

Sustainability Committee

SC(3)-08-08 (p1) Annex E; 24 April 2008

Extract from transcript of Petitions Committee meeting on 6 December 2007: Consideration of petition P-03-063, calling for a ban on plastic bags

Val Lloyd:

We now move to petition P-03-063, on banning plastic bags. We heard the petitioner on this, we then passed it to the Proposed Environmental Protection and Waste Management LCO Committee and we have also had another message from the petitioner. We needed to clarify a point and we have received a note on that, in that it was about the banning of plastic bags in Wales, not the introduction of a levy. I would draw your attention to the letter from the Chair of the LCO committee, Alun Ffred Jones, and the Minister's comments.

Michael German:-

Clearly, the powers are going to be there; deciding whether or not it is the right thing to do is the next stage. Since the petitioner is asking for that course of action to be taken, and there are arguments as to whether a levy or a ban is the appropriate way forward, I took the liberty of asking the Chair of the Sustainability Committee whether he felt that that committee could carry out a review or a study of whether banning plastic bags was a good or bad thing, in order to take it further forward, anticipating that, when the LCO is passed, this issue will be discussed. He said that he felt that it would be appropriate for the committee to look at that. Therefore, do we now simply refer this issue to that committee for it to consider whether it would do a review of the issue of banning plastic bags? I am sure that it would take the other matters into account.

Val Lloyd:-

Such as European law, which the Minister mentioned.

Michael German:-

: Yes. I am sure that it would do that, but, in terms of the petition, we can only say what the petitioner wanted.

Val Lloyd

Is everyone happy with that? I see that you are.

Michael German:-

Otherwise, we will find ourselves having to go to Ireland and look at this problem ourselves, which would be terrible, would it not?
[Laughter]

Val Lloyd:-

The point is that Ireland is an entity, and we are not an entity in Wales. I know that there are arguments that we are, but we are not at present. There would probably be European Union implications as well.

Michael German:-

I did wonder whether this committee could do a review of this issue. However, having read some of the evidence from the British Retail Consortium, an extensive study is needed on this important topic, and to do it would exhaust our resources in terms of time and so on.

Val Lloyd:

The Scottish Parliament committee looked at this for two years—using paper bags was its broad conclusion. We can officially close this petition, then, because it is in the hands of the Sustainability Committee.

Bethan Jenkins:-

Unless we want it to come back to us.

Michael German:-

We should check that that committee will deal with it.

Bethan Jenkins:-

Yes, we should not close it until the committee takes the review.

Michael German:-

Do not close it until it says that it will carry on with it.

Val Lloyd:-

I thought that you said that our workload was too heavy. [Laughter] Okay, we will formally pass it over, and we will formally get the committee's results in closing it.