



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

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

**Dydd Mercher, 7 Mai 2008
Wednesday, 7 May 2008**

Cynnwys
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Procedural Motion

Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi 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

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

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Naomi Alleyne	Cyfarwyddwr Cydraddoldebau a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Director of Equalities and Social Justice, Welsh Local Government Association
Harry Thomas	Prif Weithredwr, Cyngor Gwynedd Chief Executive, Gwynedd Council
Steve Thomas	Prif Weithredwr, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Chief Executive, Welsh Local Government Association

Swyddogion Gwasanaeth Seneddol y Cynulliad yn bresennol
Assembly Parliamentary Service officials in attendance

Joanne Clinton	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Claire Morris	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.03 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.03 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Dlodi ac Amddifadedd yn y Gymru Wledig: Sesiwn Dystiolaeth
Inquiry into Poverty and Deprivation in Rural Wales: Evidence Session

[1] **Alun Davies:** Galwaf y cyfarfod i drefn. Yr ydym wedi derbyn tystiolaeth ysgrifenedig gennych a hoffwn drafod rhai o'r materion yr ydych yn eu nodi yn y dystiolaeth honno. Fe'ch croesawaf i'r cyfarfod a diolchaf i chi am dreulio'r amser i ddod yma i roi tystiolaeth i ni. Gwerthfawrogwn hynny'n fawr iawn.

Alun Davies: I call the meeting to order. We have received written evidence from you and I would like to discuss some of the issues that you have raised in that evidence. I welcome you to the meeting and thank you for taking time to come here to give us evidence. We greatly appreciate that.

[2] A allwch chi gyflwyno eich hunain a gwneud rhai sylwadau ar eich papur ysgrifenedig?

Could you introduce yourselves and make some comments about on your written paper?

[3] **Mr S. Thomas:** I am Steve Thomas, chief executive of the Welsh Local Government

Association, which has now been rechristened the Welsh local government rainbow association. To my right is Naomi Alleyne, our director of equalities and social justice and to my left is a member of the extended family of Thomases, the chief executive of Gwynedd Council, Harry Thomas, who has made the journey down from God's country to visit the committee.

[4] We will go through a number of features in terms of the evidence. Harry will also provide some supplementary information, which drills down into more detail on some of the evidence that we have provided on statistical base.

[5] Just to let you know what the WLGA has put in place regarding rural issues, we now have an all-Wales rural forum to provide a forum for an exchange of views on key issues affecting local government. It includes the rural authorities across Wales and was addressed at its first meeting—it was reconstituted, so it was not its first meeting really, but at a recent meeting it was addressed by Elin Jones, the Minister for Rural Affairs. Through that forum, we are seeking to provide a co-ordinated approach to how local government deals with rural issues, as well as a lobbying and representational role for rural authorities. We are developing this through the rural forum, which is the first recognised interest group within the WLGA—it is allowed in our constitution. It comes from several factors, not least some of the work that we have done on recent financial settlements where there have been many contentious issues, which have had a particular impact on rural authorities. However, more than that, it provides a rural focus within the association to counterbalance some of the equally loud noises that sometimes come from south-east Wales and south-west Wales.

[6] Therefore, through the forum, we want to ensure that the rural voice is represented, and come forward with new thinking on rural issues; that partly underpins the evidence that we have given today. We have set out in our evidence some of the issues that have already emerged in the forum, not least this concept of a rural premium and some of what we have put forward in relation to rural deprivation, which Harry will discuss in more detail. I will therefore hand over to Harry Thomas at this point.

[7] **Mr H. Thomas:** Diolch am y cyfle hwn i ddod gerbron y pwyllgor. Yr wyf am ei gwneud yn glir o'r dechrau nad wyf yn arbenigwr ym maes amddifadedd gwledig, ond yr wyf yn ffodus i gael cyfaill mor frwdfrydig a gwybodus yn y maes yn eistedd ar fy llaw dde.

Mr H. Thomas: Thank you for this opportunity to appear before the committee. I make it clear at the outset that I am not an expert in rural deprivation but I am lucky to have such an enthusiastic and knowledgeable colleague in this field sitting on my right hand side.

[8] Un o'r prif negeseuon sydd gennyf yw ein bod yn chwilio am chwarae teg. Ar hyn o bryd, yr ydym yn cydnabod bod problemau enfawr gan ein cyfeillion mewn rhai ardaloedd trefol, ac, yn sicr, yn y Cymoedd. Fodd bynnag, mae'r problemau hynny yn cael eu hamlygu a'u cydnabod ar hyn o bryd, tra nad ydym wedi bod mor llwyddiannus yn amlygu'r problemau yng nghefn gwlad. Oes bydd cyfle, mae gennyf ystadegau ychwanegol i amlinellu'r pwynt hwn.

One of the main messages that we wish to convey is that we are looking for fair play. At present, we acknowledge that there are huge problems facing our colleagues in some urban areas, and, certainly, in the Valleys. However, those problems are being highlighted and recognised at present, while we have not been as successful in highlighting problems in the rural areas. If there is an opportunity, I have additional statistics to emphasise this point.

[9] Mae cwestiynau ynglŷn â phriodoldeb technegau fel y mynegai amddifadedd lluosog, ac a yw'n addas ar

There are questions about the appropriateness of techniques such as the index of multiple deprivation, and whether it is appropriate for

gyfer anghenion cefn gwlad. Mae cwestiynau hefyd ynglŷn â sut y mae adnoddau yn cael eu dyrannu i awdurdodau lleol, a'r diffygion posibl sy'n bodoli mewn rhai meysydd.

the needs of rural areas. There are also questions about how resources are allocated to local authorities, and the possible deficiencies that exist in some areas.

[10] O ran tai, mae gennym broblemau enfawr o ran tai fforddiadwy yng nghefn gwlad, ac mae gennyf ystadegau ar y pwynt hwnnw. Hoffwn godi cwestiwn ynglŷn ag uchelgais a gweledigaeth ar gyfer cefn gwlad yn y dyfodol, oherwydd mae angen rhywbeth y gall pobl ei ddilyn er mwyn hyrwyddo newid. Soniaf am hynny mewn mwy o fanylder, gyda'ch caniatâd chi, Gadeirydd.

On housing, we face huge problems in terms of affordable housing in rural areas, and I have some statistics on that point. I would like to raise a question regarding future ambition and vision for rural areas, because we need something that people can follow in order to promote change. I will mention that in more detail, with your permission, Chair.

[11] Hoffwn sôn hefyd am gyfluniad strategaeth o ran nifer o bolisiâu a strategaethau Llywodraeth y Cynulliad, a chwestiynu a yw hynny'n bodoli cystal ag y gallasai ar hyn o bryd. Yn olaf, hoffwn sôn am eiriolaeth dros faterion gwledig. Sut yr ydym wedi cyrraedd y pwynt hwn, lle yr ydym yn teimlo ein bod ar ei hôl hi? A oes angen gofyn cwestiynau sylfaenol ynglŷn â digonolrwydd eiriolaeth, ac effeithlonrwydd yr eiriolaeth honno dros faterion gwledig ar hyn o bryd?

I also wish to raise strategic alignment in terms of several of the Assembly Government's policies and strategies, and question whether that exists as effectively as it could at present. Finally, I wish to mention advocacy for rural issues. How have we got to this point, where we feel that we are lagging behind? Do we need to ask fundamental questions regarding the adequacy of advocacy, and the effectiveness of that advocacy for rural issues at present?

[12] Mae gennyf bapurau i'w dosbarthu i chi hefyd, Gadeirydd.

I also have some papers here to distribute to you, Chair.

[13] **Alun Davies:** Diolch—byddem yn gwerthfawrogi hynny. Diolch am eich cyflwyniad. Un pethau a'm tarodd o ddarllen eich papur oedd yr iaith yr oeddech yn ei defnyddio, ac yr ydym wedi cydnabod hynny. Dywedwch mewn un man,

Alun Davies: Thank you—we would appreciate that. Thank you for your presentation. One thing that struck me from reading your paper was the language that you use, which we have acknowledged. You say at one point,

[14] 'The image of the rural idyll masks a harsh reality'.

[15] Mae hynny'n iaith gref, ac yn iaith na fyddai llawer o bobl yn ei hadnabod nac yn ei chydnabod. A allwch drafod yr 'harsh reality' hwn a disgrifio yr hyn yr ydych yn ei feddwl wrth ddefnyddio'r geiriau hynny?

That is strong language, and language that many people would not recognise or acknowledge. Could you discuss this 'harsh reality' and describe what you mean by using those words?

9.10 a.m.

[16] **Mr H. Thomas:** Gallaf wneud hynny drwy eich cyfeirio at un o'r papurau sydd ger eich bron sy'n cynnwys map lliwgar o lefelau incwm yng nghefn gwlad Cymru ar hyn o bryd. Daw o'r Arsyllfa Wledig ac mae'r lliwiau ysgafn yn dangos lle mae incwm blynyddol yn isel ac mae'r lliwiau tywyll yn

Mr H. Thomas: I can do that by referring you to one of the papers that you have received, which contains a colourful map of income levels in rural Wales at present. It is the work of the Rural Observatory and the light colours show where annual income is low and the darker colours show where, on

dangos lle, ar gyfartaledd, mae'n uwch. Mae'n ddiddorol iawn, o'r safbwynt bod incwm yn un o brif nodweddion amddifadedd, ac mae'r patrwm mewn ardaloedd gwledig yn gwbl glir. Ar y dudalen drosodd, gwelwch ein bod hefyd wedi gwneud rhywfaint o ymchwil am y sefyllfa ddiweddaraf, gan edrych ar fandiau aelwydydd yng Nghymru o safbwynt incwm. Mae'n dangos y ganran sydd yn cael incwm o lai na £10,000, a hefyd ar y dde mae colofn sydd yn dangos y ganran sydd yn cael llai na £15,000. Yr hyn yr ydych yn ei sylweddoli yw bod wyth allan o naw cyngor gwledig mewn sefyllfa waeth o safbwynt incwm na'r cyfartaledd yng Nghymru, sydd yn rhywbeth nad yw'n cael ei amlygu yn dda iawn, efallai. Nid yw'n ffaith sydd yn cael ei amlygu'n aml, ac nid i'w weld yn gyrru polisïau chwaith. Mae'r un peth yn wir os ydych yn cymryd y mesur ehangach o incwm o lai na £15,000. Unwaith eto, mae wyth allan o'r naw cyngor gwledig mewn sefyllfa waeth na'r cyfartaledd yng Nghymru o safbwynt incwm isel.

[17] Mae hynny yn cael ei adlewyrchu hefyd gan ddadansoddiad tebyg a wnaethom ar sail ardal Cyngor Gwynedd yn y map hwn. Mae'r un patrwm yn ymddangos hyd yn oed tu fewn i gyngor gwledig. Hynny yw, mae'r ardaloedd trefol yn bennaf yn wyrdd eu lliw ar y map, sydd yn dangos nad yw problemau o incwm isel mor sylweddol yno. Fodd bynnag, os edrychwch ar yr ardaloedd gwledig, unwaith eto, amlygir bod incwm isel yn tueddu digwydd llawer mwy yno, hyd yn oed tu fewn i gyngor gwledig. Efallai bod angen gwneud gwaith pellach ar hyn.

[18] Felly, mae hynny yn un broblem o ran amlygu a rhoi sylw i broblem incwm. Fodd bynnag, mae hefyd dadl dros wneud mwy o waith am werth yr incwm hwnnw i unigolion, hynny yw, incwm gweddilliol. Nid wyf am fynd i fanylder ar y gwaith yr ydym wedi ei wneud yng Ngwynedd yn ddiweddar yn edrych ar faterion sydd yn codi pan ydych yn byw mewn ardaloedd ymylol, ond mae gwybodaeth yma ynglŷn â'r math o bethau sydd yn effeithio ar incwm gweddilliol. Yr ydym yn sôn am bethau fel costau cludiant—boed yn gar neu yn gludiant cyhoeddus, bydd cludiant yn ganran uwch o incwm gweddilliol unigolion yng nghefn gwlad. Mae'r un peth

average, it is higher. It is very interesting, given that income is one of the main characteristics of deprivation, and the pattern in rural areas is entirely clear. On the next page, you will see that we have also included some research that we have done regarding the latest situation, looking at households in Wales in terms of income bands. It shows the percentage with an income of less than £10,000, and on the right there is a column with the percentage that earns less than £15,000. What you realise is that eight out of the nine rural councils are in a worse situation in terms of income than the Welsh average, which is something that is not particularly well highlighted, perhaps. It is not a fact that is often highlighted, and it does not seem to be driving policy either. The same is true if you consider the broader measure of income of less than £15,000. Once again, eight out of the nine rural councils are worse off than the average in Wales in terms of low income.

That is also reflected in a similar analysis that we conducted about Gwynedd Council area in this map. The same pattern appears even within a rural council. That is, the urban areas are mainly coloured green on the map, which demonstrates that the problems of low income are not as acute there. However, if you look at the rural areas, once again, it becomes apparent that low income tends to be concentrated far more there, even within a rural council. Perhaps further research on this matter is required.

So, that is one problem in terms of highlighting and drawing attention to the problem of income. However, there is also an argument for doing more work with regard to the value of that income to individuals, that is, residual income. I do not want to go into detail on the work that we have carried out in Gwynedd recently looking at issues that arise when you live in peripheral areas, but there is information here on the kind of things that can have an impact on residual income. We are talking about things such as transport costs—whether by car or public transport, transport will account for a higher percentage of individuals' residual income in rural areas.

yn wir am gostau tai. Mae ystadegau wedi eu cyflwyno ym mhapurau Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru sydd yn amlygu'r ffaith fod canran uchel o dlodi tanwydd yng nghefn gwlad. Mae cwestiynau am gostau tai o safbwynt morgais, oherwydd medrwn brofi bod tai yn ddrytach yng nghefn gwlad. Mae nifer o bethau eraill ynglŷn â chostau pethau o ddydd i ddydd. Mae'r rhain i gyd yn angenrheidiol i drigolion cefn gwlad, ond, eto, teimlwn nad oes digon o waith wedi cael ei wneud ar sail genedlaethol i amlygu effaith yr incwm gweddilliol, yr hyn mae pobl yn gallu prynu a sut y mae'n effeithio ar ansawdd eu bywydau o ddydd i ddydd. Mae diffyg o safbwynt y wybodaeth sydd yn cael ei hel ar hyn o bryd. Mae angen mwy o waith holistaidd ar draws Cymru i amlygu'r problemau hyn er mwyn cael y strategaethau ymyrraeth priodol i ddelio gyda'r broblem.

[19] **Alun Davies:** Diolch am hynny. Brynle sydd nesaf.

[20] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Cyn i Brynle ddod i mewn, mae gennyf gwestiwn am y map manylach o Wynedd. Mae'r map hefyd yn dangos bod crynhoed tlodi yn y trefi. Hynny yw, mae'n dangos y gwrthwyneb i raddau. Ym Mangor a Chaernarfon, mae wardiau sy'n dod o fewn Cymunedau yn Gyntaf.

[21] **Mr H. Thomas:** Yr wyf yn cytuno, ond dyna y byddai rhywun yn disgwyl ei weld. Mae hynny'n wybyddus i bawb. Mae'n cael ei adlewyrchu mewn pethau fel Cymunedau'n Gyntaf a chefnogaeth ar gyfer Cymunedau'n Gyntaf.

[22] Yr hyn nad yw'n ei amlygu yw'r ffaith bod problemau enfawr hefyd mewn ardaloedd gwledig. Ble mae'r polisïau cyllido a'r adnoddau i gefnogi'r ymyrraeth briodol ar gyfer y broblem honno? Ein prif neges yw ei bod yn iawn cael y sylw priodol yn ardaloedd trefol Cymru, gan gynnwys yn y Cymoedd, ond beth am gael sylw priodol a chwarae teg ar yr ochr arall, lle mae problem yn bodoli? Os nad oes problem, mae hynny'n ddigon teg.

[23] **Brynle Williams:** In its evidence to this committee, the Commission for Rural Communities in England raised the concern that rurality is often not a consideration in the

The same is true of housing costs. There are statistics in the Welsh Local Government Association papers that highlight the fact that there is a high percentage of fuel poverty in rural areas. There are problems regarding the cost of housing in terms of mortgages, because we can prove that houses are more expensive in rural areas. There are a number of other issues regarding the costs of day-to-day items. These are all necessities for rural residents, but, again, we feel that not enough work has been done nationally to identify the impact on residual income, what people can afford to buy and how that affects their quality of life from day to day. There are deficiencies in the information that is currently collected. More holistic work needs to be done across Wales to identify these problems so that we have the appropriate intervention strategies in place to deal with the problem.

Alun Davies: Thank you for that. Brynle is next.

Alun Ffred Jones: Before Brynle starts, I have a question about the more detailed of Gwynedd. The map also shows that poverty is concentrated in the towns. That is, it shows the opposite to some degree. In Bangor and Caernarfon, there are wards that fall within Communities First.

Mr H. Thomas: I agree, but that is what one would expect to see. That is known to all. It is reflected in such things as Communities First and in support for Communities First.

What is not highlighted is the fact that there are also massive problems in rural areas. Where are the funding policies and resources for appropriate intervention in that problem? Our main message is that it is right that appropriate attention is paid to Wales's urban areas, including the Valleys, but what about appropriate attention and fair play on the other side, where problems also exist? If there is no problem, that is fair enough.

adoption of many Government strategies, unless a strategy is specifically focused on the rural, such as agriculture. In your experience, is the same thing happening in Wales?

[24] **Mr H. Thomas:** Cwestiwn anodd iawn, ond ceisiaf ei ateb. Un broblem sydd gennym yw cyfluniad strategaethau, fel eu bod yn mynd i'r un cyfeiriad pan ddaw i faterion gwledig. Gwyddom fod tlodi yng nghefn gwlad, a gwyddom fod problemau diffyg incwm ac ati, ond mae cwestiwn ynglŷn â chael strategaethau economaidd i fynd i'r un cyfeiriad mewn perthynas â materion gwledig.

Mr H. Thomas: That is a tough question, but I will try to answer it. One problem that we have is with the configuration of strategies, so that they flow in the same direction when it comes to rural issues. We know that there is poverty in rural areas, and we know that there are problems with lack of income and so on, but there is also the matter of channelling economic strategies in the same direction with regard to rural issues.

[25] Er enghraifft, mae'r ddogfen strategaeth ymyrraeth economaidd, 'Cymru: Economi yn Ffynnu', yn sôn am nod i uchafu twf yng Nghymru, sy'n ddigon teg. Mae hefyd yn sôn am nod i ledaenu twf. Ond os ydych yn edrych ar y strategaethau ymyrraeth, gwelwch nad oes llawer o sylw yn cael ei roi i ledaenu twf. Mae hynny'n cael ei adlewyrchu mewn polisiau cyffelyb sy'n dilyn, er enghraifft, y cynllun gofodol. Mae'r cynllun hwnnw'n tueddu i ganolbwyntio ymyrraeth yn yr ardaloedd trefol—am resymau dealladwy, oherwydd y sefyllfa economaidd; gallwch sicrhau gwell twf os ydych yn canolbwyntio'ch ymdrechion, ac mae tystiolaeth i brofi hynny.

For example, the economic intervention strategy document, 'Wales: A Vibrant Economy', mentions an objective to maximise growth in Wales, which is fair enough. It also mentions an objective to spread that growth. However, if you look at intervention strategies, you will see that not much attention is given to disseminating growth. That is reflected in similar, subsequent policies, such as the spatial plan. That plan tends to concentrate intervention on the urban areas—for understandable reasons, because of the economic situation; you can achieve better growth if you concentrate your efforts, and there is evidence to support that.

[26] Ond beth am y Gymru wledig? Ble mae'r polisiau i sicrhau bod rhywbeth addas a chanddo bwrpas yn y strategaethau hynny? Beth sy'n dueddol o ddiwydd yw bod canolbwyntio ymdrechion ar y materion trefol, heb sylw cytbwys wedyn, efallai, i ymyrraeth economaidd ac ati ar yr ochr wledig. Un o'r prif broblemau yr ydym yn ei gweld yw bod WAVE wedi llywio pethau fel y cynllun gofodol, cynllun Môn a Menai ac ati, ac mae hynny'n golygu nad yw twf yn cael ei ledaenu. Mae hynny'n codi cwestiwn ynglŷn â gobaith ar gyfer cefn gwlad. Hoffwn symud ymlaen, rhyw ben, i ystyried pen draw'r daith o ran diboblogi cefn gwlad.

But what about rural Wales? Where are the policies to ensure something suitable and purposeful in those strategies? What tends to happen is that efforts are concentrated on urban issues, and economic intervention is perhaps not then given balanced consideration on the rural side. One of the main problems that we see is that WAVE has steered things such as the spatial plan, the Môn a Menai scheme and so on, and that means no dissemination of growth. That raises the matter of what hope there is for rural areas. I would like to move on, at some point, to consider what lies at the end of the road with regard to rural depopulation.

[27] **Mr S. Thomas:** There is a range of strategies that we can point to, and Harry has highlighted a number of them. Another that you could point out, on which the association has some disagreement with the Assembly, was the raising attainment and individual standards in education in Wales grant. This was a classic grant set to tackle critical mass, but did not dig down to some of the detail. RAISE was based on the concept of free school meals, but obviously, in Valleys areas and in urban areas, there would be a higher concentration of those who take free school meals. The problem with the distribution of that grant was that, as it was based on that one criterion, it partly disadvantaged rural areas. Part of our argument was that,

when it comes to grants such as that, it must either be left to the authorities to determine for themselves the distribution or there must be a greater range of distribution factors.

[28] **Alun Davies:** May I just follow that up with a question? RAISE is a good example of where the Government's intentions were good—I do not think that there would be any argument about that—and the Government's view was that, if you distributed it too thinly, the impact would dissipate. I take it that you do not accept that argument.

9.20 a.m.

[29] **Mr S. Thomas:** What happened with the RAISE grant was that, because of the nature of its distribution, it threw up many perverse effects. I live in Blaenau Gwent and five of the six comprehensive schools in Blaenau Gwent got the RAISE grant and one did not. That was happening increasingly in rural Wales, because of the lack of critical mass in terms of the key indices. Our view at the time, and we argued it very strongly, was that the indices should be much more wide ranging, which would give greater cognisance to rural issues. We had long discussions in the rural forum about the impact of sparsity on rural services, but that clearly did not figure in the distribution of that grant. There is a range of other factors that can be taken into account when you distribute grants that would see much more equality and equity of distribution in terms of rural areas. We recently re-examined the economic development formula on a totally different formula basis, on gross value added. Gwynedd went from a situation of losing something like £500,000 on an annual basis to gaining quite a lot more. That was because of a formula change.

[30] **Brynle Williams:** In some of the evidence that we have taken, and I think that that is what you are saying now, that pride—for want of a better word—is playing a part in a certain degree of rural poverty. Families are not claiming what they should be claiming, because they think that there is a social stigma to it. It is the old adage: you cannot live on the view. Is this issue cropping up? You were saying that you are seeing it in the Valleys, but in the evidence that we have already received, quite a few contributors have said the same thing. What are your comments on that?

[31] **Mr H. Thomas:** Yr wyf yn meddwl bod angen gwneud mwy o ymchwil. Yng Ngwynedd, er enghraifft, yr ydym wedi cyflogi swyddogion penodol i fynd allan i sicrhau bod pensiynwyr yn defnyddio eu hawliau o safbwynt budd-daliadau'r dreth gyngor a budd-daliadau tai ac yn y blaen. Mae mwyafrif ein pensiynwyr yn digwydd byw yng nghefn gwlad. Os ydych yn rhannu Gwynedd yn ardaloedd llai, yr ardal mwyaf trefol yw ardal hen gyngor dosbarth Arfon, ac mae 20 y cant o'r boblogaeth dros oedran ymddeol. Os ydych yn mynd i'r ardaloedd sy'n bennaf wledig, sef Dwyfor a Meirionnydd, mae 30 y cant o'r boblogaeth dros oed ymddeol ac felly mae mwy o siawns fod tan hawlio yno. Mae angen hefyd cael gwell tystiolaeth ac ymestyn y mathau o bethau yr ydym yn eu gwneud o safbwynt mynd allan at bobl i hwyluso'r defnydd o fudd-daliadau.

Mr H. Thomas: I think that more research is needed. In Gwynedd, for example, we have employed officers specifically to go out to ensure that pensioners take-up their entitlements in terms of council tax benefit and housing benefit and so on. The majority of our pensioners happen to live in rural areas. If you were to divide Gwynedd into smaller areas, the most urban area is that of the old district council of Arfon, where 20 per cent of the population is over retirement age. If you go to the mostly rural areas, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd, 30 per cent of the population in those areas is over retirement age and therefore there is a greater chance that they are not claiming there. There is also a need for better evidence and for an expansion of the sorts of things that we do in terms of reaching out to people to assist with benefit take-up.

[32] Ar y cwestiwn ynglŷn â Rhagori, yr In answer to the question about RAISE, what

hyn a oedd yn ddiddorol am Rhagori oedd i Lywodraeth y Cynulliad rhyddhau ystadegau, fis neu ddau cyn i'r grant gael ei gyhoeddi, ynglŷn â'r berthynas rhwng prydau am ddim, sef y gyrrwr a ddefnyddiwyd, a chyrhaeddiad addysgol. Yr hyn a oedd yn ddiddorol am yr ystadegau hynny oedd bod y berthynas rhwng cyrhaeddiad addysgol a'r prydau am ddim yn gryfach hyd at y pwynt lle yr oedd 20 y cant yn hawlio prydau am ddim mewn ysgolion ac yn wannach tu hwnt i'r trothwy 20 y cant. Eto, defnyddiwyd y trothwy uwchben 20 y cant ar gyfer dyrannu'r adnoddau. Yr wyf yn meddwl fy mod yn cofio'n iawn mai dyna oedd y ffeithiau.

[33] Yr ail bwynt ynglŷn â RAISE yw hyn: yr wyf yn meddwl bod cwestiwn cyffredinol ynglŷn â'n hagwedd at amddifadedd a ffyrdd cyfannol o ymdrin ag ef. Mae gennym sawl ffynhonnell o adnoddau ar hyn o bryd ar gyfer amddifadedd—y grant amddifadedd, Rhagori, Cymunedau yn Gyntaf a sawl grant penodol arall. Mae'r tri cyntaf hynny yn gyfrifol am £100 miliwn ar hyn o bryd. Pe baent yn cael eu dyrannu ar sail poblogaeth, byddai pob cyngor gwledig, ar gyfartaledd, yn cael £1.5 miliwn ychwanegol y flwyddyn. Y prif bwynt yw sut mae'r rhain oll yn rhyngweithio i gael yr effaith priodol ar amddifadedd. Cyhoeddodd y Joseph Rowntree Foundation bapur ar hyn fis Medi diwethaf—mae'n debyg eich bod wedi ei weld. Mae'r papur yn dweud, o safbwynt cyrhaeddiad addysgol perthynol, dim ond 14 y cant a esbonnir gan ansawdd yr hyn sy'n digwydd mewn ysgolion o ran ansawdd ysgolion ac ansawdd profiadau disgyblion mewn ysgolion. Mae'n atgyfnerthu'r un pwynt eto mewn papur a gyhoeddwyd fis Rhagfyr diwethaf ynglŷn â thlodi plant. Bydd mwyafrif y dylanwadau ar gyrhaeddiad addysgol yn digwydd y tu hwnt i'r ysgol.

[34] Mae ymchwil wedi'i wneud yn America, er enghraifft, ar nifer y geiriau y bydd plentyn wedi eu clywed erbyn ei fod yn bedair oed. Os yw'n dod o gefndir dosbarth canol, bydd wedi clywed 40 miliwn o eiriau—mae rhywun wedi cyfathrebu â'r plentyn ac mae'r plentyn wedi datblygu hunanhyder a sgiliau rhyngweithio a chymdeithasol, ac yn y blaen. O ran plant o gefndir budd-daliadau, mae'r ffigur tua 15

was interesting about RAISE was that, a month or two before the grant was announced, the Assembly Government released statistics about the relationship between free school meals, which was the driver used, and educational attainment. What was interesting about those statistics was that the relationship between educational attainment and free meals was stronger up until the point when 20 per cent were claiming free school meals and it was weaker beyond the threshold of 20 per cent. However, the threshold of above 20 per cent was used to allocate the resources. I think that I am remembering the facts correctly.

The second point about RAISE is this: I think that there is a general question about our attitude towards deprivation and holistic ways of dealing with it. We have currently several sources of resource for deprivation—the deprivation grant, RAISE, Communities First and several other specific grants. The first three currently account for £100 million. If they were allocated according to population, every rural council would receive, on average, an additional £1.5 million a year. The most important point is how all of these interact to achieve the appropriate effect on deprivation. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation published a paper on this in September last year, which I suppose you must have seen. The paper says, in terms of relative educational attainment, that only 14 per cent of it is explained by the quality of what goes on in schools in terms of the quality of schools and the quality of the pupil experience in schools. It reinforces the same point in a paper on child poverty that it published in December of last year. The majority of those things that influence educational achievement happen outside school.

Research from America shows, for example, the number of words that a child will have heard by the time they reach four years of age. If they come from a middle class background, they will have heard 40 million words—someone will have communicated with the child and the child will have developed self-confidence and networking and social skills, and so on. For children from benefit-claiming families, the figure is about

miliwn o eiriau. Felly, mae'r bwlch wedi dechrau cyn i blant gyrraedd carreg drws yr ysgol.

[35] Yr ydym yn falch o gefnogi cynlluniau fel Cychwyn Cadarn. Os ydych yn meddwl yn strategol ynglŷn â buddsoddiadau, mae angen buddsoddi mwy yn y blynyddoedd cynnar hynny er mwyn sicrhau bod plant yn gallu manteisio ar y cyfleoedd sydd yn digwydd yn yr ysgol. Mae'n eironig ein bod yn gwario mwy y pen ar fyfyrwyr mewn prifysgolion ac ar blant ysgol nac ar blant cyn iddynt fynd i'r ysgol. Gellid gofyn a ddylem droi hynny o amgylch yn gyfan gwbl.

[36] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae gosodiad ac addewid yn 'Cymru'n Un'

15 million words. So, the gap has begun before children get to school.

We are pleased to support schemes such as Sure Start. If you think strategically about investments, we need greater investment in those early years to ensure that children can take advantage of opportunities in school. It is ironic that we spend more per capita on university students and schoolchildren than on pre-school children. One could ask whether that should be completely reversed.

Alun Ffred Jones: There is a statement and a promise in 'One Wales'

[37] '...to identify and address the particular needs of deep rural areas'.

[38] Mae'r cynllun gweithredu yn sôn am drafod hyn gydag awdurdodau lleol yn gynnar yn 2008. A yw'r trafodaethau hynny wedi dechrau, ac a ydych yn disgwyl canlyniad iddynt?

The action plan mentions discussing this with local authorities early in 2008. Have those discussions begun, and are you expecting an outcome to them?

[39] **Mr S. Thomas:** We had part of the discussion in the all-Wales rural forum with Elin Jones, and there will be continued dialogue with her. There is some debate about what is meant by the term 'deep rural areas'; we must have a clear definition of what 'One Wales' points to in that regard. Those discussions are ongoing. Many other discussions are ongoing in terms of how we take forward this agenda, and some of the things that we also have concerns about when it comes to rural issues. Going back to the education point, the Assembly commissioned a report by Professor Glen Bramley on school funding issues. That report uses a very limited range of indices and if it was to be implemented, you would see decimation around rural authorities. The association has said—as have urban authorities, to be fair—that it does not agree with the methodology of that report, because of the distributional impacts and the rather questionable methodology behind it. For example, it would see Cardiff, in urban terms, gain £12 million but Pembrokeshire would lose an equal amount of money on a distribution formula. That would cause devastation to a local education authority. We must have those types of debates with the Assembly, because you cannot implement a report of that nature, and have discussions of that nature, with that type of distributional effect; you would effectively bankrupt a local authority.

[40] **Alun Ffred Jones:** You said that you have had discussions with Elin Jones in the all-Wales rural forum, but the things that you have mentioned go far beyond the reach of Elin Jones's remit, and would involve other members of the Assembly Government. Is that the intention?

[41] **Mr S. Thomas:** That is definitely the intention, and, from our point of view, these issues have been raised with a variety of Assembly committees over time. If I could put it in a crass way, I think that it points to the fact that, for local government, rural issues are a corporate issue; they are not in a rural box—they go across an authority. In terms of gross net revenue expenditure over recent years—which Harry could point to—in the bottom part of the league table would be some of the rural authorities. That said, some rural authorities will also

appear in the top part of the table, but there is a trend in terms of how we look at funding where rural authorities have fared very badly in recent years. That has got to be a strategic and corporate issue for local government.

9.30 a.m.

[42] **Alun Davies:** If you have information on the Bramley report or a critique of it, it would be useful for the committee to receive any notes. You are aware that we will be conducting a relatively short investigation into small schools, which is starting next month, and it would be useful to have your views on Bramley as part of that investigation. I am sorry that I interrupted you.

[43] **Mr S. Thomas:** We will send you a paper.

[44] **Mr H. Thomas:** Gadeirydd, hoffwn ymateb gydag un sylw sy'n atgyfnerthu'r pwynt a wnaed gennyf eisoes. Mae adroddiad Bramley yn amlygu'r cysylltiad cryf rhwng tlodi plant a chyrhaeddiad addysgol, ond dadleuwn ei fod yn gamgymeriad defnyddio'r ffactorau gwariant ar ysgolion a chyrhaeddiad addysgol er mwyn meintoli'r arian sydd angen ei ailgylchu o fewn y fformiwla, gan fod perthynas wan rhyngddynt. Arweiniodd hynny at y casgliad, o ran y senario gwaethaf, y dylid tynnu £90 miliwn oddi ar y naw cyngor gwledig, sef ryw £9 miliwn yr un, a byddai hynny wedyn yn cael ei ailgylchu i gynghorau eraill. Nid yw'r ffeithiau sy'n sail i'r astudiaeth yn cefnogi'r fethodoleg honno o gyflawni'r nod o wella cyrhaeddiad, ac mae'r gwaith y soniais amdano gan Sefydliad Joseph Rowntree yn dangos bod angen ymyrraeth y tu hwnt i ffiniau ysgolion, yn y gymuned, yn enwedig o ran magu plant a phobl ifanc. Efallai bod modd cyrraedd y nod llawer yn well drwy ailgylchu llawer llai o gyllid. Nid ydym yn dadlau yn erbyn y nod o wella cyrhaeddiad addysgol mewn ardaloedd o amddifadedd, pa le bynnag y bônt—boed yn y Cymoedd, neu mewn ardaloedd trefol neu wledig.

Mr H. Thomas: Chair, I just want to respond with one comment that reinforces the point that I have already made. The Bramley report highlights the strong link between child poverty and educational achievement, but I would argue that it is a mistake to use the factors of school expenditure and educational achievement to identify how much funding needs to be recycled within the formula, as there is a weak relationship between the two. That led to the conclusion that, in the worst-case scenario, £90 million should be taken away from the nine rural councils, which is some £9 million each, and that that would then be recycled to other councils. The facts that form the basis of the study do not support that methodology to achieve the aim of improving achievement, and the work that I referred to by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that intervention is needed beyond the boundaries of schools, in the community, especially in relation to raising children and young people. So, perhaps you could reach your target far easier by recycling far less funding. We do not dispute the target of improving educational achievement in deprived areas, wherever they are—whether in the Valleys, or in urban or rural areas.

[45] **Alun Davies:** Brynle, before I bring in Mike German, are you content with that?

[46] **Brynle Williams:** I just have one thing to add, Chair. We have convergence funding and what have you coming up. Could initiatives such as Communities Next and the rural development plan be improved so that a better target or deal could be achieved? What are the issues facing rural communities in this regard?

[47] **Mr S. Thomas:** One issue is that one of the largest rural authorities in Wales, Powys, does not qualify for the full range of convergence funding even though it is in the competitiveness area. You might also notice that a lot of the new convergence funding is based on the Lisbon agenda, which is jobs-based. If you do not have the basic level of

industry and the economic infrastructure at a local level, access to that convergence funding is not that straightforward. As a result, you will see the predominant amount of convergence funding go to the Valleys and west Wales. There is no doubt about that, because of the situation there and the ability of those authorities to bring together large strategic projects. When you track the level of convergence funding and Objective 1 funding in Wales historically, you will see that rural authorities have benefited, but not in the same way as some other authorities have. That is a structural weakness in how convergence and Objective 1 funding is rolled out.

[48] **Michael German:** I have four questions that I want to ask one after the other. They start broad and end up narrow, and the answers to the first question may influence what I ask in the second and third questions.

[49] First, if we take it that there is no agreed definition of ‘rural’—given that no-one can tell us what ‘rural’ is, and people use different definitions in different circumstances—do you think that it is important that we should have such a definition? However, if you have a definition of ‘rural’, it will impact terribly on how you allocate resources. If I have read what you say in your document and listened to what you have said this morning correctly, there are major faults in how the Welsh Assembly Government allocates resources in Wales, because of the methodologies that are used, and there ought to be a more sophisticated approach. Apart from telling me whether you think that there should be a definition of ‘rural’, I want you to start by explaining what level of agreement there is in the Welsh Local Government Association about what should replace the current methods of distribution of all resources for Wales, and what sort of system you would like to see put in its place.

[50] **Mr S. Thomas:** There is a vast level of disagreement. Harry has mentioned the deprivation grant, for example. Let us be candid: the deprivation grant is there for many reasons, and there is no doubt that some of them are partly political. The grant varies. Some authorities receive well over £1 million, while Monmouthshire gets the value of a postage stamp. However, if you try to remove that grant, which has now become core funding for many local authorities, you will find huge problems.

[51] We need to look at the totality of what we have got. You used to sit on the consultative forum on finance and so you will know that, through our working groups, we seek to review these things constantly. However, the problem is that, once you try to unpick these issues, you open up a can of worms. Given that there are 22 authorities, there are inevitably huge swings between distribution formulae. In recent years, when we have these huge swings, the association has tried to dampen the impact of distributional changes by staging them in. The classic example would be Powys, which lost £8 million recently under the roads formula, but that loss was staged over three years. We had to get the agreement of the other 21 authorities to stage that, but it is a lot of money to lose. However, the formulae need to be updated and considered constantly.

[52] Is there an appetite to look at the totality of the formula? We had a look at it in 2000 with the Pion Economics study. We constantly try to update it, but the view of many members on some of the financial formulae is conveyed by that famous phrase, ‘A period of quiet would be most welcome’. They are of the view that we have had a lot of turbulence in recent years, and they would be happy just to shut it down for a while. However, shutting it down calls into question the viability of the formula. So, that is our dilemma. You have gone straight to the heart of the matter in that it is extremely difficult to change this. We used to say to you when you were on the consultative forum on finance that only two people in Wales understand local government finance and one of those is dead.

[53] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Who is the other one? [*Laughter.*]

[54] **Michael German:** I will not touch on the postage stamp, which I have seen on a leaflet somewhere in Monmouthshire.

[55] Secondly, the dilemma is that you have come forward with major issues about how the formula is distributed, and then you say that you cannot recommend how it should be redistributed. That is a fundamental problem that local government and the Assembly Government have to address. Let us consider the major problem, namely that the index of multiple deprivation drives most of the deprivation indicators. You say in paragraph 20 of your submission that often people in poverty and deprivation live alongside individuals with a great deal of affluence. The deprivation indicators do not capture this problem. So, may I put you on the spot here and now and ask whether you want the Welsh index of multiple deprivation to be altered so that it recognises individuals living in deprivation alongside those living in affluence? In other words, it is a Monmouthshire problem—to go back to the postage stamp—so does the Welsh Local Government Association want to see that happen?

[56] **Mr H. Thomas:** Gallaf gadarnhau'r hyn sydd yn y papurau yr ydym wedi eu cyflwyno, sef bod angen rhyw fath o fesur ar gyfer perifferoldeb i eistedd wrth ymyl mynegai amddifadedd lluosog Cymru. O ran yr ymgynghoriad am newid y mynegai a wnaed yr haf diwethaf, mae'n ddiddorol gweld bod tudalen 5 o'r ddogfen yn sôn am amddifadedd incwm o safbwynt mesur nifer y sawl sy'n hawlio budd-daliadau. Mae sôn bod 17 y cant o boblogaeth Caerdydd yn dioddef oherwydd yr amddifadedd hwn. Mae hefyd yn amlygu'r ffaith bod union yr un ganran yn Ynys Môn. Fodd bynnag, oherwydd natur a phwrpas y mynegai amddifadedd lluosog, nid yw'r rhif hwnnw yn Ynys Môn yn cael cydnabyddiaeth, ond beth am yr 17 y cant yn Ynys Môn sy'n dioddef o'r amddifadedd hwnnw? A ydynt yn cyfrif? A oes angen chwarae teg arnynt?

Mr H. Thomas: I can confirm what is in the papers that we have submitted, namely that there needs to be some kind of measure of peripherality to sit alongside the Welsh index of multiple deprivation. On the consultation that was conducted last summer on changing the index, it is interesting to see that page 5 of the document mentions income deprivation in relation to measuring the number of benefit claimants. It is claimed that 17 per cent of the population of Cardiff suffers because of that deprivation. It also identifies the fact that there is exactly the same percentage in Anglesey. However, given the nature and purpose of the index of multiple deprivation, that number in Anglesey is not acknowledged, but what about that 17 per cent in Anglesey who suffer that deprivation? Do they count? Do they need fair play?

[57] Unwaith eto, yr ydym yn sôn am yr angen i ganoli amddifadedd lluosog mewn rhai mannau, oherwydd mae'n debyg bod goblygiadau polisi o ran yr isddiwylliant sy'n cael ei greu a'r diffyg dyhead ac yn y blaen. Fodd bynnag, beth am y sefyllfa lle mae gwasgaru? Yr un broblem ydyw, ac mae angen cymorth ar yr un nifer o bobl. Mae'r ffaith eu bod wedi'u gwasgaru yn golygu eu bod yn cael eu heithrio yn gyfan gwbl. Credwn fod angen parhau â'r mynegai lluosog fel y mae'n sefyll, ond hefyd mae angen creu un newydd ar gyfer ardaloedd sydd â phroblemau perifferoldeb.

Once again, we are talking about the need to centralise multiple deprivation in some places, because there appear to be policy implications to that in relation to the sub-culture that is created and the lack of aspiration and so on. However, what about the situation where there is dispersal? It is the same problem, with the same number of people requiring assistance. The fact that they are dispersed means that they are completely exempted. We believe that we need to continue with the multiple index as it stands, but we also need to create a new index for areas with peripherality problems.

9.40 a.m.

[58] **Michael German:** That leads nicely on to my third question, which was about sparsity and peripherality—there is a difference, is there not? Sparsity is population based and

peripherality is geographically based. Since you have said that you want to change the Welsh index of multiple deprivation and that you want to see a more sophisticated model, can you describe the difference between a sparsity model and a peripherality model? Why have you gone for a peripherality model rather than a sparsity model? How would they work alongside each other? Is it simply a matter of weightings, and so you twiddle the knob of sparsity more than that of peripherality or vice versa? How do you think it might work?

[59] **Mr H. Thomas:** Mae'n debyg y gall Steve roi'r ateb technegol. Ef yw'r arbenigwr yn y maes hwn. Fodd bynnag, mae gennyf un sylw, sef bod natur amddifadedd yn gallu bod yn wahanol mewn ardaloedd gwledig. Gallaf roi enghraifft i chi: mae ystadegau i'w cael ym mhapurau y bore yma sy'n dangos bod llawer mwy o swyddi rhan amser mewn ardaloedd gwledig, ac mae ansawdd y swyddi yn wahanol yng nghefn gwlad, felly. Gallant fod yn dymhorol, yn rhan amser, a gall y cyflogau fod yn is. Sut y dylid dal y broblem honno? Mae cyfleoedd i weithio yn codi yn aml mewn ardaloedd trefol lle ceir amddifadedd cyflogaeth, ond nid yw'r un cyfleoedd yn bodoli mewn ardaloedd ymylol. Mae hynny'n effeithio ar ddyfodol cymunedau, gan fod pobl ifanc yn gadael os nad oes swyddi o ansawdd ar gael i'w cadw yn eu cymunedau. Credaf fod llawer o ryngweithio yma a chredaf fod papur Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru yn cynnig tua phum pennawd ar gyfer mynegai newydd o ran perifferoldeb.

Mr H. Thomas: I am sure that Steve can come in to give you the technical response. He is the expert in this field. However, I have one specific comment in that the nature of deprivation can be different in rural areas. I can give you an example: there are statistics in this morning's papers that demonstrate that rural areas have far more part-time jobs, and so the quality of the jobs available in rural areas is different. They can be seasonal, part time and the wages can be low. How should that problem be captured? Opportunities to work are often available in urban areas, where there is employment deprivation, but those same opportunities do not exist in peripheral areas. That has an impact on the future of those communities, because young people leave if there are no quality jobs to retain them in their communities. There is a lot of interaction here and I think that the Welsh Local Government Association's paper offers five headings for a new index that would deal with peripherality.

[60] **Mr S. Thomas:** As an expert—no, but, for my sins, I am the company secretary of the local government data unit, which compiles the index, and I am surprised that Harry has not called it the 'Welsh index of rural mass-destruction' today, which is his usual characterisation of it. I will give you the advantages of the index first. It has been revised in recent years and it takes on board a greater range of small areas' statistics than it previously did. It used to be a ward-based index primarily, but it now drills down to a much greater level of examination. The index, however, is built from a range of factors that does not put things such as sparsity at a premium, and I think that we accept that. One discussion that we have been having over recent months and years is with Andrew Stephens, the director of the local government data unit, to see whether some of these factors could be brought on board. Having said that, some authorities are hugely dissatisfied with the index; others are perfectly content with it. It was ever thus. We have to ensure that we factor in new research wherever and whenever we can.

[61] To go back to your earlier point, one thing that you could do to factor in more attention to rural issues in relation to funding is rural-proof new and specific emerging grants. The Assembly now has £642 million-worth of specific grants in local government, and the grant conditions are the key to taking that forward. If you get the correct grant conditions in place, you can ensure a much fairer distribution. It will be interesting to see what grant conditions the Assembly Government sets for the foundation stage, for example.

[62] **Michael German:** I agree with rural-proofing, except that we do not have a definition of 'rural', which is part of the problem. You have come nice and neatly into my

fourth question.

[63] You have talked about having more research in this area. If we need more research to understand the model better and to be able to manoeuvre the model better, should the data unit undertake that research? Should any other body or part of the Welsh Assembly Government do that? What about the Wales Rural Observatory, which was meant to deal with this issue, which was why it was established in the first place? Is it doing its job properly? Can it give you the information that you need to be able to develop a more sophisticated model? What would your recommendations be on where that research locus should be? If you were giving it its remit, what would your top lines be?

[64] **Mr S. Thomas:** In terms of its work programme, the data unit does not concentrate on pieces of research that are specific to rural areas or urban areas; it concentrates on research that applies across the piece. Its major research project at present is the roll-out of the Ffynnon software, which is a performance management system. So, I am not certain whether the data unit has the expertise to do that. We have had discussions in the past about how we inform some of the discussions around the financial formulae. I am pleased that the rural observatory is in place but I do not have enough dealings with it to tell you whether it is excellent, good, bad or poor. I just do not know. We have talked to the University of York in the past about how we take forward some of the new discussions that we are having on financial formulae. Some of that expertise needs to be brought in.

[65] **Mr H. Thomas:** Efallai y cwestiwn priodol yw nid pwy sy'n gwneud yr ymchwil ond pa ymchwil sydd yn cael ei wneud? Mae hynny'n codi'r cwestiwn o bwy sy'n comisiynu'r ymchwil hwnnw yn y lle cyntaf. Mae grwpiau o ystadegwyr yn Llywodraeth y Cynulliad ac Arsyllfa Wledig Cymru yn gwneud y gwaith y maent yn credu y bydd o ddiddordeb i bobl, ond pwy sydd yn mynd ati o ran yr agwedd holistaidd er mwyn comisiynu'r ymchwil briodol? Dyna le mae'r gwagle ar hyn o bryd: nid yw'n fater o nifer y cyrff sydd gennym â'r arbenigrwydd i wneud y gwaith, ond o gomisiynu y gwaith priodol er mwyn i'r problemau cael eu hystyried.

Mr H. Thomas: Perhaps the appropriate question is not who does the research but what research is being done? That raises the question of who commissions the research in the first place. Groups of statisticians in the Assembly Government and the Wales Rural Observatory do the work that they believe is of interest to people, but who takes the holistic approach to commission the appropriate research? That is where there is a gap at present: it is not so much a matter of the number of bodies we have with the expertise to do this work, but of the appropriate work being commissioned in order for the problems to be addressed.

[66] Mae hynny'n dod â fi at bwynt arall sydd gennym, sydd yn cael ei grynhoi i ryw raddau yn y tabl diwethaf ond un yn y papur yr ydych wedi'i dderbyn y bore yma. Gwelwch fap o newid naturiol yn y boblogaeth yng Ngwynedd. Mae ar y tudalen diwethaf ond un. Mae'r llefydd coch yn dangos newid naturiol positif. Yn y llefydd gwledig, y llefydd du, mae lleihad yn y boblogaeth oherwydd newidiadau naturiol, sef marwolaethau a genedigaethau. Efallai y byddech yn dweud, 'Dyna beth yr ydych yn disgwyl ei weld'. Fodd bynnag, y cwestiwn mae'n codi imi yw: beth yw diben draw y daith? Pryd fyddwn yn cyrraedd trothwy lle mae cymunedau yn anghynaliadwy o safbwynt y proffil demograffig? Yr ydym yn

That brings me to another of my points, which is summarised to a certain extent in the last but one table in the paper that you have received this morning. You will see a map of the natural shift in the population of Gwynedd. It is on the last but one page. The red areas show a positive natural shift. In the rural areas, the black areas, there is a reduction in population because of natural changes, that is births and deaths. You might say, 'That is what you would expect to see'. However, the question that it raises for me is: what is the ultimate point of this journey? When will we reach a threshold where communities become unsustainable in terms of the demographic profile? We are starting to see evidence in Meirionnydd, for example,

dechrau gweld tystiolaeth ym Meirionydd, er enghraifft, ein bod yn methu â recriwtio gofalwyr cartref oherwydd diffyg pobl yn y grŵp oedran i wneud y gwaith, a hefyd cynnydd yn y gofyn. Efallai fod angen darn o waith i edrych ar y gorwel a gwneud rhyw fath o *scenario planning* yn edrych 10 i 15 mlynedd i lawr y lein. Mae angen gofyn am yr hyn fydd yn digwydd os bydd y tueddiadau presennol o ran yr economi, cymdeithas a'r demograffeg yn parhau, gyda'r polisiâu presennol yn eu lle. Ble fydd hynny'n ein gadael yn y pen draw? Beth fedrwn wneud i liniaru'r broblem, gan dderbyn na fedrwnch nofio yn erbyn y llanw. Mae rhai o'r grymoedd hyn yn rhy gryf ac ni fedrwnch wneud dim amdanynt, ond, gyda rhai eraill, pe medrwnch gweld lle y byddem yn mynd mewn 15 mlynedd byddech heddiw yn dechrau hadu'r fath o strategaethau a ymyraethau polisi a fydd yn lleihau'r niwed. Mae pethau y gallwch eu gwneud o'r safbwynt hwnnw.

[67] Rhoddaf enghraifft byw o un o'r problemau sydd gennym yng Ngwynedd, sef trefniadaeth ysgolion—yr wyf yn gweld bod un neu ddau Aelod yn cymryd diddordeb yn y maes hwn. Mae'n rhaid i gynghorau gwledig ymateb i'r hyn sydd wedi digwydd yn y gorffennol—y tueddiadau demograffig a chymdeithasol sydd wedi digwydd ers degawdau. Fodd bynnag, wrth wneud hynny, a phan yr ydym yn ceisio ennill ewyllys da a chefnogaeth y gymuned, efallai fod pobl yn meddwl ein bod yn hyrwyddo'r dirywiad. Wedyn, nid oes gobaith i'r dyfodol. Beth fydd yn torri'r cylch hwnnw i'r dyfodol?

9.50 a.m.

[68] Mae'n rhaid inni greu rhyw fath o obaith ar gyfer cefn gwlad Cymru, fel bod pobl yn derbyn bod yn rhaid ymateb wrth edrych yn ôl, ac yn gweld i'r dyfodol bod ewyllys gwirioneddol i wneud rhywbeth yn y tymor hir, a bod polisiâu cyffrous i wireddu hynny. Er enghraifft, pe baech yn dyfeisio model ar gyfer trothwyon critigol o safbwynt y cymysgedd poblogaeth mewn cymunedau penodol, efallai eich bod yn dynodi statws arbennig ar gyfer cynllunio yno ar gyfer tai newydd.

[69] Mae pethau eraill y gallwch eu

that we cannot recruit home carers because of a shortage of people in the age group to do the work, but also an increase in demand. Perhaps a piece of work is needed to look at the horizon and to do some sort of scenario planning looking at 10 to 15 years down the line. We need to ask what will happen if the current trends continue in terms of demographics, the economy and society, and with the current policies are in place. Where will that ultimately leave us? What can we do to alleviate the problem, accepting that you cannot swim against the tide? Some of these forces are too strong and you cannot do anything about them but, with others, if you could see where we would be in 15 years' time you would start to put in place the sorts of strategies and policy interventions that will limit the damage. There are things that you can do from that point of view.

I will give a live example of one of the problems that we have in Gwynedd, which is schools organisation—I see that one or two Members take an interest in this area. Rural councils have to respond to what has happened in the past—the demographic and social trends that have occurred for decades. However, in doing that, and when we are trying to gain the goodwill and support of the community, we could be seen to be promoting the decline. Then there is no hope for the future. What will break that vicious circle for the future?

We have to create some sort of hope for people in rural Wales, so that people accept that you have to respond to past trends, and see that in the future there is a real will to do something for the long term, and that there are exciting policies to achieve that. For example, if you came up with a model for critical thresholds in terms of the population mix within specific communities, you might designate a particular status for planning there for new houses.

There are other things that you can do in

gwneud o ran trethi ail gartrefi, sy'n lleihau'r gofyn ac yn creu incwm a all gael ei ailgylchu. Mae hynny'n digwydd yn Lloegr a'r Alban ers blynyddoedd, ac ni fuasai'n gost ychwanegol i Lywodraeth y Cynulliad. Buasai hynny'n galluogi adnoddau ar gyfer ymateb i rai o'r problemau sy'n bodoli ynglŷn â thai fforddiadwy yng nghefn gwlad. Yn ein papur, mae cymhareb yn nodi'r prisiau tai diweddaraf ac enillion pobl, sy'n dangos yn glir fod y broblem fwyaf yn yr ardaloedd gwledig; mae'r map yn amlygu'r pwynt hwn.

terms of taxing second homes, which reduces demand and creates an income that can be recycled. That has been happening in England and Scotland for many years, and it would be at no additional cost to the Assembly Government. That would allow resources to respond to some of the problems that exist with affordable housing in rural areas. In our paper, there is a comparison that notes the latest house prices and people's earnings, which shows clearly that the main problem is in the rural areas; the map highlights this point.

[70] Felly, mae angen gobaith a gweledigaeth ar gyfer y dyfodol, er mwyn gallu ymgysylltu â'r bobl sy'n gorfod newid i'r dyfodol—er mwyn dal i fyny â'r gorffennol—ond sydd angen rhyw fath o obaith ar gyfer y dyfodol, a gwybod lle yr ydym yn mynd.

Therefore, we need hope and vision for the future, in order to engage with the people who have to change for the future—in order to catch up with the past—but who need some sort of hope for the future, and to know where we are going.

[71] **Michael German:** I was sensing that Steve was making us an offer, namely that the WLGA senses that there is a need for future research, and that that should be commissioned. Would it be possible to accept Steve's kind offer of the WLGA providing us with a note on what research should be commissioned in order to be able to deal with some of these issues, which underpin some of the problems?

[72] **Ms Alleyne:** On the Welsh index of multiple deprivation, there are concerns that the index is used to influence the amount of funding that is available: for example, Communities First. As such, if rural authorities are not fairly reflected, there is a potential of them losing out on funding. One issue that you have been looking at specifically in this inquiry is the impact on child poverty. In June or July, the Welsh Assembly Government and the data unit will be bringing out a child index of multiple deprivation, which is based, similarly, on the Welsh index. It will be interesting to see how far that has been able to capture some of the deprivation and poverty that exists among children in rural areas. We will therefore need to look at that when that first index comes out in June or July.

[73] **Brynle Williams:** I fynd yn ôl at yr hyn a ddywedasoch, Mr Thomas, mae cynllunio yn ganolog i hyn. Fel y mae eich diagram yn ei ddangos, ac, fel y dywedasoch, mae pobl wedi symud o gefn gwlad i'r trefi dros y blynyddoedd. Mae pobl wedi ymgyfoethogi hefyd, ac mae'r rheini sy'n fwy cyfoethog wedi symud mewn i gefn gwlad. Mae'n rhaid inni yn awr, gyda ChLILC, cymunedau, a chynghorau, edrych ar y cynlluniau hyn. Dyna pam yr ydym yma heddiw—mae'n pentrefi yn marw ar eu traed.

Brynle Williams: Going back to what you said, Mr Thomas, planning is central to this issue. As your diagram shows, and, as you said, people have moved from rural areas into the towns over the years. People have also become more affluent, and those who are more affluent have moved into rural areas. We must now, with the WLGA, communities, and councils, look at these plans. This is why we are here today—our villages are dying on their feet.

[74] Soniodd Naomi am dlodi plant yng nghefn gwlad. Nid dim ond ymysg plant yng nghefn gwlad y mae tlodi—mae'n effeithio ar bob agwedd o'r gymuned. Mae'n rhaid inni

Naomi mentioned child poverty in rural areas. It is not just among children that poverty exists in the countryside—it affects all aspects of the community. We have to

edrych—ac efallai y gwnewch chi chwerthin ar hyn—yn radical ar gynllunio, sydd mor bwysig.

look—and you may laugh at this—radically at planning, because this is so important.

[75] Tua tair wythnos yn ôl, yr oeddem yn Awstria. Yr oedd yn ddiddorol gweld ffatri newydd sbon yng nghanol y wlad yno, mewn lle hynod o brydferth, a fyddai'n cymharu ag Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol. Yr oedd y ffatri honno yn mynd â gwaith i'r bobl; yr ydym ni wedi tueddu i godi ystadau diwydiannol o gwmpas trefi, ac felly wedi hel pobl i'r trefi. Soniwch yn eich adroddiad am y cynnydd ym mhris tanwydd, ac yr ydym i gyd yn gwybod am effaith hynny.

About three weeks ago, we were in Austria. It was interesting to see a brand new factory in the middle of the countryside there, in an exceptionally beautiful place, which would compare to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. That factory was taking work to the people; we have tended to erect industrial estates around urban centres, and have therefore sent people into the towns. You mention the increasing price of fuel in your report, and we all know the effect that that has.

[76] Mae'n rhaid inni edrych o ddifrif ar gynllunio. Gobeithiaf eich bod yn cytuno i raddau â'r hyn yr wyf yn ei ddweud—yr ydych wedi awgrymu hynny. Cyn iddi fynd yn rhy hwyr, rhaid i ni wneud rhywbeth am y broblem hon. Mae ysgolion yn cau oherwydd nad oes digon o blant a phobl ifanc, oherwydd nad yw pobl yn gallu fforddio byw yno. Mae angen creu mwy o waith, yn enwedig mewn ardaloedd gwledig fel y canolbarth, Gwynedd, Môn, Meirionnydd, a Dyffryn Clwyd. Mae pobl yn teithio 50 milltir i'r gwaith oherwydd eu bod yn methu fforddio prynu tai mewn rhai llefydd. Hoffwn glywed eich sylwadau ar hwn.

We must look seriously at planning. I hope that you agree to some extent with what I am saying—you have suggested that. Before it is too late, we need to do something about this problem. Schools are closing because there are too few children and young people, because people cannot afford to live there. More work needs to be created, particularly in rural areas such as mid Wales, Gwynedd, Anglesey, Meirionnydd, and the Vale of Clwyd. People travel 50 miles to work because they cannot afford to buy houses in certain areas. I would like to hear your comments on this.

[77] **Mr H. Thomas:** Cytunaf â chi ar y pwynt penodol ynglŷn â thai. Yn ein cynllun datblygu unedol yng Ngwynedd, bu inni ymdrechi i ddynodi statws er mwyn gallu adeiladu mwy o dai yng nghefn gwlad, ond cafodd ei wrthod yn gyfan gwbl gan yr arolygydd. Yr ydym yn dod yn ôl, felly, at yr aliniad strategol, lle mae pawb yn mynd i'r un cyfeiriad. Mae hynny'n bwysig. Mae un rhan o Lywodraeth y Cynulliad, er enghraifft, yn dilyn polisiau proffesiynol sydd i'w gweld yn gywir, ond nid ydyw wedi cymryd agwedd holistaidd wrth daclo problemau cefn gwlad.

Mr H. Thomas: I agree with your specific point on housing. In our unitary development plan in Gwynedd, we attempted to allocate a status so that we could build more houses in rural areas, but it was rejected completely by the inspector. That brings us back to the strategic alignment, where everyone is travelling in the same direction. That is important. One part of the Assembly Government, for example, might follow professional policies that appear to be correct, but it does not take a holistic approach to tackling problems in rural areas.

[78] Ar yr ail bwynt ynglŷn â swyddi, a symud swyddi, credaf yn gryf y dylai'r sector gyhoeddus arwain y ffordd i ryw raddau. Mae'r Cynulliad wedi ymdrechi i wneud hyn drwy symud swyddi, sy'n ddigon teg. Fodd bynnag, beth allwn wneud fel awdurdodau unigol? Mae Cyngor Gwynedd wedi agor

On the second point about jobs, and moving jobs, I believe strongly that the public sector should lead the way to a certain extent. The Assembly has attempted to do this by moving jobs, which is fair enough. However, what can we do as individual authorities? Gwynedd Council has opened a new contact

canolfan cyswllt newydd, gyda 35 o swyddi. Byddai rhywun yn disgwyl i'r ganolfan gael ei leoli yng Nghaernarfon, sef y prif bencadlys gweinyddol. Fodd bynnag, yr ydym yn fwriadol wedi symud y swyddi i lawr i dde'r sir, i ganolbwynt sy'n galluogi pobl o nifer o bentrefi gwahanol fynd i'r gwaith a chymryd mantais o'r cyfleoedd. Yr oedd y costau'n uwch oherwydd ein bod wedi gwneud hynny, ond yr oedd yn benderfyniad bwriadol. Hoffwn symud 100 o swyddi ychwanegol yno, ond yn yr hinsawdd ariannol bresennol, bydd yn anodd gwneud hynny heb gymorth ariannol.

[79] Pe bai gweledigaeth ar y cyd gyda Llywodraeth y Cynulliad, efallai y gallem gydgyllido a symud swyddi cyhoeddus; yna, drwy'r bwrdd gwasanaethau lleol, efallai y gallem ddarbwyllio asiantaethau cyhoeddus eraill i ymuno â ni ar y daith. Byddwn yn digolledu rhywfaint—efallai na fyddai'n sylweddol iawn o ran y nifer o swyddi—am y ffaith fod dynamig y sector breifat yn wannach yng nghefn gwlad. Mae ymyrraeth y Cynulliad yn digwydd yn drefol, ac mae'r gefnogaeth ar gael yn drefol ac mae dynamig y sector preifat yn gryfach yn drefol; beth am inni drïo digolledu am hynny drwy symud swyddi? I wneud hyn, mae angen strategaeth a chymorth.

[80] Yr ydym hefyd yn treialu gweithio hyblyg ar hyn o bryd. Mae hyn yn caniatáu i fwy o bobl weithio i'r cyngor o'u cartrefi. Golygir hyn eu bod yn aros yn eu cymunedau o ddydd i ddydd, ac mae goblygiadau o safbwynt plant a chludo plant i'r ysgol—maent yn cludo'u plant i'r ysgol agosach yn hytrach na mynd â nhw i ysgol sydd 20 milltir i lawr y lôn. Mae hwn yn gostus iawn, ond yr ydym yn edrych ar fodelau sydd wedi eu sefydlu gan BT, sy'n arwain yn y maes. Unwaith eto, mae angen buddsoddi er mwyn sefydlu cyfundrefn o'r fath. Fodd bynnag, mae hwn i gyd yn helpu i leihau'r diboblogi sy'n digwydd yng nghefn gwlad.

[81] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Yr ydych yn dweud yn eich tystiolaeth—ym mhwynt 29—bod cost cyflwyno gwasanaethau mewn ardaloedd gwledig yn uwch. A oes gennych brawf neu dystiolaeth o hynny? Ar ddiwedd y paragraff, yr ydych yn cyfeirio yn benodol at gost uwch ar gyfer gwasanaethau

centre, with 35 jobs. One would expect the centre to be located in Caernarfon, as the main administrative headquarters. However, we have purposely moved the jobs to the south of the county, to a centre that allows people from a number of different villages to work there and to take advantage of the opportunities. The costs were higher because we did that, but it was a deliberate decision. I would like to move an additional 100 jobs there, but in the current financial climate, it would be difficult to do that without financial assistance.

If there was a joint vision with the Assembly Government, perhaps we could jointly fund this and move public sector jobs; then, through the local services board, perhaps we could convince other agencies to join us on this journey. We would compensate to some extent—it may not be significant with regard to the number of jobs—for the fact that the dynamic of the private sector is weaker in rural areas. The intervention of the Assembly happens in urban areas, and the support is available in urban areas and the dynamic of the private sector is stronger in urban areas; why do we not, therefore, try to compensate for that by moving jobs? In order to do that a strategy and help is needed.

We are also trying flexible working at the moment. This allows more people to work for the council from their homes. This means that they stay in their communities from day to day, and there are implications in terms of children and transporting children to school—they take their children to the nearest school rather than taking them to a school 20 miles down the lane. This is very expensive, but we are looking at models that have been established by BT, which is the leader in this field. Once again, investment is needed in order to establish such a system. However, this all helps us to reduce the depopulation that is happening in rural areas.

Alun Ffred Jones: You state in your evidence—in point 29—that the cost of providing services in rural areas is higher. Do you have proof or evidence of that? At the end of the paragraph, you refer specifically to the higher cost for social services because of the travelling involved. That appears to be

cymdeithasol oherwydd teithio. Mae'n ymddangos fel peth eithaf synhwyrol, ond a yw'r fformwlâu yn cydnabod hynny?

[82] **Mr H. Thomas:** Yr ateb syml yw 'Nac ydy'. Mae chwarter o'r grant craidd y mae awdurdodau lleol yn ei dderbyn yn ymwneud â gwasanaethau cymdeithasol. Felly, mae'n swm sylweddol iawn o safbwynt hyfywedd awdurdodau unigol. Ar hyn o bryd, nid oes cydnabyddiaeth ar gyfer y costau uwch sy'n gysylltiedig â darparu gwasanaeth mewn ardaloedd gwledig. Chwe blynedd yn ôl, cyflawnodd Cyngor Gwynedd gwaith ymchwil. Bu inni edrych ar y costau o gyflawni un awr o ofal cartref mewn ardaloedd trefol a'u cymharu â'r costau mewn ardaloedd gwledig. Yr oedd gennym ffigurau meintiol cadarn yn glŷn â'r gost uwch mewn ardaloedd gwledig. Felly, mae tystiolaeth ar sail cynghorau unigol.

10.00 a.m.

[83] Yn ddiddorol iawn, yn Lloegr, rhoddir pwysoliad ar gyfer materion gwledig a gwasgariad poblogaeth. Mae'r pwysoliad hwn wedi cynyddu yn y blynyddoedd diwethaf. Felly, yn Lloegr, maent yn cydnabod y broblem. Un o'r problemau sydd gennym yng Nghymru yw bod yr ystadegwyr proffesiynol am lynu'n gaeth wrth un fethodoleg, yn hytrach na bod yn fwy hyblyg er mwyn darganfod rhywbeth sy'n amlwg inni i gyd, lle mae'r dystiolaeth eisoes yn bodoli. Gallai hynny wneud gwahaniaeth mawr i'r cyllid sydd ar gael i gynghorau gwledig. Er enghraifft, byddai pwysoliad bach iawn yn golygu £9 miliwn yn ychwanegol y flwyddyn i'r naw awdurdod gwledig. Felly, mae angen edrych ar hyn. Mae'n digwydd mewn manau eraill ac mae gennym dystiolaeth, ond efallai fod y bobl broffesiynol yn gyndyn o ehangu eu gorwelion i sicrhau eu bod yn darganfod y berthynas.

[84] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae gennyf ddau gwestiwn arall. I fynd yn ôl at eich cymhariaeth rhwng ffigurau Caerdydd ac Ynys Môn, a ddywedasoch fod yr un canran o bobl yn dioddef o incwm isel?

[85] **Mr H. Thomas:** Yr oedd y gymhariaeth yn ymwneud â budd-daliadau

sensible, but do the formulae recognise that?

Mr H. Thomas: The simple answer is, 'No, they do not'. A quarter of the core grant received by local authorities relates to social services. Therefore, it is a considerable sum from the point of view of the viability of individual authorities. At the moment, there is no recognition of the higher costs that are associated with providing a service in rural areas. Six years ago, Gwynedd Council undertook some research work. We looked at the costs of providing one hour of homecare in urban areas and compared that with the costs in rural areas. We had firm quantitative figures with regard to the higher costs in rural areas. So, there is evidence on the basis of individual councils.

Interestingly, in England, weighting is given for rural affairs and dispersed populations. This weighting has increased over recent years. Therefore, in England, they do acknowledge the problem. One of the problems that we have in Wales is that the professional statisticians want to stick very closely to a single methodology, rather than being more flexible in order to find something that is clear to us all, where the evidence already exists. Doing that could make a big difference to the funding that is available for rural councils. For instance, a very small weighting would mean an additional £9 million for the nine rural authorities. Therefore, this needs to be looked at. It is happening in other places and we have evidence, but the professionals may be reluctant to broaden their horizons in order to identify the relationship.

Alun Ffred Jones: I have two more questions. To return to your comparison between the figures in Cardiff and Anglesey, did you say that the same percentage of people are suffering from low incomes?

Mr H. Thomas: The comparison involved benefits related to low incomes.

sy'n gysylltiedig ag incwm isel.

[86] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae hynny'n cael ei gydnabod i ryw raddau gan y mynegai amddifadedd lluosog yng Nghaerdydd. A yw hynny'n wir?

Alun Ffred Jones: That is acknowledged to some extent by the index of multiple deprivation in Cardiff. Is that true?

[87] **Mr H. Thomas:** Ydy, gan fod yr amddifadedd yng Nghaerdydd wedi'i ganoli.

Mr H. Thomas: Yes, because deprivation is concentrated in Cardiff.

[88] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae wedi'i ganoli mewn rhai wardiau neu ardaloedd penodol, ond at ei gilydd, nid yw'r amddifadedd hwn yn cael ei gydnabod yn Ynys Môn. Pa broblemau mae hynny'n eu creu? Ai dyna'r cwestiwn cywir, o safbwynt yr awdurdod lleol neu unrhyw un arall sy'n ceisio mynd i'r afael â'r sefyllfa?

Alun Ffred Jones: It is concentrated in specific wards or areas, but on the whole, this deprivation is not picked up in Anglesey. What problems does that create? I do not know whether that is the right question, in relation to the local authority or anyone else who is attempting to deal with the situation?

[89] **Mr H. Thomas:** Mae dwy broblem. Mae un, yn amlwg, yn ymwneud ag adnoddau, gan fod diffyg cydnabyddiaeth yn golygu nad yw'r adnoddau yn llifo i mewn i ymdrin â'r broblem. Mae'r ail broblem yn fwy diwylliannol ei natur. Oherwydd nad yw problemau amddifadedd sy'n wasgaredig yn cael eu hamlygu, nid ydynt yn cael sylw'n gyffredinol. Mae hyn yn creu'r feddylfryd nad ydynt yn bodoli. Felly, mae'r bobl hyn yn cael llai o sylw. Dyna un o'r problemau mawr sydd gennym ar hyn o bryd, sef y sylw sy'n cael ei roi i amddifadedd sy'n wasgaredig—nid yn unig o safbwynt y Llywodraeth ganolog, ond o safbwynt awdurdodau unigol hefyd. Gan nad yw'n cael sylw parhaol, nid yw'n rhan o'r feddylfryd. Felly, ceir elfen o anwybyddu'r problemau, yna byw â chanlyniadau'r problemau ymhellach ymlaen.

Mr H. Thomas: There are two problems. One, clearly, is related to resources, because the lack of acknowledgement means that the resources do not flow in to deal with the problem. The second problem is more cultural in its nature. Due to the fact that the problems of dispersed deprivation are not highlighted, they are generally not given any attention. This creates the mindset that they do not exist. Therefore, there is less of a focus on these people. The attention given to dispersed deprivation is one of the major problems facing us at present—not only from the central Government point of view, but also in individual authorities. Given that it is not given continual attention, it is not part of the mindset. Therefore, there is an element of ignoring the problems, and then living with the consequences later on.

[90] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Mae rhai ohonoch wedi rhestru nifer o grantiau penodol. Er enghraifft, mae'r grant amddifadedd ar gael i lywodraeth leol. A yw hwn yn dilyn yr un fformiwla â'r mynegai amddifadedd lluosog, neu a yw'n seiliedig ar rywbeth arall?

Alun Ffred Jones: Some of you have listed a number of specific grants. For instance, the deprivation grant is provided to local authorities. Does that follow the same formula as the index of multiple deprivation, or is it based on something else?

[91] **Mr H. Thomas:** Os wyf yn cofio'n iawn, mae'n seiliedig ar fformiwla cwbl anhygoel, o safbwynt y cyfiawnhad dros y fformiwla.

Mr H. Thomas: If I remember correctly, it is based on quite an incredible formula, in terms of justifying that formula.

[92] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Ond mae'n rhaid gofyn beth yw pwrpas a nod y grantiau

Alun Ffred Jones: The question must then be asked, what is the purpose and aim of the

amddifadedd? Ai codi incwm yw eu pwrpas, ynteu a ydynt yn ymwneud â rhywbeth mwy annelwig o ran agweddau pobl?

[93] **Mr H. Thomas:** Yr hyn sy'n digwydd ar hyn o bryd, o roi barn bersonol, yw eu bod yn cefnogi cyllid cyffredinol yr awdurdodau sy'n elwa fwyaf. Felly, maent yn gwarchod y dreth gyngor neu'n gwarchod gwasanaethau'n gyffredinol. Un o'r problemau sydd gennym yw diffyg agwedd gyfannol tuag at yr holl ffrydiau cyllid sy'n ymwneud ag amddifadedd. Byddwn yn dadlau bod hyn yn wir mewn ardaloedd gwledig hefyd. Heb drosolwg gyfannol a phwrpas clir o ran yr hyn yr ydych yn ceisio'i gyflawni, bron fod pobl yn gweithio ar draws ei gilydd mewn rhai cymunedau. Yr wyf wedi profi hyn yn bersonol mewn un ardal o amddifadedd yng Ngwynedd. Yr oedd yno nifer o swyddogion yn cael eu cyllido o wahanol ffrydiau, ond pwy oedd yn cydlynu ac yn cydgordio'r gwaith hwnnw? A oedd angen cynifer o swyddogion? A ellid fod wedi defnyddio'r arian mewn ffordd fwy effeithiol? Felly, mae cwestiwn mawr ynglŷn â defnyddio a chydlynu'r adnoddau hyn mewn ffordd gyfannol at bwrpasau penodol, yn hytrach na chyllido o ffrydiau gwahanol.

[94] **Brynle Williams:** Gan edrych ar baragraff 33 eich adroddiad, sy'n ymwneud â phroblemau o ran mynediad i wasanaethau sylfaenol, cofiaf flynyddoedd yn ôl yn ein hardal ni fod gennym gynllun syml ond tra effeithiol. Yn lle bod henoed yn y pentrefi yn mynd at y doctor, byddai'r doctor yn dod i'r pentref.

[95] Pam na allwn ni gyflwyno rhywbeth tebyg? A fyddai hyn yn helpu neu a ydwyf yn siarad yn wirion? Byddai'n dod â chyfleusterau yn ôl i'r gymuned. Mae sôn mawr yn yr adroddiad am drafnidiaeth a chludo pobl at gyfleusterau fel meddygon, deintyddion ac yn y blaen. Henoed neu ferched â phlant ifanc yw'r rhan fwyaf o'r bobl sy'n mynd at feddygon. Pan fod gennych ddau neu dri phentref yn weddol o agos at ei gilydd, pe bai'r meddyg ond yn dod un diwrnod yr wythnos i gynnal meddygfa, byddai'n arbed lot o arian ac yn helpu'r bobl yn y pentrefi. Oni allai arian ddod o'r grant hwn i helpu â chyfleusterau o'r fath?

deprivation grants? Is it to increase income, or is it something vaguer regarding people's attitudes?

Mr H. Thomas: What happens at present, and this is a personal opinion, is that they support the general funding of the authorities that benefit most. Therefore, they protect council tax and general services. One of the problems facing us is the lack of a holistic approach towards all of the funding streams related to deprivation. I would argue that this is also the case in rural areas. Without a holistic overview and a clear purpose in terms of what you are trying to achieve, people almost work across each other in some communities. I have experienced this in a deprived part of Gwynedd. A number of officials were funded from different streams, but who co-ordinated and synchronized that work? Were so many officials needed? Could we have used the funding more effectively? Therefore, there is the question of using and co-ordinating these resources in a holistic manner for specific purposes, rather than having different streams of funding.

Brynle Williams: Looking at paragraph 33 of your report, on restricted access to basic services, I recall that many years ago in my area we had a simple but effective scheme. Rather than the elderly having to visit the doctor, the doctor would come to the village.

Why can we not introduce something similar? Would this be of help or is this just idle talk? It would bring facilities back to the community. There is a lot of talk in the report about transport and transporting people to facilities such as doctors, dentists and so on. Most people who visit doctors are elderly or are women with young children. When you have two or three villages quite close together, even if the doctor only came one day a week to hold a surgery, it would save a lot of money and help those people in those villages. Could funding not be provided from this grant to assist with such facilities?

[96] Am I simply being stupid?

[97] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Don't answer that. [*Laughter.*]

[98] **Mr H. Thomas:** O safbwynt bwrdd gwasanaethau lleol Gwynedd, mae gennym gwpl o flaenoriaethau. Mae un yn ymwneud â'r union fath hwnnw o syniad, sef symud gwasanaethau gofal iechyd yn agosach at y gymuned ac anghenion pobl. Yn lle eu bod yn gorfod mynd drwy'r system a chael eu cyfeirio at ysbytai ar gyfer profion, yr ydym yn ystyried a fyddem yn gallu gwneud hynny yn eu cymunedau. Yr ydym yn edrych ar ail-ddylunio gwasanaethau yn ôl anghenion unigolion fel eu bod yn fwy cyfleus, fel bod y llwybrau iechyd a gofal yn fwy effeithlon a chyfleus o safbwynt unigolion, ond hefyd yn gyflymach, fel eu bod yn gallu troi at wybodaeth a rhoi pobl drwy'r system yn gyflymach. Mae hynny'n arbrawf sy'n mynd ymlaen ar hyn o bryd yng Ngwynedd.

Mr H. Thomas: In terms of Gwynedd's local services board, we have a couple of priorities. One is related to exactly that kind of idea, namely, moving healthcare services closer to communities and closer to the need. Rather than them having to go through the system and then being referred to hospitals for tests, we are considering whether we could do that in their communities. We are looking to reconfigure services according to people's needs so that they are more conveniently available, so that the health and care paths are more efficient and convenient for individuals, but also so that they are quicker, so that they can turn to the information and get people through the system more quickly. That is an experiment that is currently ongoing in Gwynedd.

[99] Nid wyf yn gwybod pa mor ymarferol a chost effeithiol fyddai mynd â meddygon i'r pentrefi. Yn amlwg gallwn ddarparu rhai o'r gwasanaethau iechyd yn agosach at unigolion, ond ochr arall y geiniog honno yw cludiant cymunedol a chludiant sy'n fwy perthnasol ar gyfer anghenion yr henoed, mamau â phlant ac yn y blaen. Mae angen i ni fod yn fwy arloesol o ran y gwaith yr ydym yn ei wneud. Gwyddom am gynlluniau arloesol dros y ffin yn swydd Amwythig, er enghraifft, ac efallai bod angen i ni efelychu'r mathau hynny o gynlluniau sy'n fwy perthnasol i anghenion yr henoed a'r ifanc yn enwedig.

I am not sure how practical and cost effective it would be to take doctors to the villages. Obviously, we can provide some health services closer to individuals, but the other side of that coin is the issue of community transport and transport that is more relevant to the needs of elderly people and mothers with young children and so on. We should be more innovative in the work that we do. We know of innovative schemes over the border in Shropshire, for example, and perhaps we need to emulate those kinds of schemes that are more relevant to the needs of the elderly and the young in particular.

[100] **Mr S. Thomas:** This will surely be one of the issues that you will have to discuss, as Assembly Members, when you debate the new configuration of the health service. On the current consultation, you will have eight local health boards and eight super trusts and the danger is that you will lose the localist dimension. I know that there is a large debate about community services and where they are located. One of the things that you have to consider, as Assembly Members, is the interface between the health service and local government on local government's current boundaries. There are lots of people who would like to reorganise local government, but it exists as it is: there are 22 authorities. How do you put it at that boundary level? I think that that will be a key debate for you.

[101] **Alun Davies:** Os nad oes rhagor o gwestiynau, diolchaf i chi am eich tystiolaeth y bore yma. Yr ydym yn ei werthfawrogi'n fawr iawn. Edrychwn ymlaen at dderbyn y nodiadau yr ydych wedi cytuno i'w darparu yn ystod yr wythnosau nesaf. Bydd y rheini o

Alun Davies: If there are no further questions, I thank you for your evidence this morning. We appreciate it very much. We look forward to receiving the written notes that you have agreed to provide during the coming weeks. They will be of great

gymorth mawr gyda'n trafodaethau.

assistance in our discussions.

10.08 a.m.

Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion

[102] **Alun Davies:** Dyna ddiwedd sesiwn ffurfiol y bore yma. Bydd cyfarfod nesaf yr is-bwyllgor yn y prynhawn ar 22 Mai, pan fydd y Gweinidog yn bresennol i ateb cwestiynau ar yr adroddiad. Diolch yn fawr i bob un ohonoch am eich tystiolaeth y bore yma.

Alun Davies: That brings this morning's formal session to a close. The next meeting of the sub-committee will be on the afternoon of 22 May, when the Minister will attend to answer questions on the report. Thank you, each of you, for your evidence this morning.

[103] Cynigiaf fod

I propose that

[104] *y pwyllgor yn penderfynu gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog Rhif 10.37(vi).*

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 10.37(vi).

[105] Gwelaf fod y pwyllgor yn gytûn.

I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion carried.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.09 a.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 10.09 a.m.*