



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Yr Is-bwyllgor Datblygu Gwledig
The Rural Development Sub-committee**

**Dydd Iau, 18 Hydref 2007
Thursday, 18 October 2007**

Cynnwys
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Discussion of Scoping Paper and Terms of Reference for the Committee's Second
Scrutiny Inquiry

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Mick Bates	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Alun Davies	Llafur (Cadeirydd yr Is-bwyllgor) Labour (Sub-committee Chair)
Alun Ffred Jones	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Brynle Williams	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Lorraine Barrett	Llafur Labour
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Swyddogion Gwasanaeth Seneddol y Cynulliad yn bresennol
Assembly Parliamentary Service officials in attendance

Joanne Clinton	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Dr Virginia Hawkins	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 8.49 a.m.
The meeting began at 8.49 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

- [1] **Alun Davies:** Galwaf y cyfarfod i drefn. **Alun Davies:** I bring this meeting to order.
- [2] Mae'n rhaid i mi ddechrau gyda rhai datganiadau. Os oes larwm tân, rhaid inni adael yr ystafell drwy'r allanfa dân a dilyn cyfarwyddiadau'r staff. Nid oes prawf ar y system larwm tân heddiw. I must begin with some announcements. If there is a fire alarm, we will have to leave the room through the fire exit and follow the instructions of staff. There is no fire alarm test today.
- [3] Gobeithiaf fod pawb wedi troi eu ffonau a'u BlackBerrys i ffwrdd. I hope that everyone has turned their phones and BlackBerrys off.
- [4] Mae'r Cynulliad yn gweithredu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg, ac mae'n bosibl defnyddio'r clustffonau i glywed y cyfieithiad neu i glywed y sain yn well. The Assembly operates through the media of Welsh and English, and it is possible to use the headsets for the translation and for the amplification of sound.
- [5] Peidiwch â chyffwrdd y botymau ar y meicroffonau; byddant yn cael eu gweithredu ar eich rhan. Do not touch the buttons on the microphones; they will be operated for you.

8.50 a.m.

**Trafodaeth ar y Papur Cwmpasu a'r Cylch Gorchwyl ar gyfer Ail Ymchwiliad
Craffu'r Pwyllgor
Discussion of Scoping Paper and Terms of Reference for the Committee's
Second Scrutiny Inquiry**

[6] **Alun Davies:** Symudwn yn syth at y papur a gawsom gan yr ymchwilyr ar gyfer ein hymchwiliad nesaf, ar dlodi yng nghefn gwlad. Ysgrifennwyd y papur hwn yn dilyn ein trafodaeth bythefnos yn ôl. Mae'n adlewyrchu'r farn a fynegwyd gan sawl Aelod yn ystod y drafodaeth honno. A oes sylwadau gennych ar y papur presennol?

Alun Davies: We will move directly to the paper that we have received from the researchers for our next inquiry, on poverty in rural Wales. This paper was written following our discussions a fortnight ago. It reflects the opinions expressed by many Members during that discussion. Do you have any comments on the current paper?

[7] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Diolchaf i wasanaeth ymchwil yr Aelodau am y gwaith hwn. Mae'r papur yn rhoi cefndir addas a diddorol i'r hyn yr ydym yn ei wneud. Fodd bynnag, credaf y dylem ddiffinio'n glir iawn yr hyn yr ydym yn ceisio ei gyflawni drwy'r ymchwiliad hwn. Gan mai rôl graffu sydd gennym, mae angen i ni benderfynu, yn gyntaf, beth yr ydym yn ei feddwl wrth amddifadedd neu dlodi mewn cyd-destun cefn gwlad. A yw'n wahanol mewn unrhyw ffordd i dlodi neu amddifadedd mewn rhan arall o Gymru, gan gynnwys, yn arbennig, ardaloedd mwy poblog? Wedyn dylem ystyried sut y mae gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yn ymateb i'r ffenomenon honno. Gallem ddod i'r casgliad bod tlodi yng nghefn gwlad yn iawn, oherwydd bod y bobl hynny'n byw mewn lle braf, ond, yn sicr, mae'n rhaid inni weld sut y mae polisiau'r Llywodraeth yn helpu i ymladd yr amddifadedd hwnnw. Ond, yn gyntaf mae'n rhaid i ni ddeall beth yw amddifadedd. Yr oeddwn yn trafod Arsyllfa Wledig Cymru gyda Virginia yn gynt. Mae hwnnw'n le da i ddechrau diffinio'r maes. Yna, gallwn edrych ar wasanaethau cyhoeddus i weld sut y maent yn ymateb i'r ffenomenon honno.

Alun Ffred Jones: I thank the Members' research service for this work. The paper provides an appropriate and interesting background to what we are doing. However, I think that we should clearly define what we are trying to achieve through this inquiry. Given that ours is a scrutiny role, we should begin by determining what we mean by deprivation or poverty in a rural context. Does it differ in any way to poverty or deprivation in any other part of Wales, including the more populated areas? We should then consider how public services respond to that phenomenon. We may reach the conclusion that rural poverty is okay, because those people live in quite an idyllic place, but we must see how Government policies help to tackle that deprivation. However, we must begin by establishing what it is. I was discussing the Wales Rural Observatory with Virginia earlier. That is a good starting point in terms of defining this area. We could then look at the public services and see how they respond to this phenomenon.

[8] **Brynle Williams:** Cytunaf gydag Alun. Ni ddylem symud ymlaen nes ein bod wedi diffinio'n union beth yw tlodi cefn gwlad. Dyna'r man cychwyn pwysig ar gyfer ein trafodaeth.

Brynle Williams: I agree with Alun. We should not move on until we know exactly what rural poverty is. That is the most important starting point for our debate.

[9] **Mick Bates:** The papers are very useful, including annex 2 on the indices of multiple deprivation. I do not disagree—we must take evidence so that we can scrutinise the Government, and the rural observatory is a starting point. What concerns me is that much of

the data are quite old, given that they were compiled in 2004. Are there any up-to-date sources of data that would assist us? When I read through the papers, particularly the house price table, I wondered whether it would be possible to gain data on rental values; we often fix house price values, but rental issues are equally important in terms of poverty, if you can find somewhere decent to live.

[10] Other than that, I think that the paper is excellent. When you look through the areas and you look at certain indices of multiple deprivation, you realise that access to services becomes a key issue for us. Referring back to the data, we have real-time data from, for example, ambulance services, which are not included, as I understand it, in those data. Those data deal with distances from hospitals and, in terms of emergency services and how quickly they can get to places, those data are available. As I read the paper, I could not see it in there. I stand to be corrected, but if it is not included, it would be useful information to include, because access to services is the key issue that I see arising from this.

[11] **Alun Davies:** We want to address the issue of access to data as part of any investigation. I agree that the quality and quantity of data that are available to describe these issues are an essential part of how we understand the nature of poverty in rural Wales. I would be quite anxious, if those data were not available at present, for our investigation to understand that. One of the purposes of it would be to lead to situation whereby those data are understood, collected and analysed to enable us to have a far better and more robust picture of what constitutes poverty in rural Wales

[12] **Lorraine Barrett:** Following on from what everyone has said, and to pick up Mick's point—I think that I made this point at the last meeting—I wish to refer to access to services, and emergency services in particular. You may live in a big house and have a reasonably good pension, but if you are unwell and you do not have a car, you need a fire engine, an ambulance or a bus to get you to where you need to go. I wish to reinforce what Mick just said.

[13] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Credaf y bydd anhawster, oherwydd, fel rhan o'r gwaith cefndir hwn, mae gwybodaeth am y mynegai sy'n cael ei ddefnyddio ar hyn o bryd i ddiffinio tlodi. Canlyniad hynny yw mai dim ond ardaloedd poblog sy'n cael eu diffinio fel rhai sy'n dioddef o amddifadedd. Mae rhesymau am hynny. O ganlyniad, rhoddir yr argraff nad oes tlodi yng nghefn gwlad, gan nad yw'n cael ei ddangos ar y map. Mae'n anochel y bydd cymharu o ran y defnydd a wneir o'r mynegai amddifadedd lluosog i weld ym mha ffordd y mae'n gwasanaethu pobl yng nghefn gwlad—neu ym mha ffordd nad yw'n gwneud hynny. Fel y gwyddom, mae teuluoedd yn yr un sefyllfa yng nghefn gwlad ond nad oes cymaint ohonynt yn yr un lle. Felly, rhaid gofyn beth yr ydym yn ei wneud i helpu'r bobl hynny, neu a ydynt yn mynd heb eu helpu? Credaf ein bod ar dir eithaf anodd, ond bydd yn rhaid inni ganolbwyntio ar yr hyn yr ydym yn ceisio ei wneud, sef craffu ar waith y Llywodraeth i weld sut y mae'n ymateb i amddifadedd yng nghefn gwlad.

Alun Ffred Jones: I think that there will be some difficulty, because, as part of this background work, there is information on the index that is currently used to define poverty. The result is that only populated areas are defined as suffering from deprivation. There are reasons for that. As a result, the impression is given that there is no rural poverty, because it is not shown on the map. It is inevitable that there will be some comparison in terms of the use made of the index of multiple deprivation to see how it does or does not cater for rural Wales. As we know, there are families in the same situation in rural areas, but without there being so many in one place. Therefore, we must ask what are we to do to help those people, or do they do without assistance? I think that we are in a difficult position, but we will have to focus on what we are trying to do, namely scrutinise the Government on how it responds to rural deprivation.

[14] **Brynle Williams:** Nid wyf yn gwybod a oes modd inni ymdrin â'r pwnc hwn, ond a fyddwn yn ystyried cynllunio yng nghefn gwlad? Mae hynny'n achosi llawer o broblemau. Mae costau byw yng nghefn gwlad yn berthnasol, ond eto yr ydym yn adeiladu tai yn agos i drefi. Mae hynny'n arwain at chwalu teuluoedd ac ati. Dylem, rhywsut, edrych ar gynllunio. Mae gennym wahanol ffyrdd o helpu pobl, ond nid yw hynny'n ddigon. Yr wyf yn canfod, fel y mae eraill yn y canolbarth, yn y gorllewin ac yn y gogledd mae'n siŵr, bod yn rhaid i bobl aros yng nghefn gwlad gan eu bod yn gweithio yno. Fel arfer, mae'r cyflogau yn is ac maent yn gweithio ar y tir, yn y sector twristiaeth ac mewn coedwigaeth, ond nid oes tai ar eu cyfer. Maent yn gorfod gadael y swyddi hynny, ac mae hynny'n gwaethygu'r sefyllfa. A oes gennym hawl i ystyried cynllunio?

Brynle Williams: I do not know whether we can deal with this issue, but will we be considering planning in rural Wales? This causes many problems. The cost of living in rural Wales is relevant, and yet we are building houses near towns. This leads to the break-up of families and so on. We should be looking at planning in some way. We have different mechanisms to assist people, but that is not enough. I find, as do others in mid Wales, west Wales and north Wales I am sure, that people need to live in rural areas as that is where they work. The wages are usually lower and they work on the land, in the tourism sector and in forestry, but there are no houses for them. They are forced to leave those jobs, and that makes the situation worse. Is it within our remit to consider planning?

[15] **Alun Davies:** Credaf y gallwn ystyried effaith polisiau cynllunio ar safon byw pobl yng nghefn gwlad. Fodd bynnag, mae polisiau cynllunio, fel y cyfryw, yn dod o fewn cylch gwaith y prif bwyllgor mae Mick yn ei gadeirio.

Alun Davies: I believe that we can consider the impact of planning policy on people's standard of living in rural areas. However, planning policies per se fall within the remit of the main committee, which is chaired by Mick.

[16] **Mick Bates:** To continue on the issue of data and other information, it might be useful if, at some stage, we invited someone who understands the data to come in. We tend to take the data as being absolute, but it is all relative; it is not an absolute thing. It may help us to understand the issue when we investigate this and scrutinise policy. We need perhaps a seminar or more information from the people who are responsible for compiling the data to help us to understand them. I am struggling a little with some of the figures, particularly as they are a little out of date. It would help us if we understood the mechanism of collection and what the raw figures mean.

9.00 a.m.

[17] The second issue relates to that. I always like to see comparisons with other countries. I would find an international comparison quite useful. Both England and Scotland have undertaken work, and extensive work has been done in some areas of Europe. The European Commission has extensive programmes, which are not being used enough at the moment to combat some of the issues, particularly on poverty.

[18] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Yn dilyn yr hyn a ddywedodd Mick, dylem ddechrau gyda'r arsyllfa gan mai hi gyflawnodd y gwaith manwl ar ran y Llywodraeth. Ffurfiwyd grŵp o fewn Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru. Nid wyf yn siŵr beth yw ei enw, ond y cynghorau gwledig ydynt. Efallai dylem ei wahodd yma yn weddol fuan—

Alun Ffred Jones: Following on from what Mick said, we should start with the observatory as it carried out the detailed work on behalf of the Government. A group has been formed within the Welsh Local Government Association. I am not sure of its name, but it comprises the rural councils. Perhaps we should invite it here fairly soon—

- [19] **Alun Davies:** Central Wales Plus yw ei enw. **Alun Davies:** It is called Central Wales Plus.
- [20] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae'n amlwg fod ganddo bersbectif ar y sefyllfa hon. Byddai hynny'n dod â ni'n syth at wasanaethau cyhoeddus hefyd, a sut mae hynny yn effeithio ar y broblem. **Alun Ffred Jones:** It obviously has a perspective on this situation. That would also bring us straight to public services, and the way in which that affects the problem.
- [21] **Alun Davies:** Cytunaf. Lorraine? **Alun Davies:** I agree. Lorraine?
- [22] **Lorraine Barrett:** I have nothing to add.
- [23] **Alun Davies:** Hoffwn ddod â'r drafodaeth i ben a diolch yn fawr i chi. Yr wyf wedi casglu tri pheth o'n trafodaeth y bore yma. Yn gyntaf, mae angen diffinio a disgrifio tlodi yng nghefn gwlad. Derbyniaf y pwyntiau a godwyd gan Mick ynglŷn â'r data sydd ar gael i ni a sut ydym yn deall natur tlodi yng nghefn gwlad. Yn ail, mae angen ystyried effaith polisiau gwrthdlodi'r Llywodraeth ar gefn gwlad. Yn drydedd, dylem edrych ar fynediad i wasanaethau cyhoeddus yng nghefn gwlad. Dyna'r tri phrif bwynt yr ydym am eu hystyried. Byddwn yn dechrau drwy drafod gydag Arsyllfa Wledig Cymru a ChLILC i ddarganfod sut y maent yn diffinio a deall tlodi yng nghefn gwlad. Derbyniaf eich pwynt, Mick, ac yr wyf yn mawr obeithio y gallwn drefnu rhywbeth gyda'r gwasanaeth ymchwil i ddeall y ffigurau a natur y data sydd gennym. Efallai fydd angen sesiwn breifat i drafod hynny er mwyn i ni ddeall y darlun cyfan. Wrth ddod i ddeall hynny, gallwn weld a oes bylchau. A oes cytundeb ar hynny? Gwelaf fod cytundeb. **Alun Davies:** I would like to bring the discussion to an end and thank you very much. From our discussion, I have identified three areas for us to consider. First, we need to define and describe poverty in rural areas. I accept the points raised by Mick with regard to the data that we have and our understanding of poverty in rural areas. Secondly, we need to consider the effect of the Government's anti-poverty strategies on rural areas. Thirdly, we should look at access to public services in rural areas. Those are the three main points that we will consider. We will begin with a discussion with the Wales Rural Observatory and the WLGA to discover how they define and understand poverty in rural areas. I accept your point, Mick, and I hope that we can organise something with the research service so that we understand the figures and the nature of the data that we have. Perhaps we will need a private session to discuss that so that we understand the full picture. By understanding that, we can identify any gaps. Is there agreement on that? I see that there is.
- [24] Gan ein bod wedi cytuno ar hynny, nid oes rhagor o fusnes i'w drafod y bore yma. Cewch wybod am ddyddiad y cyfarfod nesaf. **Alun Davies:** As we have agreed on that, there is no more business to discuss this morning. You will be informed of the date of the next meeting.
- [25] **Mick Bates:** I would like to make one point on that. Since the Minister is coming to the meeting on 8 November, would it be possible, if there is time, to look at bluetongue and foot and mouth disease? I know that they are massive issues, but the bluetongue issue, particularly now that the infected zone is bordering mid Wales, will become a significant factor in farmers' ability to trade, particularly in the border areas, where, as you know, there are livestock markets and farm sales at this time of year. Would it be useful to see if the Minister can also come to the meeting prepared to answer questions on bluetongue and possibly foot and mouth disease?
- [26] **Brynle Williams:** As Mick said, bluetongue will have far more serious implications than even foot and mouth disease with regard to the ability to trade across borders. Could we

have the Minister here? I spoke to the Minister the day before yesterday and she will try to facilitate a meeting between Dr Glossop, Mick, and me to explain the situation to us. However, the situation has moved on in 24 hours and has worsened. I do not think that it is too dramatic a point to say that it has reached crisis point within 24 hours.

[27] **Lorraine Barrett:** We have to be careful that we do not stray into what the committees were in the previous Assembly. This sub-committee held an inquiry into TB in Wales and that is what the Minister is coming to talk to us about, along with the budget, and I would suggest that one of the opposition parties—and I am not being flippant here—could use its minority party debates in the Chamber to have a full discussion on issues like bluetongue. We could have had it yesterday, for instance, because bluetongue has been around for a few weeks now—and I am not being political in saying that. Otherwise, I could raise the issue of having an LCO or a Measure on making vegetarianism compulsory in Wales—I could bring anything in. The point is that I do not want us to stray.

[28] **Alun Davies:** I will try to bring some of this conversation together. I agree with points that Brynle and Mick have raised, and my suggestion is that we ask the Minister to make a statement in Plenary next Tuesday, because we do not want to wait until after the recess to have that discussion. So, it might be useful if I write to the Minister and say that we have had this discussion this morning and ask her to make a statement to Plenary next Tuesday.

[29] The Minister will be with us to discuss her budget. I am anxious that we have a full session to discuss the budget because that will have a fundamental impact on all areas of rural life, if you like—not only agriculture but elsewhere too. It is important that we spend and focus time on that. We have said that we need to conclude the investigation into TB and we also need to have that debate with the Minister.

[30] I indicated before this meeting started that it is probably time that we began looking at how the Government handled the foot and mouth disease issue. I do not want to overload the agenda and not achieve anything meaningful in our next meeting, so perhaps I could continue to discuss with you, after this meeting, the nature of that agenda. We need to ensure that there is time and space for the budget and for the TB inquiry and we need to make arrangements with the Minister to discuss foot and mouth disease and probably bluetongue in the future too. So, I think that we will be seeing a lot of Elin Jones in the next few weeks and months, and we need to ensure that our agendas are such that we have a meaningful discussion with the Minister when she is able to attend this committee.

[31] **Mick Bates:** Having raised the issue of bluetongue and foot and mouth disease and the Minister's appearance before us, I think that your suggestion of writing to the Minister, following this meeting, and asking her to make a statement in Plenary next week is very good. It will afford us an opportunity. I also place it on the record that I have asked for that statement for the last two weeks and it has not been forthcoming. Hopefully now, with your influence from this committee, it will be undertaken in next week's Plenary.

[32] **Alun Davies:** If business is concluded, the meeting is closed.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 9.08 a.m.
The meeting ended at 9.08 a.m.*