an attempt to discredit me, by claiming that this petition is simply an attempt to block the development.

Mr Thomas paints a picture in the “history” section of his letter that the redevelopment of Stradey Park has been a case of unreasonable objectors blocking the planning processes at every turn. His memory appears to be somewhat selective. He mentions the Right of Way application, but fails to point out that his department’s decision to refuse the application was overturned on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate. The Right of Way application was not a delaying tactic but an attempt by residents to protect a long established footpath, and based on the Planning Inspectorate’s decision it would appear that it was Carmarthenshire County Council, rather than the residents who raised the application, that was being unreasonable.

My understanding is that the call-in at the Outline Planning stage was because the Stradey Park site was shown on WAG flood maps to be a C2 Flood Plain at risk from tidal flooding, but that Carmarthenshire County Council had decided to recommend approval of the application. On the eve of the 2007 Planning Inquiry consultants for the developers convinced Environment Agency Wales that there was no tidal flood risk and, following the Inquiry, Outline Planning permission was subsequently granted. It is apparent that if the Council had postponed their Planning Meeting until the developers had shown there was no tidal flood risk there would have been no call-in and minimal delay.

I believe that the recent call-in of the Reserved Matters is due to the fact that the site is now shown on WAG flood maps to be a C2 Flood Plain at risk from fluvial flooding, following a re-assessment of the area by Environment Agency Wales. Nevertheless, Carmarthenshire County Council was “minded to approve” the application despite the regulations preventing housing developments in C2 flood zones. It is my understanding that this call-in has been withdrawn due to some ambiguities in the call-in letter, but could be re-instated. In the meantime, a “stopper notice” is in effect. I find it interesting that Mr Thomas decided not to provide the complete current picture and instead suggested that it was only a matter of time before the Assembly withdraw the “stopper notice”.

I am told that the Outline, Reserved Matters and Village Green call-in’s were supported by former Llanelli AM Catherine Thomas, current Llanelli AM Helen Mary Jones and Llanelli MP Nia Griffith, as well as several County Councillors and, of course, local residents.

The Planning call-in directives have clearly taken place due to Carmarthenshire County Council not following the planning regulations relating to the ban on building highly vulnerable – residential development – on C2 flood plains. It would appear from the tone of Mr. Thomas' letter that it is convenient to blame objectors and, further, to drag this petition into the mix.

It is quite perverse that Mr Thomas claims that the petition is *“to prevent any development on the site”* only to then quote from the supporting documentation *“...listing Stradey Park would mean listing the Stradey Park pitch and retaining it as an open space within any development”*.

As Mr Thomas is clearly questioning my credibility and motives as the petitioner, I feel I must justify myself. I have been heavily involved in local heritage in Llanelli for the last 15 years or so, and I am one of the founding members of Llanelli Community Heritage, an organisation set up to ensure recognition for Llanelli's built heritage and places. My attempts to have the Stradey Park pitch recognised by Cadw pre-date the planning application.

In 2005 I was in contact with a Cadw Officer responsible for the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens who advised me to approach Carmarthenshire County Council for recognition of the Stradey pitch as Cadw did not have a suitable category. With the support of Llanelli Town Council I made contact with Carmarthenshire County Council, but was swiftly rebuked.

In addition Carmarthenshire County Council's Chief Executive wrote to Llanelli Town Council stating that it would not be possible to recognise the pitch as that would *“jeopardise the new stadium project”*. That statement enraged several Town Councillors and featured in the local press. My credibility is not in question.

It is evident that Mr Thomas has not looked at the previous discussions that have taken place at the Petitions Committee with regard to this petition and the term “list”.

Through my involvement in local heritage I am well aware of the listing criteria, but decided to use the word “list” on the petition as it is a term understood by the general public to mean recognition and protection. As the Petitions Committee has previously discussed and accepted, the term “list” has been used in the wider sense on this petition to imply official recognition for the Stradey Park pitch. This has also been accepted by the Minister who has asked Cadw to consider the criteria for the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens with a view to adding historic sports pitches to the Register.

As the Minister states in his recent letter *“Cadw hopes to be in a position early in the new year to consult on possible draft designation criteria and other possible measures to help highlight this aspect of our cultural heritage”*. While, as Mr Thomas is keen to point out, *“no additional statutory controls follow from the inclusion of a site in the Register”*, would it not be disdainful for a Local Planning Authority to disregard this national recognition?

Mr Thomas claims that *“the council was not aware of this petition until comparatively recently and therefore did not have the opportunity to consider the advice of the Minister of Heritage to defer consideration of the Reserved Matters application to permit Cadw to undertake a full assessment of whether the ground could have been included in the Register”*.

This is a direct contradiction to the Minister of Heritage's letter of 24th May 2010 to the Petitions Committee where he states that his officials had confirmed "*to the planning authority's officers the grounds undoubted local – and doubtless wider – historic interest*" and goes on to state "*it would of course be open to the Council to defer the consideration of the planning application to allow Cadw to undertake a full assessment ...*" ending with "*The Council has however indicated that, unless the site were to be included on the Register, there is currently no basis for the authority to reconsider the historic importance of the site...*".

The Council clearly knew about the petition and had contact with Cadw well before the June planning meeting. They refused to consider a deferment but now claim not to have had the opportunity to consider deferring it. I suggest Mr Thomas' letter is an unsuccessful attempt to cover for his Council's unreasonable behaviour.

In his May letter, the Minister reports that the Council claim that the historic importance of the site was considered at the planning inquiry, but this is not the case. As a Scarlets shareholder I am aware that the future of the pitch was raised at several shareholder meetings prior to and during the outline planning process and this resulted in former Scarlets Chief Executive Stuart Gallacher confirming that the pitch would be retained in the proposed housing development.

All indicative site plans prior to Reserved Matters show the retained pitch so this was not an issue for residents or heritage enthusiasts and was, therefore, not raised as a concern and not considered at the Planning Inquiry. It is inaccurate and misleading for Carmarthenshire County Council to claim otherwise.

Mr Thomas appears to take great delight in advising the Petition Committee of the work undertaken over the summer to demolish the stands and remove the top soil of the pitch, claiming that there is nothing of any worth on the site left to merit any preservation orders being made. What Mr Thomas fails to advise is that the top soil has simply been moved to another part of the site for storage and that the footprint of the pitch is still very obvious.

In the Reserved Matters application, the developer states that it intends to re-use the Stradey turf at various locations of the 23.5 acre site – they also clearly recognise the importance of the Stradey pitch. Should Cadw confirm that the Stradey Park pitch is worthy of inclusion on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, it would simply be a case of relaying the topsoil in its original position. Alternatively, as it is the pitch location that is important, it would simply be a case of re-turfing the area, as happened on countless occasions in the 129 years of use.

Mr Thomas is also keen to point out that a Memorial Park area has been designed within the site. I assume the name has been chosen to suggest a green park area, but as indicated on the plans and confirmed in a meeting I had with the Former Players Association, this is no more than a small concrete public square containing plaques listing the names of former players and notable matches and occasions.

Carmarthenshire County Council was asked for its view on the petition and whether it wished to protect the pitch. Mr Thomas responded with an attack - on the objectors who he claims have delayed the planning process - and the petition - and the petitioner.

Mr Thomas appears to have conveniently ignored the fact that the call-in directives have been made because of concerns on the how the planning regulations have been implemented. However, he seems happy to call into question the legality of any attempt to list or register Stradey Park and recognise its historical importance.

While the petition may have planning implications, it is not a legal matter but simply an issue of modern Welsh Heritage. The fact that Cadw has already confirmed to Carmarthenshire County Council “*the grounds undoubted local – and doubtless wider – historic interest*” implies to me that there is acknowledgment that the time has come for recognition for places like Stradey Park.

I look forward to their initial findings and, hopefully, in the near future, official confirmation and recognition of Stradey Park’s historic and cultural importance.

The Stradey Park petition was collected on the counters of market stalls, newsagents, pubs, chip shops and the like at over 50 locations in Llanelli and Carmarthen and attracted over 4500 signatures, with additional support from Llanelli Town Council, Llanelli Rural Council and local heritage groups. The comments by Mr Thomas are out of order and disregard the signatures of thousands of people who want the pitch area of Stradey Park recognised and protected.

I apologise for my rambling, but felt it was important to rebut the misleading comments made by Mr Thomas on behalf of Carmarthenshire County Council. I hope that the Petitions Committee will consider my response to those comments.

Thank you.

Vaughan Jones

Gofynner am / Please ask for: **Mr. Lyn Thomas**
Llinell Uniongyrchol / Direct Line: **01267 224010**
E-bost Uniongyrchol / Direct E-mail: **DLThomas@sirgar.gov.uk**
DLThomas@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
Dyddiad / Date: **1st November, 2010**

Eich cyf / Your ref: **P-03-263**
Fy nghyf / My ref: **DLT/SM/PL-0115**
Ffacs / Fax: **01267 224652**
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The Petitions Committee,
National Assembly for Wales,
Cardiff Bay,
CARDIFF.
CF99 1NA

**FAO – CHRISTINE CHAPMAN AM,
CHAIR OF THE PETITIONS COMMITTEE**

Dear Sirs,

Re: P-03-263 List Stradey Park

I refer to your letter dated the 5th October, 2010 in the above matter inviting the Council to set out its views on the issues raised in the petition.

Firstly, I regret the slight delay in reverting to you whilst the relevant enquiries were made and the necessary legal research undertaken. I note, however, that you wrote to Alun Ffred Jones AC/AM, Minister for Heritage, seeking his views on the petition on the 4th May last and therefore I deduce that this matter has in any case been with you for some time already.

I think it is important that I set out briefly the background to this matter before I consider the issues raised by the petition itself. The site as you will be aware from the correspondence was sold to Taylor Wimpey, the developer, and the application to redevelop the site for housing was the subject of a Call-in Planning Application. After an extensive Public Inquiry which took approximately two weeks to hold, the Welsh Assembly Government granted Outline Planning Permission for the redevelopment of the area for housing on the 14th May, 2007. A further Public Inquiry followed in relation to an application made by residents for the training pitches to be redesignated into a Village Green. The application was subsequently refused. I should add that the Village Green Inquiry was conducted at the Council's expense and the Council had to appoint a Leading Counsel to adjudicate the matter. A further application was later made to amend the Definitive Map to add a footpath over the former car park of the Rugby Club.

On the 19th June, 2008 the Assembly Government issued an Article 14 “Holding” Direction in relation to the reserved matters application for this site. Subsequently, the Assembly Government issued a “Call-In” Direction which was later withdrawn on the 26th August, 2010 as a result of submissions made by the Developer.

The current position is that Taylor Wimpey’s application for Reserved Matters was considered by the Planning Committee of the Council on the 24th June, 2010. The Committee duly resolved that it was minded to approve the said application and therefore the scheme for the redevelopment for housing subject to the withdrawal of the Article 14 Holding Direction made by the Welsh Assembly Government on the 26th August, 2010 and certain other matters being resolved.

I have referred to the background in this matter in some detail as I think it is extremely important that you appreciate the problematic history of this matter. I also think it is very relevant with regard to the motives behind the preparation of this petition. It is quite clear to the Council that the objectors who are the architects of this petition have used every means at their disposal in an attempt to prevent this development from proceeding and this is yet another attempt to do everything in their power to prevent any development on this site.

I now intend to deal with the petition itself and the legal grounds upon which it is purportedly made. I note from the supporting information provided by the petitioner that it is their intention that the sports pitch itself is listed with the intention of protecting the heritage of this “cultural icon”. They concede that:-

“Although the petition is named “List Stradey Park”, and there are many that would like to see the whole stadium saved, it is generally accepted that listing Stradey Park would mean listing the Stradey Park pitch and retaining it as an open space within any development”.

It is clear that their intention and focus is on protecting the pitch rather than the built structures which surrounded it. Unfortunately, their petition appears to the Council to be wholly misconceived in that respect. You have already received advice from the Minister for Heritage that the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 (the statutory provision which is relevant in this matter) only provides the means to list **buildings** of special architectural or historic interest. Indeed the petitioners recognise this themselves and appear to concede the point in that they indicate in their supporting information “to list a sports pitch would probably require a new listings category or an amendment to an existing category”. I also note from the Minister for Heritage that any provision to list the listing of items which are not buildings would require primary

legislation and that in any case it would not appear in his view that extending the current statutory planning controls in the way suggested by the petitioners would work in the case of items without a built component.

Therefore, it is simply neither realistic nor legally possible in the Council's view to list the pitch as requested by the petition. Therefore the Council would strongly submit that this matter cannot proceed as outlined or submitted by Mr. Vaughan Jones.

I also note, however, that Mr. Jones also indicates that :-

"I am not sure that I have worded the petition very well as it would appear that the word "listing" might be confusing the issue. I probably should have said "amend the criteria of historic parks and gardens to allow Stradey Park to be added to the Register".

I also note the comments of the Minister for Heritage in that respect. He has confirmed that there are no historic sporting grounds currently included on the non-statutory Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest and that CADW have yet to devise a specific criteria for the inclusion of such sites.

The Council is also minded by the advice contained within the Welsh Office Circular 61/96, paragraph 16 which indicates that :-

"No additional statutory controls follow from the inclusion of a site in the Register. Local Planning Authorities are asked to take it into account in preparing local plans and in determining Planning Applications especially those concerning road schemes which would effect registered parks and gardens and their settings or where the proposed development is of a sufficient scale to have more than local impact on the historic landscape".

As you will be aware from my previous comments on the background to this matter, this site is already subject to an Outline Planning Consent and therefore the value of this would be very limited. However, matters have now progressed and you will be aware as referred to earlier in this letter that the application for Outline Planning Consent has already been determined. The Council was not aware of this petition until comparatively recently and therefore it did not have an opportunity to consider the advice of the Minister of Heritage to defer consideration of the Reserved Matters application to permit CADW to undertake a full assessment of whether the ground could have been included in the Register. However, the Council is minded that this matter has been held in abeyance pending the various Public Inquiries for a considerable period of time and to have

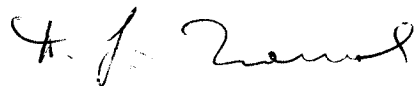
deferred the matter for a further period of time for all these issues to be dealt with would have not been fair to the developer concerned.

I would also like to remind the Minister of the current position of the site which I think is an extremely important consideration notwithstanding the legal impediments. Any inspection that the Minister wishes to make of the site will show that both the pitch and the stands have now been demolished and/or removed and there is nothing of any worth left on the site to merit any Preservations Orders being made even if the same were possible which the Council submit is not the case here.

Finally, the Minister should be aware that as part of the Reserved Matters, the Council is pleased to note that a Memorial Park area has been designed within the site which is an important and central feature within the Landscaped Management Plan which was prepared in accompaniment of the scheme. The detailed design of the Park will be subject to further discussions with the former Players Association with the intention of that body adopting the maintenance of that area in due course.

I trust therefore that after due consideration the Minister will find that it is simply not possible on either a legal or practical basis to grant listed status to Stradey Park.

Yours faithfully,



Head of Administration and Law

13. 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 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the petitioner and is included below. The National Assembly for Wales Communities and Culture Committee has published its report on 'financial inclusion and the impact of financial education'. This has been included at annex 2.

November 2nd 2010

Dear Chair,

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

Thank you for your correspondence dated July 26th relating to the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning's response to our petition and subsequent evidence session.

In response to your request for an update on the Housemate evaluation, I can report that teachers in 25 secondary schools have responded to the questionnaire to date as well as 17 other organisations working in the youth, education, support or housing sectors. We are also collecting anecdotal evidence from stakeholders who are known users of the Housemate resources.

As part of the evaluation report, we will be including evidence from youth related research projects currently being led by Shelter Cymru. This evidence further supports the need and demand for leaving home education to be included in the curriculum. We will also draw on pupil feedback from our Big Lottery funded North Wales Peer Learning Project, where peer educators have spoken to over 3,000 young people across the region since May 2008.

In terms of the Minister's response, we appreciate his view that the delivery of the curriculum is best delegated to schools working in partnership with their local authority. However, we believe that educating and informing pupils about leaving home and helping them to make a successful transition into independent living cannot be left to chance. It is such a fundamental issue facing all young people and we believe it should be embedded in every school's curriculum.

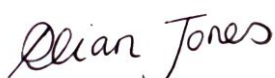
We have worked with the Welsh Financial Education Unit to help teachers make the link between housing issues and financial literacy and we appreciate the Unit's efforts in promoting the Housemate resources.

Shelter Cymru's Education Service is a member of the National Information and Quality Standards Group, administered by CLIC. We will be working with CLIC's editorial group to see how the Housing information section on www.cliconline.co.uk can link into the information on the Housemate website to ensure the highest possible quality and to provide consistent messages.

I have met with Mark Lancett, PSE Subject Specialist and I am currently preparing a case study for the PSE website to highlight areas of good practice in delivering leaving home information. Mark suggested the case study should focus on the different methods of delivery and how Shelter Cymru's Education Service can provide briefings to teachers on delivering Housemate and other relevant resources.

I look forward to sending on the Housemate evaluation report to the Committee in due course and will be happy to discuss the findings.

Yours sincerely,



Rhian Jones, Education Coordinator, Shelter Cymru

14. P-03-274 Boiler Scrappage Scheme

Petition Wording

We call upon the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Government to introduce a boiler scrappage scheme, which matches the scheme which has been introduced in England.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-274.htm>

Petition raised by: John Jacobs

Number of signatures: 112

Previously considered by the Committee on: 23 March 2010, 29 June 2010.

Update: The committee will consider an update in relation to this petition.

15. P-03-276 Motion for Women - Sustrans

Petition wording

We, the undersigned, want to be able to choose to cycle much more. To do this we need to feel safe when we cycle.

We demand that governments prioritise the creation of environments that encourage and support cycling, this must include the National Assembly for Wales urging Welsh Government to make this a priority.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-276.htm>

Petition raised by: Sustrans

Number of signatures: 9,000

Previously considered by the Committee on: 1 February 2010, 23 March 2010 and 25 May 2010, 13 July 2010.

Update: The committee has received 'a walking and cycle action plan for Wales 2009-2013'. This is included below at annex 3.

16. P-03-279 Save Welsh Universities

Petition wording

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to fully fund universities in Wales. We further call for:

- the Welsh Government not to follow the example of England by slashing university funding in the March remit letter to the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
- a timetabled commitment from the Assembly Government to close the investment gap between the university sectors in Wales and England;
- Wales to follow the example of France, Germany and the US who have chosen to invest heavily in their universities as a key strategy for economic recovery from the recession.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-279.htm>

Petition raised by: University and College Union

Number of signatures: 907

Previously considered by the Committee on: 23 March 2010, 13 July 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and Higher Education Wales.

Cyngor Cyllido Addysg
Uwch Cymru
Higher Education Funding
Council for Wales

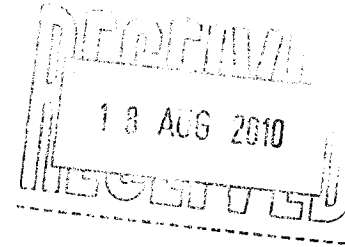
Cwrt Linden
Clos Ilex, Llanisien
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Ffacs 029 2076 3163
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Linden Court
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Fax 029 2076 3163
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hefcw

11 August 2010

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



Petition: P-03-279 Save Welsh Universities

Thank you for your letter of 26 July, 2010 inviting me to offer our views on the issues raised by the above petition in the context of the recent statements on the organisation, administration and funding of higher education by the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning.

The level of public funding which is invested in Welsh higher education is a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government. In allocating that funding, we aim to support the best higher education system in Wales that we can afford. In doing so, we seek to deliver our Strategic Plan which also forms the action plan, approved by the Cabinet, for delivery of *For our Future*, the primary aims of which are to secure social justice and a buoyant economy. Further details of our corporate priorities can be found in our Strategy at http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/publications/corporate_documents/corporate_strategy_plan.aspx.

Professor Phil Gummett
Chief Executive

Mr Roger Thomas
Cadeir/dd/Chairman
Ffôn/Tel 029 2068 2252

Yr Athro/Professor Philip Gummett
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive
Ffôn/Tel 029 2068 2251

Higher Education Wales (HEW)

2 Caspian Point, Caspian Way, Cardiff Bay CF10 4DQ Tel: +44 (0)29 2044 8020 Fax + 44 (0)29 2048 9531
Email hew@hew.ac.uk Web www.hew.ac.uk

Addysg Uwch Cymru (AUC)

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



Aberystwyth University
Prifysgol Aberystwyth

Bangor University
Prifysgol Bangor

Cardiff University
Prifysgol Caerdydd

University of Wales Institute, Cardiff
Athrofa Prifysgol Cymru, Caerdydd

University of Glamorgan
Prifysgol Morgannwg

Glyndŵr University
Prifysgol Glyndŵr

University of Wales, Newport
Prifysgol Cymru, Casnewydd

The Open University in Wales
Y Brifysgol Agored yng Nghymru

Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe

Swansea Metropolitan University
Prifysgol Fetroplitan Abertawe

University of Wales: Trinity Saint
David
Prifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi
Sant

University of Wales
Prifysgol Cymru

22 September 2010

Dear Ms Chapman

Petition: P-03-279 Save Welsh Universities

Thank you for your letter of 26 July, 2010 inviting our views on the issues raised by the above petition in the context of the recent statements on the organisation, administration and funding of higher education by the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning.

The level of public funding which is invested in Welsh higher education is a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government. The responsibility for allocating that funding rests with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales that has recently published its Corporate Strategy. This strategy has a direct link to the delivery of *For our Future*, the Welsh Assembly Government's strategy for higher education to which all higher education institutions are working with.

Higher Education Wales submitted evidence to the Finance Committee on the funding of higher education in Wales in January 2010 which can be accessed in full via the link below.

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-other-committees/bus-committees-third-fin-home/bus-committees-third-fin-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=161215&ds=1/2010>

This initial evidence was followed up with a supplementary submission following discussion at Committee and can be found via the link below and is helpful to read in tandem with the initial evidence.

The Voice of Higher Education in Wales
Llais Addysg Uwch yng Nghymru

A National Council of Universities UK
Un o Gynghorau Cenedlaethol Prifysgolion y DU

Company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No. 2517018. Charity No. 1001127
Cwmni cyfyngedig trwy warant, a gofrestrwyd yng Nghymru a Lloegr Rhif 2517018. Rhif Elusen 1001127

Assembly Members will be aware that the investment gap in Higher Education is almost double the size of the estimated investment gap at the secondary school level^[1]. A brief summary of the investment gap between the HE sector in Wales and the sectors in the rest of the UK is presented below:

- The annual university investment gap with England (in terms of total grant-in-aid to universities) reached £66m in 2006/07 (the latest year for which data is available). This has increased from an estimated level of £22m in 2003/04, as recorded in the first HEFCW Funding Gap Report. HEFCW estimates that the investment gap with England will increase further to a level of £69m in 2007/08, based on early financial returns.
- The investment gap between the university sectors of Wales and Scotland was larger still at £203m in 2006/07.
- The *cumulative* level of the investment gap between Wales and England **reached an aggregate level of £250m from 2003/04 to 2006/07.**
- The investment gap per student (according to figures from the HEFCW Report) is running at 15% per student. A university in Wales receives an average of £5,450 a year per full time student whereas a university in England receives £6,287 per student. A university in Scotland receives an average of £8,040 for each full time student it educates per annum.

I hope that this information will aid discussion at committee.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Wilkinson
Director

^[1] The estimate of the gap at secondary school level is between £497 per pupil while the investment gap at the HE level was £837 per student in 2006/07. See <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6031877>

Higher Education Wales (HEW)

2 Caspian Point, Caspian Way, Cardiff Bay CF10 4DQ **Tel:** +44 (0)29 2044 8020 **Fax** + 44 (0)29 2048 9531
Email hew@hew.ac.uk **Web** www.hew.ac.uk

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Ebost hew@hew.ac.uk **Gwé** www.hew.ac.uk

The Voice of Higher Education in Wales
Llais Addysg Uwch yng Nghymru

A National Council of Universities UK

Un o Gynghorau Cenedlaethol Prifysgolion y DU

Company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No. 2517018. Charity No. 1001127

Cwmni cyfyngedig trwy warant, a gofrestrwyd yng Nghymru a Lloegr Rhif 2517018. Rhif Elusen 1001127

17. P-03-284 Brynmawr Social Housing Petition

Petition wording

We the undersigned ask that the National Assembly for Wales calls on the Welsh Government to reconsider the use of Welsh Government owned land at Factory Road, Brynmawr, for the provision of social housing.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-284.htm>

Petition raised by: Malcolm Broderick

Number of signatures: 10 (166 for a related petition)

Previously considered by the Committee on: 27 April and 15 June 2010, 12 October 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and is included below.

AMU
Environment Directorate / Cyfarwyddiaeth Amgylchedd

John Parsons, Msc., C.I.W.M., C.Env., M.I.C.E., I. Eng., F.I.H.I.E., M.C.I.M. Corporate Director Environment/Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Amgylchedd

T: (01495) 356088

DX: 43956 Ebbw Vale

F: (01495) 357770

E: john.parsons@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Our Ref./Ein Cyf:

JP/CP

Your Ref./Eich Cyf.

Contact:/Cysylltwch â: John Parsons



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

8th November 2010

Dear Christine

RE: P-03-284 BRYNMAWR – SOCIAL HOUSING

With reference to your letter dated 15th October 2010 in connection with the above, the formal planning application for the development at Factory Road, Brynmawr is currently under consideration by the Council's Planning department. The developers staged two consultation sessions with local residents in a local venue. As a direct result of these consultation events the plans for the development were changed to reflect some of the wishes expressed on the day. The local residents have also been consulted through the statutory planning process.

The Ward Members from Brynmawr were engaged at an early stage in the process and were actively involved in selecting Melin Homes as the developer. The site represents the Welsh Assembly Government's own policy of land disposal for affordable housing purposes. The final scheme reflects a multi million pound investment in affordable housing for Blaenau Gwent.

I hope this answers your question and should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION

Cc Chief Executive

Christine Chapman AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF CF99 1NA

We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh or English / Croeso i'n dweud iaith trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.

18. P-03-285 Oppose the Badger Cull

Petition wording

We the undersigned call upon the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Government to review the decision to undertake a Badger cull pilot scheme in North Pembrokeshire due to commence in May 2010. This review should be done in the light of the of the recent report published by Imperial College which queries the long term effectiveness of badger culls in reducing Bovine TB. We call for the pilot scheme to focus on improving farm biodiversity safety and other measures as opposed to culling.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-285.htm>

Petition raised by: Pat Underwood

Number of signatures: 1467

Previously considered by the Committee on: 11 May and 29 June 2010, 28 September 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Rural Affairs and is included below.

MS

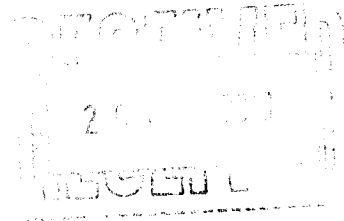
Elin Jones AM/AC
Y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig
Minister for Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref p-03-285
Ein cyf/Our ref EJ/01043/10

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



19 October 2010

Dear Christine

Thank you for your letter of 5 October 2010 following your meeting on 28 September 2010 when you considered an update to petition P-03-285 Oppose the Badger Cull.

As you are aware, on 20 September 2010 I announced my decision to consult on proposals for a limited cull of badgers in one small area of west Wales. This consultation closes on 17 December and a summary of responses will be published in the New Year. I will be glad to inform the Committee when the summary is available.

Elin Jones AC/AM
Y Gweinidog dros Faterion Gwledig / Minister for Rural Affairs

19. P-03-290 Dowlais Engine House

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to make a decision in relation to Dowlais Engine House's application for funding

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-290.htm>

Petition raised by: Pant and Dowlais Boys and Girls Club

Number of signatures: The Petition was submitted by the club. An associated petition collected 921 signatures.

Previously considered by the Committee on: 11 May 2010, 29 June 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government and is included below.

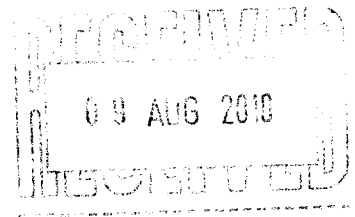
PS AM
Carl Sargeant AC/AM
Y Gweinidog dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a Llywodraeth
Leol
Minister for Social Justice and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-03-290
Ein cyf/Our ref: CS/1063/10

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



5 August 2010

Dear Christine,

DOWLAIS ENGINE HOUSE

Thank you for your letter of 12 July 2010, regarding the petition received by the Petitions Committee in relation to the Dowlais Engine House Project in Merthyr Tydfil.

As I indicated in my previous reply, there were a significant number of outstanding issues that needed to be resolved before a decision could be made on the application.

Some progress has been made on these, but critically my officials are still awaiting confirmation that the Children and Young People's Partnership and the local Safeguarding Children Board are satisfied that identified conditions, in order to support the application, have been met.

I will inform you of the outcome of my decision in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Carl Sargeant AM/AC

20. P-03-292 Public Toilet Provision

Petition wording

We, the undersigned, call upon the National Assembly for Wales to investigate the health and social well-being implications resulting from public toilets closures and to urge the Welsh Government to issue guidance to local authorities to ensure adequate public toilet provision.

Link to petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-292.htm>

Petition raised by: Cllr Louisa Hughes

Number of signatures: 430

Previously considered by the Committee on: 15 June 2010, 13 July 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government and the Welsh Local Government Association. These are included below along with a summary of responses received from local authority planning departments. The correspondence received from local authorities is included at annex 4.

MA

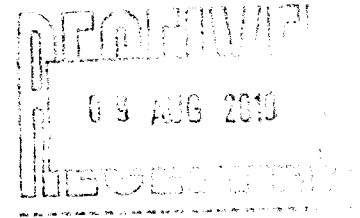
Carl Sargeant AC/AM
Y Gweinidog dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a Llywodraeth
Leol
Minister for Social Justice and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-03-292
Ein cyf/Our ref: CS/1123/10

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



5 August 2010

Dear Christine,

Petition: P-03-292 Public Toilet Provision

Thank you for your letter of 26 July 2010, regarding the Public Facilities Grant Scheme.

The local authorities in Wales that will be participating in the Scheme in 2010-2011 are: Anglesey, Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Conwy, Denbighshire, Gwynedd, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouth, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Swansea, Vale of Glamorgan and Wrexham.

Yours sincerely

Carl Sargeant AM/AC

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Ffacs * Fax 029 2089 8522
Correspondence.Carl.Sargeant@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

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

ST/SW/SJ
15 November 2010
Steve Thomas
029 2046 8610
steve.thomas@wlga.gov.uk



WLGA • CLILC

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

Dear Ms Chapman

Information to the Petitions Committee – Ref P-03-292 Public Toilet Provision in Wales

Background

The original rationale for provision of public toilets was to prevent the risks to public health that arose from people 'going behind the bushes'. There were particular problems that arose when motor travel became popular and longer journeys were made, hence the provision of motorway service stations.

The risk of 'going behind the bushes' is two fold, in the first place there are no facilities for hand washing etc, and in the second there is no provision for the removal of the waste material, which may constitute a risk to public health.

There are individuals suffering from various complaints – IBS, and cystitis are two examples, as well as pregnant women, young children and the elderly who may need fairly immediate access to toilets.

A fear of being unable to get to a toilet can cause individuals to stay at home rather than take the risk of being caught short; this is bad for mental health and well being.

Wales statistics

Information regarding the number of toilets available for use by the public was received from 18 of the 22 local authorities in Wales – the data below therefore does not provide the total picture across Wales.

Currently there are 382 public toilet facilities provided by local authorities.

Only one local authority indicated that there would be a significant reduction in the provision of public toilets from the start of the new financial year (29 toilets down to 9 in this instance).

A further 104 businesses have signed up to allow the public to use

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Chief Executive
Prif Weithredwr

Welsh Local Government
Association
Local Government House
Drake Walk
CARDIFF CF10 4LG
Tel: 029 2046 8600
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Cymdeithas Llywodraeth
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www.wlga.gov.uk

their toilet facilities. (Public Facilities Grant Scheme – see below)

Public Facilities Grant Scheme

Businesses may claim up to £500 from their LA if they meet certain criteria – for opening their toilets to members of the public. The Welsh Assembly Government wrote to Local Authority Chief Executives in October 2010 explaining the detail of the scheme.

9 of the 18 respondent Local Authorities reported that businesses had met the criteria and taken up the grant funding.

In the case of people with specific illnesses there is a card scheme that allows them to present the card to shopkeepers etc indicating that they need to use the toilet and shopkeepers are asked to make private toilet accommodation available to them, but this is not the case for the elderly, pregnant women, and for young children, particularly where mothers have to change them

CIEH does not say that local authorities should provide public toilets, but we do say that facilities should be available. There is currently a scheme in London where pubs are paid an amount of money a year to make their toilets available to everyone, not just patrons, and were this scheme to be more widely adopted there may not need to be local authority toilet provision. The issue is that there should be toilets available for the public to use, rather than that local authorities should provide them.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Thomas', written in a cursive style.

Steve Thomas CBE
Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr

P-03-292 PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

The Petitions Committee wrote to all local planning authorities (LPAs) to ask:

What if any requirements do you have to ensure that there is provision for public toilets in out of town developments or other public developments which are in rural/isolated locations.

23 LPAs responded from a total of 25. No LPA has a specific requirement for the provision of public toilets in rural or isolated locations, apart from Flintshire, which requires lorry parks to provide adequate toilet facilities.

There was a consensus from respondents that most developers will include public toilets if there is an expectation that the public will use the development. It was highlighted that TAN 12 encourages the inclusion of accessible public toilets in new and public commercial buildings. A number of councils stated that they would raise the issue of public toilet provision if they did not feel there was adequate provision, however, for a planning obligation to be imposed, certain tests would have to be met. Anglesey has included provisions for new public conveniences within Supplementary Planning Guidance on Planning Obligations.

Some LPAs provided information on public toilet provision within their area, including Blaenau Gwent who stated they are looking to encourage the use of public toilets in town centres through the Public Facilities Grant Scheme. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park described how they were seeking to address a specific issue at St Justinian's to improve provision.

Full responses are provided in Annex 4.

Committee Service

November 2010

21. P-03-295 Paediatric Neuro Rehabilitation Services

Petition wording

We, the undersigned, call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to recognise and deliver services for the rehabilitation of brain injured children. There is currently no facility in Wales to provide this vital service. Despite there being a purpose built children's hospital being built in Cardiff, there is still no provision included in its design.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-295.htm>

Petition raised by: Kyle's Goal

Number of signatures: The petition was submitted by Kyle's Goal. A related petition collected 9128

Previously considered by the Committee on: 29 June 2010, 13 July 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Health and Social Services and the petitioners. These are included below.

Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM

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

Our ref: EH/02472/10

Your ref: P-03-295

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



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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Ffacs: 029 2089 8131
E-Bost: Gohebiaeth.Edwina.Hart@cymru.gsi.gov.uk

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

5 August 2010

Thank you for your letter of 26 July on behalf of the Petitions Committee asking for additional information on Paediatric Neuro-rehabilitation services.

The All Wales Neurosciences Standards, developed as part of the Children and Young People's Specialised Service project were issued to the service in April 2010. The standards and key actions have been developed by external working groups comprising of stakeholders, and provide a basis for service planners and providers to plan and deliver effective services for children and young people.

Standards include access to services and management of children and young people with neurological disease, children and young people recovering from neurosurgery, and those who have a neuro-disability who require access to specialised services.

It is the responsibility of the Local Health Boards (LHB) to ensure that the key actions within the standards are implemented. Some key actions can be delivered within a year while others may take a number of years to achieve. Thus each key action has a timescale for delivery between one and ten years.

The Welsh Health Specialised Service Committee (WHSSC) is currently in discussion with the Cardiff and Vale University LHB to address the problems associated with the Paediatric Neuro rehabilitation services provided to patients resident in South Wales, delivered by the University Hospital of Wales.

As set-out in my previous response to the Committee it is recognised that it may not be practical to provide the initial intensive specialised paediatric neuro rehabilitation service in South Wales, due to the low annual number of patients who require access to this Service. As a result the LHB has been asked by WHSSC to provide a detailed service specification to include the scope of the service - catchment area & historical activity and the service model - staffing, infrastructure and links with other services.

Paediatric neuro-sciences covers many services areas, and it is necessary to get it right in terms of planning the reviews recommendations by the LHB's who are working closely with WHSSC.

Ensuring the implementation of the generic characteristics which James Steers' expert group recommended, should underpin the care of children and young people with long term neurological conditions, which will include neuro rehabilitation.

The quality of care being provided will be evidenced through local and national clinical audit and the monitoring of the implementation of the overarching Standards for Paediatric Neurosciences, which the Welsh Assembly Government published in April.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John H...', is located at the bottom left of the page.

Dear Mrs Chapman

PETITION: P-03-295 Paediatric Neuro-Rehabilitation Services

Thank you for your letter of the 26 July which included the Minister for Health and Social Services response to the committee letter of the 21 June.

Mrs Harts letter of response of 2 July provided an overview of the current situation in Wales in relation to paediatric neuro-rehabilitation services but did not deal with the specifics of our current petition. I welcome the committee's agreement to write to the Minister on the following issues:

- What specific improvements are planned in paediatric neurology within Wales and on what timeframe?
- How many patients in Wales require the intensive specialised paediatric neuro-rehabilitation service?
- When will the review into clinical support for rehabilitation services identified by the Minister be completed?
- How will the implementation of the recommendations of the advisory group on care pathways for long term neurological conditions be monitored, in the context of the review of clinical support for rehabilitation services, in order to avoid variation in provision throughout Wales;

I note that you have requested further information on the recommendations of the expert advisory group on care pathways for long term neurological conditions. I have read a copy of this report and would be interested in the Ministers comments on the recommendations of the report and particularly the sections regarding early specialist rehabilitation and community and longer term rehabilitation.

The Ministers response stated that specialist care such as that provided at the Childrens Trust in Tadworth would continue to be utilised and at present Kyle is receiving his second period of rehabilitation at the facility in Tadworth. This is following three months of rehabilitation at the Univeristy Hospital of Wales of a care package recommended by the Childrens Trust at the University Hospital of Wales, a care package agreed by the Minister in a meeting I had with her on the 20 April but was not delivered as per the specifications set out by the Childrens Trust.

The Childrens Trust have again assessed Kyle and have recommended a further 3 months of continuing rehabilitation at their facility, however, The Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) funding is only being provided for 6 weeks, how can the Minister say that these facilities will continue to be utilised when they can't be fully funded.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Simmons

22. P-03-299 South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Petition wording

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to consider whether recent changes proposed to staff hours and working arrangements at the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are in line with the National Service Framework; and if they are not, that the Welsh Government takes swift steps to ensure appropriate action is taken to bring the service's arrangements back in line with the framework.

Link to the petition: <http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions-old/admissible-pet/p-03-299.htm>

Petition raised by: Danny Clark

Number of signatures: 65

Previously considered by the Committee on: 12 October 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the Fire Brigades Union. These are included below.

Carl Sargeant AC/AM
Y Gweinidog dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a Llywodraeth
Leol
Minister for Social Justice and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-299
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/01579/10

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

25 October 2010

Don Anisfore

Thank you for your letter of 5 October regarding Petition (P-03-299).

I understand that the petition was received on 4 August. Therefore the proposed changes to staff hours and working arrangements referred to relate to a proposal in South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (FRA) draft Risk Reduction Plan (RRP) for 2011-12 which was being formally consulted on during the course of the summer. Specifically the RRP proposal sought views in relation to the introduction of new crewing arrangements (Self Rostering) at three South Wales FRA stations (Penarth, Maesteg and New Inn).

The consultation closed on 3 September and in line with Assembly Government RRP Guidance FRAs is required to fully consider the results and implications of responses received on their RRP proposals prior to finalising the document. As a result the FRA, when it met to consider its RRP on 27 September, decided not to pursue Self Rostering, as part of its 2011-12 RRP, but instead to pursue an alternative crewing system (Flexible Rostering), as proposed by the Fire Brigades Union during the consultation. Flexible Rostering is intended to achieve the same benefits as Self Rostering but across the whole FRA area and is a system more acceptable to representative bodies. The FRA and FBU are now engaged in detailed negotiation over the introduction of the new arrangements which are planned for April 2011.

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Correspondence: Carl.Sargeant@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

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FRAs are required by our RRP Guidance to meet with me prior to finalising their RRP and I met with the FRA representatives on 22 September, the meeting enables me to influence FRA decisions, as Welsh Ministers have no powers to require FRAs to halt or amend their RRP proposals. FRAs are autonomous statutory bodies with the responsibility for securing the provision of fire cover in their areas. As far as the Fire and Rescue National Framework is concerned, a tenant of the Framework is that it is there to provide guidance to FRAs, whilst leaving them free to take local decisions.

Yours sincerely

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

Carl Sargeant AM/AC

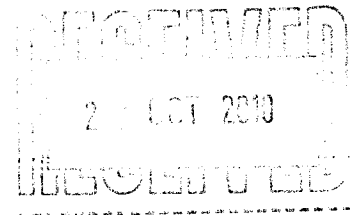


**Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service**

Simon A Smith
Prif Swyddog Tân / Chief Fire Officer

22 October 2010

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



Dear Ms Chapman,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 15 October 2010 addressed to Alwen Davies concerning the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority. I should be grateful if you would ensure that all future correspondence is addressed to the Chief Fire Officer at the above address so that I can arrange for the most appropriate response to be made.

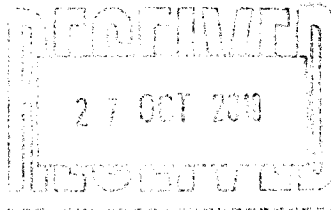
With regard to the contents of your letter, I do not feel it appropriate to express an opinion on the activities of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority. I would say, however, that since 2004 the National Framework documents issued by the Welsh Assembly Government have made a number of references to the need for Fire and Rescue Authorities to identify priorities, allocate resources efficiently and utilise staff more effectively. Paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 of the Assembly's first National Framework (published in 2005) and paragraphs 2.4, 3.10 of the current National Framework (published in 2008) are cases in point.

To come to your final point, I would say that the National Framework is not for the "compliance" of Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Framework provides strategic direction from Government while ensuring that Fire and Rescue Authorities continue to make local decisions. All Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales are regularly inspected and audited. An intervention protocol exists for use by the Minister if he believes that a Fire and Rescue Authority is outwith the National Framework. To date, the Minister has not sought to intervene in North Wales.

Yours sincerely

Simon A Smith
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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



*Gofynner am/
Please ask for:* Temporary Chief Fire Officer
P Coleman
Rhif Est/Extn. No. 4402
E-bost/E-mail: p.coleman@mawwfire.gov.uk
Fy Nghyf/My Ref: PLC/MT
Eich Cyf/Your Ref:
Dyddiad/Date: 25 October 2010

Dear Ms Chapman

I refer to your letter dated 15 October 2010 in relation to a petition considered by the National Assembly's Petitions Committee on 12th October (P-03-299 South Wales Fire Authority).

With regards to your first point, I do not feel it to be appropriate for me to comment on issues relating to South Wales Fire & Rescue Service.

On the second, more general point, relating to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales, the Mid and West Wales Fire Authority has and continues to pay due regard to the guidance and strategic direction provided by Government in the Framework.

An annual audit process, which includes how the Authority discharges its statutory functions in connection with the Framework, is undertaken by the Wales Audit Office and the Assembly Government. All such audits, since the inception of the Framework in 2005, have resulted in positive reports. Further, the Minister has the power to intervene if Fire and Rescue Authorities fail to act in accordance with the Framework, a power that has not been used to date.

I trust that this provides you with the information you require.

Yours sincerely

P Coleman
Temporary Chief Fire Officer



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

Our Ref: AM/JAG
Your Ref:
Date: 3 November 2010
Contact: Andy Marles
Tel: 01443 232007

Dear Ms Chapman

P-03-299 SOUTH WALES FIRE AUTHORITY

Thank you for your letter dated 15th October 2010, and the opportunity to comment on the petition raised by Mr Clark.

The petition refers to proposed changes to staff hours and working arrangements of the Self Rostering Project outlined in the consultation document for the draft Risk Reduction Plan 2011/12 (see attached extract).

Self Rostering or similar working patterns have been implemented in other Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) internationally as well as in England and Wales. Each FRS may use a slightly different project title such as Low Levels of Activity & Risk (LLAR) Optimal Crewing, Low Activity Station and Day Crewing Plus. As such, the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government is aware of the working pattern.

It is difficult to identify from the petition wording which element of the framework document the Self Rostering Project is alleged to conflict with. The petition refers to the National Service Framework; this is understood to mean the Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales 2008 – 2011. This document focuses on three priority areas, one of which is

Providing statutory services which protect communities and meet their specific local needs by maximising and pooling resources. This will involve a more integrative, participative and collaborative approach between Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) and the wider public sector.

Section 3.10 directs FRAs to prepare, publicly consult and publish its annual Risk Reduction Plan (RRP). The RRP guidance indicates there is sufficient scope for local flexibility and innovative ways of delivering its services.

Section 3.11 requires FRAs to aim their RRP's at:

- Reducing numbers of fires and other emergency incidents
- Reducing the loss of life and other emergency incidents
- Reducing the number and severity of injuries in fires and other emergency incidents
- Reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents
- Safeguarding the environment and heritage, both built and natural
- Providing services that are Value for Money
- Integrating the activities of the Fire & rescue Authority within the wider social justice agenda
- Addressing the equality and diversity proposals set out in this Framework

In our opinion, the Self Rostering Project complies with the aims of the RRP.

Although this does not apply to Welsh fire and rescue services, the Fire & Rescue Service Bulletin dated 20th October 2010 issued by Communities and Local Government outlines the budget implications for English FRS of the recent Comprehensive Spending review and specifically states it is for individual Fire & Rescue Authorities - not central government - to make local decisions on how to manage the reduction in budgets through seven key areas. The first area identified is flexible staffing arrangements.

It could be possible the petitioner is referring to the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service, 6th Edition 2004 (Grey Book). In our opinion the proposed working conditions relating to the Self Rostering Project complies with the key areas of the document, that is, Section 4 - Conditions of Service Framework, Part A - Duty Systems and Hours of Duty. In particular duty systems should have regard for special circumstances and be family friendly. A Cochrane Systematic Review of flexible working conditions and their effects on employee health and wellbeing was published in 2010. The authors concluded that increasing worker control and choice (such as self-scheduling) is likely to have positive effects on health outcomes which includes statistically significant results in reduced psychological stress, and improvements in sleep quality and systolic blood pressure.

Finally we would like to bring to the attention of the Petitions Committee that the Self Rostering Project is no longer being progressed at this time. This decision was taken at the Fire & Rescue Authority meeting held on 27th September 2010.

Yours sincerely



Andy Marles
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

AM
16
Fire Brigades Union – Welsh Region

Undeb Brigadau Dân – Ardal Cymru



Regional Office: FBU Building, 4 Ffordd yr Hen Gae,
Pencoed CF35 5LJ

Telephone: 01656 867910 Fax: 01656 864087



Executive Council Member
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Regional Chair
Cerith Griffiths
07827 300089

Regional Secretary
Grant Mayos
07970 475153

Regional Treasurer
Simon Jenkins
07779 130110

Regional Official
Chris Howells
07817 412637

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

9 November 2010

Dear Christine,

P-03-299 South Wales Fire Authority

Thank you for your letter of 15th October and the opportunity your Committee has afforded us to comment on the Petition submitted by Danny Clark.

I must apologise for the delay in replying, I have been away from my desk for the past 3 weeks and this is the first opportunity I have had to respond to your letter.

I could sum up the position in relation to the proposals from South Wales Fire Authority in a couple of words by saying the dispute has now been settled and the threat to introduce the Self Rostering Duty System has been lifted – for the time being. However for the record I would like to comment on the proposals from South Wales Fire Authority in respect of the content of the Petition, I think it would be helpful for your Committee.

The first comment I would make is that although we find the Petition very helpful and supportive of our dispute with the Authority, in actuality the Assembly Government does not have the powers to intervene directly as the issue was one which impacted on our members Conditions of Service and currently the Assembly Government, although it has responsibility for Fire & Rescue under the devolved functions, it has no responsibility for determining Conditions of Service which are the responsibility of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire & Rescue Services. The NJC is a UK-wide body but representation is by way of Local Government organisations which includes one seat for the WLGA.

NO₂
Fire Deaths

The Assembly Government is of course responsible for producing and implementing the National Framework for Fire & Rescue in Wales, which sets the framework for the strategic objectives of the three Fire Authorities in Wales, but the National Framework is and has to be silent on Conditions of Service for Firefighters.

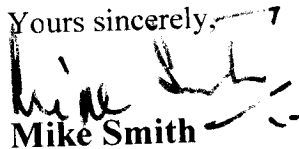
There is no doubt that the duty system which South Wales were seeking to introduce is outwith the NJC Conditions of Service and breaches the EU Working Time Directive and, in conjunction with our consultative ballot for strike action may be some of the reasons why the Authority decided to withdraw the proposals.

I do have some very serious objections to an Authority publishing a Risk Reduction Plan (which also falls within the remit of the Assembly Government) which includes proposals to radically alter our members Conditions of Service. I fail to see how that improves fire cover arrangements in Wales and makes the public safer, however that is a matter which we need to raise with the Minister, Carl Sargeant.

If it is at all helpful to your Committee I am more than happy to explain the "intricacies" of the various issues which this Petition raises and to expand on the points I have set out above, if you think that will be helpful.

Can I thank you for your Committee's considerations and again if I can be of any further assistance please let me know.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Smith

Executive Council Member (Wales)

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

Petition raised by: Sophie Morris

Number of signatures: 113

Previously considered by the Committee on: 28 September 2010.

Update: Correspondence has been received from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government and is included below.

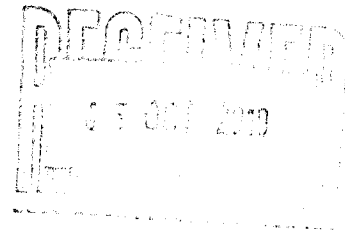
15 AM
Carl Sargeant AC/AM
Y Gweinidog dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a Llywodraeth
Leol
Minister for Social Justice and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-301
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/01442/10

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



September 2010

Den Chisholm

Thank you for your letter of 22 September concerning a petition from Transgender Wales, requesting specific information on how the Government is working to ensure equality for the Transgender community and whether I plan to provide direct support for groups supporting this community.

As part of our *One Wales* commitment to equality the Welsh Assembly Government has developed and published its Single Equality Scheme for gender, race and disability, together with religion and belief or non-belief, age, transgender and sexual orientation.

During the consultation process, it was recognised that some equality strands, including transgender, were not being represented in these general consultation events. In the second phase of the consultation, we actively sought to engage with these specific equality strands and a dedicated engagement event was held for transgender people in North Wales. A transgender person's profile was also used as a case study to inform the development process. Written responses to the consultation were received from at least one person identifying themselves as transgender, and also from a: gender, the support network for transsexual, transgender and intersex staff in the Civil Service.

Training is available to Welsh Assembly Government staff on transgender issues to help inform our work processes and service delivery.

With regard to the issue of providing direct support for groups supporting the transgender community, I have been advised that no applications for funding were received from Transgender Wales to the Advancing Equality Fund 2010/11 bidding round held last year,

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Ffacs • Fax 029 2089 8522
Correspondence: Carl.Sargeant@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

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or from any other organisation dealing specifically with transgender issues. Any request for funding from organisations representing the transgender community would have received the same consideration as other applicants.

All opportunities for funding are made available on the Welsh Assembly Government website and I attach the link to the current equality funding schemes for ease of reference:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/equality/funding/?lang=en>

I hope you will find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

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

Carl Sargeant AM/AC

Committee Service

November 2010