

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 13 May 2024

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price – Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

Petitions@senedd.wales

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

2 New Petitions

2.1 P-06-1384 Introduce legislation where it is mandatory to have an defibrillator in workplaces and sport clubs

(Pages 1 – 7)

2.2 P-06-1394 Intervene in the development of the Penrhos Coastal Park into a holiday resort in Anglesey

(Pages 8 – 9)

2.3 P-06-1410 To stop using the name 'Anglesey' and exclusively use the name 'Ynys Môn' or shorten to 'Môn'

(Pages 10 – 17)

2.4 P-06-1414 Prepare a bid for Wales to compete in the Eurovision Song Contest

(Pages 18 – 22)

2.5 P-06-1417 Ban fireworks from shops

(Pages 23 – 30)

Petitions on transport

2.6 P-06-1413 Scrap the 50mph limits on the M4 around Newport and Swansea and on the A470 around Pontypridd

(Pages 31 – 38)



- 2.7 P-06-1416 Increase the speed limit on the M4 back to 70mph
(Pages 39 – 46)
- 2.8 P-06-1415 Brynglas Tunnels M4 South Wales relief road to be put into action
(Pages 47 – 53)
- 2.9 P-06-1421 Hold a public poll on whether to build the M4 Relief Road, then
implement the result immediately
(Pages 54 – 60)
- 2.10 P-06-1423 Reinstate the 552 Cardi Bach coastal bus service in South
Ceredigion!
(Pages 61 – 66)

3 Updates to previous petitions

- 3.1 P-06-1344 Moderate quality agricultural land (grade 3b) should be used for
food security not solar farms
(Pages 67 – 73)
- 3.2 P-06-1403 Reconsider cuts to Postgraduate funding and increase Doctoral
Loans to match UKRI Stipend
(Pages 74 – 77)

4 Paper to note – P-06-1387 Provide humanitarian aid to Gaza (Pages 78 – 79)

5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting

6 Draft report – P-06-1335 Welsh Government should take steps to ensure vulnerable adults without bank cards can pay with cash

Document is Restricted

Introduce legislation where it is mandatory to have an defibrillator in workplaces and sport clubs

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mai 2024
Petitions Committee | 13 May 2024

Reference: SR24/7752-1

Petition Number: [P-06-1384](#)

Petition title: Introduce legislation where it is mandatory to have an defibrillator in workplaces and sport clubs.

Text of petition:

A defibrillator is a device designed to save lives in emergency situations. It plays a crucial role in providing immediate care to individuals experiencing a cardiac arrest. During such a medical emergency, time is of the essence, and the presence of a defibrillator can be the difference between life and death. Research has shown that with the use of a defibrillator, survival rates are increased to 50 – 70%. These devices are user-friendly and can be operated by individuals with minimal training.

With the addition of this legislation, people in work places and sport clubs will have increased coverage of a bystander defibrillator and therefore increasing survival rates of anyone in close proximity suffering from a cardiac arrest.



1. Background

British Heart Foundation's [Wales factsheet](#) highlights that:

- Just 1 in 20 survive an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) in Wales.
- There are around 2,800 OHCA's in Wales each year.
- Every minute without cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and defibrillation reduces the chance of survival by up to 10 per cent.
- Early CPR and defibrillation can more than double the chances of survival.
- It's estimated that public-access defibrillators (PADs) are used in less than 10 per cent of OHCA's.

2. Welsh Government action

In June 2017, the Welsh Government [published](#) its Out-of-hospital cardiac arrest plan (the OHCA plan). The OHCA plan states that raising public awareness to ensure early recognition and prompt intervention in OHCA is paramount. It also notes that immediate initiation of bystander CPR can double or quadruple survival from OHCA and that survival rates are significantly improved with the use of a defibrillator within 3-5 minutes of collapse.

The OHCA plan's key outcomes and actions include:

- Actively promoting CPR training and how to use a defibrillator.
- Defibrillators are readily available and accessible to the public.
- Public are aware defibrillators are easy to use and can do no harm.
- Work collaboratively to ensure all defibrillators are mapped to increase accessibility and availability.
- Ensure clear protocols and procedures are in place so defibrillators are available for operational use at all times.

[Save a Life Cymru](#) (SaLC) was established in 2019 by Welsh Government to:

- Make sure that people know what to do if an OHCA happens.
- Increase the number of people who are willing to give CPR a go.
- Increase the public's understanding of defibrillators.
- Make sure that everyone's chance of surviving an OHCA is the same across Wales.

In July 2021 the Welsh Government announced a funding programme of almost £2.5 million over three years to help improve survival rates after cardiac arrest. The aim of the programme included raising awareness about the cardiac arrest chain of survival; funding new educational and training resources; educating people in Wales about helping anyone suffering an OHCA and help develop their skills and confidence in providing CPR and defibrillation; and improving public access to defibrillators.

On 15 October 2021 the Welsh Government issued a progress statement on implementing the OHCA plan. It noted that:

- The OHCA plan was developed to improve OHCA outcomes in Wales.
- SaLC is bringing together organisations across Wales to help develop CPR and defibrillation skills.
- Communities and organisations which already have defibrillators are encouraged to register them on the Circuit (a national defibrillator network providing a national overview of where defibrillators can be found).
- Further funding of £500,000 was announced on 15 September 2021 to purchase almost 500 more defibrillators (Welsh Government announced a further £500,000 on 25 February 2022).

In response to this petition, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care confirmed:

- More than 8,000 defibrillators are registered on The Circuit, doubling the number since 2019.
- SaLC has been instrumental in encouraging the installation, use and support of public access defibrillators by appointing community co-ordinators for every area of Wales; the first UK nation to have created these “influential community roles”.

The Cabinet Secretary said that Welsh Government fully supported making lifesaving equipment, such as defibrillators, more accessible in communities across Wales saying it had adopted a “supportive approach” to make defibrillators become “established and normalised across Wales”. She added:

The issue has been raised by the Petitions Committee previously and the Welsh Government’s position remains unchanged – we do not believe introducing legislation to mandate the provision of defibrillators is the best way to increase the number of devices that are available. Legislation could be counter-productive, difficult to enforce, and add unnecessary layers of bureaucracy.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In July 2015, the Fourth Assembly Petitions Committee published a report on its consideration of a petition calling for mandatory Welsh legislation to ensure defibrillators in all public places (P-04-471). The Welsh Government response noted its development of the OHCA plan which it said would correlate with the themes of the Committee's recommendations.

On 15 September 2021, there was a Welsh Conservatives debate on access to defibrillators in Plenary.

In January and March 2022, the Petitions Committee considered a petition, 'Every Second Counts: Install a defibrillator at every school in Wales for the public to access' (P-06-1230). In response to the petition, the Welsh Government clarified that it had previously provided funding to access defibrillators, it was considering a further round of funding, and that Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust had previously contacted schools to offer defibrillators.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-06-1384
Ein cyf/Our ref: EM/03409/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
petitions@senedd.wales

26 April 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter about Petition P-06-1384: Introduce legislation where it is mandatory to have a defibrillator in workplaces and sport clubs. I apologise for the delay in replying.

The issue has been raised by the Petitions Committee previously and the Welsh Government's position remains unchanged – we do not believe introducing legislation to mandate the provision of defibrillators is the best way to increase the number of devices that are available. Legislation could be counter-productive, difficult to enforce, and add unnecessary layers of bureaucracy.

We continue to encourage greater awareness of defibrillators. This includes how the public can use them, where they are located, supporting increased availability within our communities, and ensuring they are registered on the defibrillator mapping system known as The Circuit.

Currently more than 8,000 defibrillators across Wales are registered on The Circuit. This number has doubled since 2019 and continues to increase.

The Welsh Government worked in partnership with the Wales Cardiovascular Network, the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, and third sector organisations to develop the Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest Plan, which was published in June 2017. The plan is designed to increase the survival rate following an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest by optimising the four links in the cardiac arrest chain of survival – early recognition and activation of the emergency response system; early CPR; rapid defibrillation and advanced life support within a hospital setting.

In January 2019 we established the Save a Life Cymru programme to further promote and optimise the cardiac arrest chain of survival by creating awareness of the importance of bystander intervention and to transform CPR and defibrillator access. Save a Life Cymru has been instrumental in encouraging the installation, use and support of public access defibrillators by appointing community co-ordinators for every area of Wales. We are the first nation in the UK to have created these influential community roles.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Eluned.Morgan@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Eluned.Morgan@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We fully support making lifesaving equipment, such as defibrillators, more accessible in communities across Wales. We believe in adopting a supportive approach to make sure defibrillators become established and normalised across Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan'.

Eluned Morgan AS/MS

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

P-06-1384 Introduce legislation where it is mandatory to have an defibrillator in workplaces and sport clubs – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 02 May 2024

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
Welsh Government

Dear Jack Sargeant MS

Petition P-06-1384

To INTRODUCE LEGISLATION WHERE IT IS MANDATORY TO HAVE A DEFIBRILLATOR IN WORKPLACES AND SPORTS CLUBS

Thank you for forwarding us the letter dated 26th April from Health Minister, Eluned Morgan AS/MS, in reply to our above Petition.

Firstly, may we say how disappointed we are, yet again, made to feel we have hit a 'brick wall' in support from the Welsh Government when we endeavour to improve heart health in Wales.

Referring to the Minister's letter: please note, I was the original Chairman of Save a Life Cymru (SALC) when it was formed by the Welsh Government, so I am fully aware of the set-up and aims of this organisation. Unfortunately, I had to stand down from this position due to a conflict of interest in also being Chairman of Calon Hearts charity. However, I remain a stakeholder and attend online meetings. We do not feel that SALC has been fully effective in promoting greater awareness of defibrillators. We believe that Calon Hearts, via fundraising and the generosity by way of donations from the general public, achieves more than SALC has done. To date, in the 12 years since Calon Hearts was founded, we have installed over 28,700 defibrillators in communities across Wales, trained over 99,270 people in CPR and screened over 16,520 hearts for potentially life-threatening conditions. An impressive achievement, we are sure that the Minister and Members will agree. **Moreover, a greater achievement than SALC.**

Going back to the Petition, we would remind the Minister that in Italy and some other European countries, defibrillators are a mandatory requirement to be installed in sports clubs. We would like the Welsh Government to be more pro-active and take the UK lead on this initiative.

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to work more closely with the Welsh Government and would welcome a meeting with the Minister to discuss.

We look forward to your favourable response and discussion at the Petitions Committee on 6th May.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Owen

Sharon Owen
Charity and Fundraising Director
CALON HEARTS

Agenda Item 2.2

P-06-1394 Intervene in the development of the Penrhos Coastal Park into a holiday resort in Anglesey

This petition was submitted by Madison Lorraine, having collected a total of 11,992 signatures.

Text of Petition:

History eventually repeats itself, in 1957 Welsh MPs fought against the erasure of Tryweryn and yet, the plan to turn the Welsh village into a water resource for Liverpool went ahead.

Today, Land & Lakes aim to build a new holiday park over the Coast that houses endangered species and was granted planning permission by the council. Despite long efforts by organisations and members of the community to prevent the development, the council has not revoked permission.

Additional Information:

Penrhos Coastal park is a historic site in Wales, with parts of the forestry dating back to the 18th century and is home to a diverse species of flora and fauna.

The Coastal Park is a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The woodland houses badgers, foxes, newts, and red squirrels. In recent years, the native red squirrel has been in a state of rapid decline in the UK – habitat loss has aided in the decline. This is due to development plans destroying and separating the natural woodlands in this case, forcing the endangered species to a previous waste ground to which, we cannot guarantee the safety of these species.

Our land was promised to be protected back in 2021, it's now time to enact that promise. Welsh land and history is unique therefore, why are we allowing the destruction of the foundations of Wales?

Sources:

– North Wales Chronicle. (2022). Anglesey nature reserve set to be 'relocated' to toxic waste dump to make way for holiday park.

– www.penrhosholyisland.co.uk.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Neath
- South Wales West

Julie James AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol, Tai a Chynllunio
Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1394
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/03373/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

petitions@senedd.wales

26 April 2024

Dear Jack,

Petition P-06-1394 Intervene in the development of the Penrhos Coastal Park into a holiday resort in Anglesey

Thank you for your letter of 18 December regarding the above petition. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The grant of planning permission by Isle of Anglesey County Council for the development of a holiday resort at Penrhos Coastal Park was subject to conditions. One of the conditions set a deadline for start of the development.

Local campaigners argue that a material start was not made to the development prior to the deadline. The council, however, have agreed with the developer who argued a material start had been made. At a hearing of the High Court at the start of March, permission was granted for the local campaigners to pursue a judicial review of that decision.

I am unable to comment on whether a material start was made within the deadline because of the ongoing Court proceedings and because the issue may come before the Welsh Ministers at a later date as part of their formal role in the planning system, such as when determining appeals.

The petition refers to the council revoking the planning permission. The council does have powers under section 97 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to revoke or modify the permission, to such extent as they consider expedient, subject to the payment of compensation to persons with interest in the land for abortive work or other losses. This power is discretionary and is therefore a matter for the council to consider in light of the findings of the Court.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I understand that Cadw is considering a request for the Park to be statutorily registered as a Historic Park and Garden through the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016. A decision will be made once Court proceedings are concluded.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie James AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol, Tai a Chynllunio
Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning

Stop using the name 'Anglesey' and exclusively use the name 'Ynys Môn'

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mai 2024
Petitions Committee | 13 May 2024

Reference: SR24/8458-2

Petition Number: P-06-1410

Petition title: To stop using the name 'Anglesey' and exclusively use the name 'Ynys Môn' or shorten to 'Môn'.

Text of petition: Some other counties in Wales don't have a Welsh and English name. Môn is easy to pronounce for all people in all languages. Two names for a county is confusing for tourists, but using one name will help keep the Welsh heritage alive on the island.



1. Background

The names of Welsh villages, towns, cities and counties, have developed over a period of two millennia. While the **majority of place-names in Wales are Welsh**, the origin of some place-names lie in English, French, Latin, Irish, Norse and Brittonic/British (evolving to become *Cymraeg* as we know it today).

Examples of some recognisable **Welsh only place-names** include Aberystwyth, Bangor, Tonypandy, Penarth and Pontypridd. However, there are several examples of places in Wales that have both a Welsh and English name.

Some of those places with Welsh and English names have very **similar spelling and pronunciation** in both languages. Places like:

- *Caerffili* - Caerphilly;
- *Caerdydd* - Cardiff;
- *Merthyr Tudful* - Merthyr Tydfil;
- *Treorci* - Treorchy.

Dr. Dylan Foster Evans expands on the evolution of Welsh place-names in this brief article - [*What's in a name?*](#) He notes that Cardiff, for instance, 'derives from the medieval Welsh *Caerdyf* (which also gives us the modern Welsh *Caerdydd*)'. He notes that linguists believe the name was likely 'coined in the British language, back when the Romans occupied Cardiff some 2,000 years ago'.

There are examples of English names such as Flint (*Y Fflint*), Wrexham (*Wrecsam*) and Caldicot (*Cil-y-coed*) that have been adopted by the Welsh rather than the other way around. Similarly, the original name for Biwmares was the Norman-French name - Beaumaris.

Other places in Wales have alternate names unrelated to each other. Examples include:

- Newport - *Casnewydd* (the Welsh meaning New Castle);
- Swansea (derived from the Norse meaning Svein's Island) - *Abertawe* (the Welsh meaning the Mouth of the River Tawe);
- Brecon (derived from Welsh Kingdom of Brycheiniog) - *Aberhonddu* (Welsh taken from River Honddu)
- **Anglesey** (derived again from Norse - *Ongul*), while the Welsh name *Môn*, was first recorded as Latin *Mona*.

There are examples of anglicised Welsh place-names gradually ceasing to be accepted or used, including Caernarvon (Caernarfon), Conway (Conwy), Portmadoc (Porthmadog) and Llanelly (Llanelli).

There are also places where there are ongoing disagreements over whether the Welsh spelling should be used exclusively or not, such in Varteg (Farteg) which has had some publicity at one time.

2. The Place-names Standardisation Panel

The Welsh Language Commissioner, an independent body established by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, is responsible for providing advice on the standard forms of Welsh place-names. A list of standard forms of the Welsh names of villages, towns and cities in Wales is available online for anyone wishing to use it.

The Commissioner established a panel of experts to work on and make recommendations on the standard form of Welsh place-names. The Commissioner's website notes that in forming its recommendations, 'the Place-names Standardisation Panel gives consideration to the **meaning, history and etymology of the place-names**, as well as their **current usage**'. The panel is also guided by the Guidelines for Standardising Place-names in Wales. Section 9 – *Dual forms* notes the following advice for the panel to consider:

If the difference between the Welsh form and the 'English' form consists of **only one or two letters**, the use of a **single form is recommended**, with **preference being given to the Welsh form**. This accords with the recommendations of the Ordnance Survey and the Highway Authorities. However, recognized variations should be acknowledged (Caeriw/Carew, Biwmares/Beaumaris, Y Fflint/Flint, Wreccsam/Wrexham).

3. Welsh Parliament action

The Senedd has considered several petitions in the last few years relating to Welsh place-names and Welsh house names. In 2021, a petition calling on the Senedd and other bodies to start referring to Welsh cities and towns by their Welsh names was submitted, receiving 108 signatures. The petitioners called on public bodies to start using Welsh terms and place-names to "increase Welsh language use".

The Committee heard from the Welsh Language Commissioner's office during its meeting on 7 March 2022 in relation to the petition. One of the issues highlighted during the session was that it is not the intention of the Panel of experts on the standardisation of Welsh place-names to "push" Welsh forms only:

I would also emphasise that it is not the panel's agenda to push the use of Welsh place names only; the panel addresses English place names to variations of Welsh place names, such as Caerdydd and Cardiff, for example. But also names that have no relation, such as Abertawe and Swansea, y Bont-faen and Cowbridge. So, the forms used in English are not ignored; they are all given attention and given the same status in the work of the panel..

During the first half of 2020, a similar petition was submitted which called for reverting to the Welsh language spelling of place-names. The specific action the petitioners called for was:

Wales has many place names which have needlessly been Anglicised, and have often been replaced by Anglicised forms for no good reason. [...] I, and the undersigned, therefore petition the Welsh Assembly to take action and change these Anglicised forms of Welsh names – throughout Wales – and restore their original Welsh spellings.

The Petitions Committee of the 5th Senedd considered the petition in June 2020. The petition gathered 1,096 signatures.

In 2018, a petition calling on the Senedd to protect and promote Welsh place-names was submitted. It gathered 431 signatures The specific action the petitioner called for was:

Increasingly historic Welsh place names and house names are being replaced by English names. This kills the local culture and one of the elements which makes Wales unique... Old Welsh place names/building names should be protected by law; and new developments should have a mandatory Welsh name in order to preserve our unique culture and language.

A year earlier, Dai Lloyd MS won the ballot to propose a Member's bill: Development of the Protection of Welsh Historical Place Names Bill. A Plenary debate was held on 15 March 2017.

The Welsh Government did not support the bill, and it did not receive leave to proceed.

4. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government outlined its activity in this area (May 2018) in response to the petition in 2018 calling on the Senedd to protect and promote Welsh place-names. It noted that, following the passing of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the Welsh Government introduced a statutory list of historic place names, and that:

Statutory guidance requires local and National Parks authorities and Natural Resources Wales to take account of the list when their functions involve naming or renaming places. This includes the naming or renaming of streets, properties and other places, either directly or by another party. The intention is that the operation of the list and the statutory guidance together will lead to a reduction in the number of formal changes to historic property names.

However, the Welsh Government noted:

...these measures stop short of providing formal protection for historic place names. Detailed consideration was given to providing statutory protection for historic place names during the development of the 2016 Act.

In response to the petition calling to revert to the Welsh language spelling of place-names, the Minister for the Welsh Language at the time noted that:

The Welsh Language Commissioner is responsible for providing advice to individuals and organisations on the standardised forms of place names in Wales. The Commissioner's List of Standardised Welsh Place-names is a useful online resource, which can be searched or downloaded to find the standardised names of villages, towns and cities in Wales...

However, the Commissioner's role is to suggest forms and spellings for place-names, rather than to enforce them.

Responding to the petition calling on the Senedd and other bodies to start referring to Welsh cities and towns by their Welsh names, the Minister for Education and Welsh Language at the time noted that:

Welsh place names are currently the subject of close attention from the Welsh Government, with several processes ongoing in order to collect evidence for policy developments.

The Minister concluded by referring to the Welsh Government's Programme for Government Commitment, stating that:

I know that people feel strongly about Welsh place names, be they the names of houses, geographic features, towns or villages, and they are included in our Cooperation Agreement with Plaid Cymru because we as a Government want to make a real difference.

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Welsh Language, responding to the current petition, refers to the recent decision taken by Eryri and Bannau Brycheiniog National Parks to use their Welsh name as their sole corporate brand. He states that the decision taken by the National Parks has:

encouraged their use [Welsh name] by other organisations and individuals and increasing awareness of the language.

Ultimately, the Cabinet Secretary states that the National Parks, as independent organisations, have engaged with their communities to understand their thoughts on renaming. Proposals on the lines of the current petition would need "engagement and open public discussion" says the Cabinet Secretary.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

**Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Ynni a'r Gymraeg
Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Welsh Language**



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1410
Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/00573/24

**Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government**

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions Committee

15 April 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 18 March regarding a petition to stop using the name 'Anglesey' and exclusively use the name 'Ynys Môn' or shorten to 'Môn'.

Safeguarding Welsh place names is an important part of the Welsh Government's work, with both our [Programme for Government 2021-26](#) and [Cooperation Agreement](#) with Plaid Cymru including specific commitments to that end. Thus far, our focus has been on the wealth of names we have for topographical features, land and property, including farms and housing. Many of these names are historic in nature.

Many place names in Wales – including the names of villages, towns, cities and counties – have developed over hundreds, if not thousands, of years, and though the majority of them have their origins in the Welsh language, a number also have their roots in English, French, Latin, Irish or Norse. The name Anglesey itself possibly derives from Old Norse.

As I've previously stated, in general I would support the principle promoted by the Welsh Language Commissioner in her [Guidelines for Standardising Place-names in Wales](#), namely that we should aim for one spelling if the difference between the Welsh form and the English form consists of only one or two letters.

The Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill, currently being scrutinised by the Senedd, makes provision regarding the names of future Senedd constituencies. The Bill creates a presumption that the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (who will be responsible for reviewing Senedd constituencies rather than the Welsh Government) will seek to give a single name for constituencies for use in Welsh and English, and will only propose different names if there are specific reasons why a single name would be considered unacceptable. The effect of the provisions in practice will mean that any single name must be acceptable for use in Welsh. The Bill also makes provision relating to consulting with the Welsh Language Commissioner to ensure that the names of Senedd constituencies are accurate and reflect certain conventions. The Democracy and Boundary Commission's proposals, including proposed constituency boundaries and their names, will be subject to public consultation.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Jeremy.Miles@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Jeremy.Miles@gov.wales

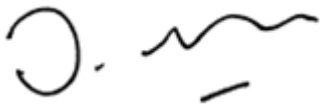
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

There's no doubt that the way public organisations are named can be influential. One need only look at how decisions by Eryri and Bannau Brycheiniog National Parks to use only their Welsh names has encouraged their use by other organisations and individuals and increased awareness of the language. It is important to note, however, that the National Parks are independent organisations, which have conducted exercises to get to know what local people think about their suggestions for renaming.

Several local authorities in Wales, of course, have names which are appropriate for use in both languages. However at present, both Ynys Môn and Isle of Anglesey are used by the relevant County Council. I believe that engagement and open public discussion would be important in relation to any decisions of the kind suggested by this petition, as it goes to the heart of local democracy and how people see themselves.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a circular mark followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Ynni a'r Gymraeg
Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Welsh Language

Prepare a bid for Wales to compete in the Eurovision Song Contest

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mai 2024
Petitions Committee | 13 May 2024

Reference: SR24/8458/6

Petition Number: P-06-1414

Petition title: Prepare a bid for Wales to compete in the Eurovision Song Contest

Text of petition: Wales is known around the world as “The Land of Song”, and we have a rich culture of music and performance which is recognised and celebrated internationally.

Wales should have the opportunity to be represented at Eurovision as a nation in its own right. Therefore, we call on the Welsh Government to work with S4C and other relevant bodies to prepare a bid for Wales to compete in the Eurovision Song Contest.

The requirement to compete at Eurovision is to be an active member of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). S4C is already an active member of the EBU. Wales has already taken part in Jeux Sans Frontières, Eurovision Choir and the Junior Eurovision Song Contest.



1. Background

The Eurovision Song Contest is organised yearly by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), together with a Host Broadcaster and around 40 Participating Broadcasters.

The Contest is overseen by the Reference Group on behalf of the Participating Broadcasters, and each Participating Broadcaster is represented by a Head of Delegation. The EBU's website makes no reference to governmental involvement.

The Eurovision Song Contest website explains:

The Eurovision Song Contest is an internationally televised songwriting competition, organised by the European Broadcasting Union and featuring participants chosen by EBU member broadcasters representing their countries from across Europe and beyond.

The membership list of the EBU (European Broadcasting Union) is available on the EBU website. Members from the UK are the BBC, S4C, ITV and STV. The BBC is the UK's Participating Broadcaster, and so runs the process of selecting the UK entry to the contest.

Wales (through S4C) has submitted entries to Jeux Sans Frontieres and the Junior Eurovision Song Contest (other EBU events) in years when other UK nations have not competed. Wales competed in Eurovision Choir (another EBU event) in 2019, when Scotland also competed from the UK.

2. Senedd and Welsh Government activity

In 2022 the Senedd debated the Welsh Conservative motion :

To propose that the Senedd:

1. Notes the European Broadcasting Union's statement on the 17 June 2022.
2. Regrets the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest cannot be held in Ukraine due to Russia's ongoing invasion.

Title:

Calls on the Welsh Government to engage with the BBC and the European Broadcasting Union regarding hosting the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest in Wales.

And a Plaid Cymru amendment:

Add as new point at end of motion:

Further calls on the Welsh Government to also prepare a bid for Wales to take part as a nation in its own right in the Eurovision Song Contest, furthering Wales's presence on the international stage.

In replying for the Welsh Government, then then Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport said:

Should we be successful for any bid for this great event, we would fully honour the EBU's commitment to ensure that the 2023 event reflects Ukraine's win this year, and any entry would be a UK entry, because Eurovision is a competition held amongst broadcasting networks, and entries are from the main public service broadcasters of each country, and for the UK this is the BBC. The BBC would therefore need to withdraw from being the UK's Eurovision broadcaster before Wales could be allowed to compete in its own right. A devolved Government does not mean separate participation.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ddiwylliant a Chyfiawnder
Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1414
Ein cyf/Our ref DB/00280/24

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru

23 April 2024

Dear Jack,

Petition P-06-1414 Prepare a bid for Wales to compete in the Eurovision Song Contest

Thank you for your letter of 18 March regarding the above petition which calls for Wales to have the opportunity to be represented at Eurovision as a nation in its own right.

Entries to the Eurovision Song Contest are populated by the main member public service broadcaster of each country. For the UK this is the BBC. The BBC would therefore need to withdraw from being the UK's Eurovision broadcaster before Wales could be allowed to compete in its own right. Eurovision is a non-political music event and a competition between public service broadcasters who are members of the EBU. It is not a contest between governments and a devolved government does not mean separate participation.

We do, of course, want to see that Wales cultural contribution and musical talents continue to play a role within the broader UK representation in the contest.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ddiwylliant a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

P-06-1414 Prepare a bid for Wales to compete in the Eurovision Song Contest - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 03 April 2024

Hello!

Apologies for the delay getting further info across

I'm very happy with the process so far and the document which reflects the aims of the petition.

I would only like to add that today a guerrilla style campaign was launched today with a Welsh entry put forward by Sara Davies. Full report here: <https://nation.cymru/culture/wales-puts-forward-eurovision-entry-campaign-for-wales-to-compete-as-a-nation-begins/>

This has also appeared on Sky News and the Guardian, as well as the BBC News programme.

It might at first seem a small issue, but from a cultural angle and for Wales on the world stage it's very important.

As a nation that is witnessing Australia and Israel compete when we can't, it's a shame our politicians don't give it more weight.

I would also like to add, that at the very least the Welsh Gov should push the BBC to rotate entries from across the UK and also use Welsh and other native Celtic languages.

With thanks and best wishes

Ban fireworks from shops

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mai 2024
Petitions Committee | 13 May 2024

Reference: SR24/8458

Petition Number: P-06-1417

Petition title: Ban fireworks from shops

Text of petition: Stop selling fireworks in shops as they can frighten and kill animals and hurt people.

1. The law on selling, owning and using fireworks

There are restrictions on the sale, possession and use of fireworks. Under the Explosives Act 1875 (as amended), it is illegal to set a firework off in a street or public place and the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 addresses noise from homes or gardens between 11pm and 7am. If the noise breaches permitted levels, an environmental health officer may serve a warning notice on the person responsible. If the warning is ignored, the person may be prosecuted.



The [Fireworks Act 2003](#) granted the UK Government powers to make regulations on the supply, possession and use of fireworks.

Brought forward under the 2003 Act, the [Fireworks Regulations 2004](#) seeks to tackle the anti-social use of fireworks. They prohibit the sale of fireworks to the public by unlicensed traders, except for days around ‘permitted fireworks nights’ (Chinese New Year, Diwali, Bonfire Night and New Year). They also prohibit the sale of fireworks with noise levels over 120 decibels and made it an offence to use fireworks after 11pm and before 7am without permission. Times are extended on permitted fireworks nights.

The [Pyrotechnic Articles \(Safety\) Regulations 2015](#) relates to the safety of fireworks as a consumer product, setting out which articles may be made available to the public, specific age restrictions, and which ones may only be supplied to those with specialist knowledge.

Although the Welsh Ministers do not have executive competence under the Fireworks Act 2003 to make regulations, in terms of legislative competence the position is not as definitive, and it is not something that the Senedd has no power to do.

2. Action

2.1. Wales

The Committee has previously considered [a petition which called for the ban of fireworks from public sale](#).

In [its response](#) to the petition, the Welsh Government explained that,

“powers to regulate the sale and use of fireworks in England and Wales exist under the Fireworks Act 2003. These powers currently sit with UK Government Ministers, specifically the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)”.

In [correspondence with BEIS](#) in 2021, former Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs Minister Lesley Griffiths also said regulation-making powers sitting with the Secretary of State made it difficult “to mirror in Wales the regulations recently made by the Scottish Government, tightening conditions on the sale and use of fireworks”. She also raised the possibility of transferring powers to Welsh Ministers, allowing the Welsh Government to make such regulations.

In a response, the then UK Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets said:

I remain committed to considering if it would be appropriate for the Welsh Government to be given additional powers in respect of fireworks. Before advancing on this matter, I would want to wait until the outcomes of commitments the Government has made and the impact of the changes the Scottish Government have implemented have been evaluated.

MSs have also raised the possibility of stricter regulations with the Welsh Government during Plenary question sessions, with the Counsel General saying,

One of the issues, of course, around fireworks is that it is a mostly reserved subject area. If tighter restrictions on firework sales and use are to be implemented, of course, they are within that reserved domain. There are some areas where we can work in[...]We've always been clear that we support tighter regulations to underpin the responsible use of fireworks and its implications for devolved matters.

The Welsh Government further outlined its support for stricter regulation in the its Noise and Soundscape plan for Wales. The plan states the Welsh Government “does not believe the current legislation in England and Wales is adequate to protect vulnerable people and animals from the effects of firework noise”.

A BBC report, from November 2023 notes that 14 councils in Wales have signed up to RSPCA-backed policies to keep animals safe.

2.2. Scotland

As referenced in the above correspondence between Welsh and UK Government, the Scottish Government has brought forward its own regulations around firework use.

The Fireworks (Scotland) Regulations 2004, as amended by the new Fireworks (Scotland) Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2021, controls the way the general public can use and access consumer fireworks, such as the times when they can be used and the quantity of fireworks that can be sold by retailers to individuals who do not have an explosives licence.

The Fireworks and Pyrotechnics Articles (Scotland) Act 2022 introduced a licensing system, powers for local authorities to designate firework control zones,

restrictions on the supply and use of fireworks, and a new offence to criminalise the supply of fireworks and pyrotechnics to under-18s.

3. UK Petitions

The House of Commons Petitions Committee has considered several petitions about misuse of fireworks and [reported in November 2019](#). The report could not recommend a ban on public sales, explaining;

There are also genuine concerns about the likely ineffectiveness of a ban, including some evidence from overseas that a ban could have unintended and counter-productive consequences for public safety [...]While people who want to ban the public from buying and using fireworks have valid concerns that must be addressed, we cannot support a ban before other, less drastic but potentially more effective, options have been fully explored.

In November 2023, the UK Government responded to a [petition](#) considered by the Committee. It stated that “we believe that the legislative framework controlling fireworks strikes the right balance and we have no plans to replace it at this time”.

There are also a number of [open UK petitions](#) which relate to a ban on the public sale of fireworks.

4. The UK Internal Market Act 2020

The UK Internal Market Act 2020 set new rules for the regulation of goods across the UK. The Act established the principles of mutual recognition and non-discrimination and enshrined them in UK law as Market Access Principles.

Under the mutual recognition principle, if a good complies with rules relating to its sale in the part of the UK in which it was produced or into which it was imported, then it can be sold in any other part of the UK without having to meet the standards in those other parts, even if they are different.

Under the non-discrimination principle, any rules regulating how goods must be sold in one part of the UK that discriminate directly or indirectly against providers from other parts of the UK do not generally apply.

A ban on the sale of fireworks in Wales might come within the scope of the Market Access Principles. This could have an impact on the effect and enforceability of that ban.

The annual report on the operation of the internal market 2023-24 appendices noted the introduction of The Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion
Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1417
Ein cyf/Our ref HIDCC/05058/24

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru

15 April 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 18 March regarding Petition P-06-1417 in relation to banning shops from selling fireworks.

Since we published our first Noise and Soundscape Action Plan for Wales in 2018 firework noise has been raised a number of times by citizens. Petitions have been considered in both the House of Commons and in the Senedd with new legislation being passed by the Scottish Government. The latest [Noise and Soundscapes Action Plan 2023-2028](#) sets out our policy on Fireworks.

The Welsh Government does not believe the current legislation in England and Wales is adequate to protect vulnerable people and animals from the effects of firework noise. Welsh Ministers have repeatedly urged the UK Government to accept the House of Commons Petitions Committee recommendation to seek a workable reduced maximum decibel limit, which would diminish the risks posed by firework noise.

The regulation of the sale and supply of goods and services to consumers is a reserved matter under Schedule 7A to the Government of Wales Act 2006. Regulation-making powers under the Fireworks Act 2003 rest with the Secretary of State in relation to England and Wales. Therefore, Welsh Ministers are not able to mirror the regulations made by the Scottish Government in 2021 which tightened conditions on the sale and use of fireworks.

Given the proximity of Wales' most populated areas to shops in England, and the ease of shopping online, the Welsh Government would welcome concerted action across Great Britain to ensure that in future fireworks available for sale are quieter and used at more predictable times of the year.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

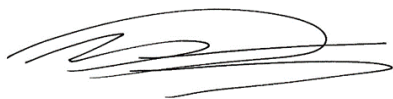
Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Welsh Government will continue to work constructively with UK Government to improve the laws governing the sale and use of fireworks in England and Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping loops and lines, positioned above the printed name.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs

**P-06-1417 Ban fireworks from shops – Correspondence from the Petitioner,
25 April 2024**

I would like to add a comment towards my petition for fireworks to stop being sold to public and only be used in organised events only to use them as kids ages 11 13 and 14 got hold of them from shops /online and fort it was funny to go into my horses field and chase my beloved horse Max around firing fireworks at him which ended with him being in stress bolting frew a fence and went into a stream with sinking mug and was stuck when I found out and got to him and finely got him out with help of vets and farmers he had no temperature with its being in october time and cold water and inhaled water to lungs .

Vets did everything thay could me and my freinds stayed with him all night but he passed away on his owen

I had him from 6 months old till the day he passed away by fiyerworks and kids ! There getting into wrong hands and hurting /killing people and animals I think they should be organised events only thing !

Thank you

M4 speed limit petitions

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mai 2024
Petitions Committee | 13 May 2024

Reference: SR24/8458 - 5 & 8

This briefing has been prepared to support the Committee's consideration of two petitions relating to 50mph speed limits on the Welsh trunk road and motorway network.

Petition 1

Petition Number: P-06-1413

Petition title: Scrap the 50mph limits on the M4 around Newport and Swansea and on the A470 around Pontypridd

Text of petition: Despite the fact that everyone wants to improve air quality, we need policies that can actually make the difference, no restrictions that affect our livelihood with no clear benefits to the environment. Speed limits affect our economy, the traffic on our roads, our mental health and our freedom. There's no safety issues on those dual carriageways that require such speed limits. We want our government to stop punishing motorists. We are not criminals!

Petition 2

Petition Number: P-06-1416

Petition title: Increase the speed limit on the M4 back to 70mph



Text of petition: The reduced limit is causing congestion and has an impact on drive time. It increases the time a car is located in an area producing the same level of carbon emissions a standard same volume per second over time. A faster speed would therefore allow a higher gear producing fewer emissions and spending less time in the area therefore reducing the emissions.

1. Background

Exposure to Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) has negative health impacts. The Welsh Government has a legal duty to comply with air quality regulations, including limits on NO₂ at the roadside. Legal limits are set at:

- an hourly limit value of an average of 200 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³) (which must not be exceeded more than 18 times in a calendar year); and
- an annual limit value of an average of 40 µg/m³.

Assessment and monitoring previously identified NO₂ levels above the legal limit at several locations on the motorway and trunk road network.

In 2018, both the Welsh Government and UK Government were successfully taken to Court over NO₂ levels which exceeded legal limits.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government consulted on an approach to tackling roadside NO₂ concentrations in the Spring of 2018. In November 2018 it published its plan for Tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations in Wales. In terms of the trunk road and motorway network, which the Welsh Government is directly responsible for, the plan noted:

Exceedances of legal limits for NO₂ have been identified on the following discrete stretches of motorway and trunk road outside the Cardiff and Swansea Urban Areas:

- (i) A494 at Deeside (North Wales Zone);

- (ii) A483 near Wrexham (North Wales Zone);
- (iii) M4 between Junctions 41 and 42 at Port Talbot (Swansea and South Wales Zone);
- (iv) M4 between Junctions 25 and 26 at Newport (South Wales Zone);
and
- (v) A470 between Upper Boat and Pontypridd (South Wales Zone).

The plan made clear that NO₂ concentrations were above the 40 µg/m³ limit at these sites. The Welsh Government determined the introduction of 50mph speed limits as the quickest method of achieving compliance.

In June 2018, 50mph speed limits were introduced at each of the five sites identified in the air quality plan, and made permanent the following year. The Welsh Government has monitored the sites since, and published monitoring reports on its website up to 2021. Data for 2022 has also been published through an FOI response.

Data for roadside NO₂ concentrations for the period 2018 to 2022 at each of the five sites, including the M4 sites addressed by the petitions, are provided in the table below.

Annual Mean NO₂ Concentration at Welsh 50mph trunk road and motorway sites (µg/m³)

Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
A470 Pontypridd	64.6 (56.8)	54.7 (48.1)	35.9 (30.5)	38.7 (33.3)	44.4 (38.6)
M4 Newport	72.2 (63.5)	67.3 (59.2)	45.2 (38.4)	45.5 (39.2)	48.4 (42.1)
M4 Port Talbot	55 (48.4)	48.9 (43)	33.1 (28.2)	39.1 (33.6)	39.4 (34.2)
A483 Wrexham	57 (50.2)	46.5 (40.9)	32.3 (27.5)	29.6 (25.5)	33.1 (28.8)
A494 Deeside	47.9 (42.2)	41.6 (36.6)	31.2 (26.5)	32.6 (28)	32.0 (27.8)

Source: Welsh Government

Note: The data has been collected by diffusion tube and has been adjusted using the national bias adjustment factors published by Defra. Adjusted figures are shown in brackets alongside the raw data.

The Welsh Government also published its Clean Air Plan for Wales in August 2020.

While a fixed 50mph speed limit was put in place on the M4 at the Brynglas Tunnels to address air quality, a variable speed limit had already been implemented between junctions 24 and 28.

The South East Wales Transport Commission, established by the Welsh Government to consider alternatives to the M4 relief road, published its interim report in 2019. This recommended the introduction of average speed control cameras between junctions 24 and 28, replacing the previous variable speed limit approach. In doing so, the Commission said:

The VSL system has been effective at regularising speeds during the inter-peak period. However, it has had a limited impact on improving traffic flow during peak periods. The locations of the spot cameras can also cause harsh accelerating and braking from some drivers. These changes in speed contribute to a breakdown of traffic flow.

Our analysis suggests an average speed control would help improve the regularity of traffic speeds across the problematic stretches of the M4. A fixed speed limit should encourage vehicles to travel at a more consistent speed, making many journeys quicker and more reliable. A single speed limit should also reduce driver confusion and improve safety.

We have considered and modelled a range of speed limits from 40mph to 50mph and 60mph. Our analysis demonstrates 50mph to be the optimal speed in terms of journey time reliability and journey speeds, also taking account other important factors such as air quality, emissions and noise.

In September 2021, the Welsh Government announced enforcement of 50mph at all five locations would begin from 4 October that year.

The Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, has written to the Chair regarding petition P-06-1413 and P-06-1416. He outlines the legal position on air quality and explains the Welsh Government's rationale for the limits. He says he understands that reduced speed limits are not always welcome, and points to action taken to raise awareness of the reason for the reduced limits. He also explains that monitoring data "has revealed significant reductions" in NO₂ pollution levels at the locations where 50mph limits have been introduced.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The Petitions Committee has previously considered a petition calling for the Welsh Government to “Remove the average speed cameras and 50mph speed limit on the M4 between Newport and Cardiff.” The Committee noted the concerns, whilst recognising that the Wales Transport Strategy emphasises environment, air quality and people’s well-being through focusing on sustainable travel and improved public travel infrastructure. It concluded the Welsh Government has no plans to remove the average speed cameras at present, and agreed to thank the petitioner and close the petition.

The issue of 50mph limits in general, and on the M4 in particular, has been discussed in the Senedd. For example, in November 2022 Natasha Asghar MS said the 50mph cameras on the M4 in Newport “simply haven’t worked” as “heavy congestion still plagues that stretch of the road every single day”. She asked, referring to cancellation of the M4 relief road scheme:

... is it not true that the imposition of unrealistic speed limits has less to do with cutting pollution and everything to do with forcing motorists off our inadequate roads to cover up your failure to provide Wales with an effective and efficient road network?

The then Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS, responded:

The provision of 50 mph speed limits, as the Member knows, were, in many cases, court ordered because they were breaching air quality targets, and, far from her saying have proven ineffective, the reverse is true, as she well knows. They have proven effective in bringing down the pollution levels, as well as contributing to smoother flow of traffic.

In Plenary in June 2019, responding to the announcement that the limits were being made permanent, Mark Reckless MS asked about the evidence for their effectiveness “in terms of reducing or otherwise the pollutants we’re concerned about?” He made clear this was in the context of the decision not to proceed with the M4 relief road given that “an inspector [at the public inquiry] on the M4 said that the relief road would reduce climate change emissions and air pollution”.

The then Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths MS, suggested communication about the reason for the speed limit had not been effective, and the reasons were not well understood:

... I don't think people have been adhering to it because I think there has been a little bit of confusion as to what it's for and because if they think it's because of speed and it's not being enforced, then they don't stick to the 50 mph. Certainly, the evidence that I've seen from across the five sites is mixed, but I think if we have signage saying very clearly that poor air quality kills—and I think that you have to sometimes shock people—then people will adhere to the reduction more willingly.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion
Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1413
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00545/24

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions Committee
petitions@senedd.wales

15 April 2024

Dear Jack,

Petition P-06-1413 Scrap the 50mph limits on the M4 around Newport and Swansea and on the A470 around Pontypridd

Thank you for your letter of 18 March, addressed to the previous Deputy Minister for Climate Change, providing details of *Petition P-06-1413 concerning 50mph speed limits on the M4 around Newport and Swansea and on the A470 around Pontypridd* as provided to the Petitions Committee by Michele Crackett. Your letter asks me to provide views on the issues raised in the accompanying Petition Text.

Welsh Government has a legal duty to comply with statutory air pollutant limits for the protection of human health. Outdoor air pollution is considered to be the largest environmental health risk of our generation, according to the World Health Organisation, increasing risks of heart and lung disease as well as contributing towards the worsening of pre-existing health conditions such as asthma. These pollutants include nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM_{2.5}/PM₁₀), ground level o-zone (O₃), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), and carbon monoxide (CO).

Vehicle emissions are a major cause of NO₂ levels near roads. [UK compliance assessment](#) identified NO₂ levels above the legal limit at several locations on the Welsh Government motorway and trunk road network. These locations included the M4 at Newport between junctions 25-26, Port Talbot between junctions 41- 42 and also the A470 between Upper Boat and Pontypridd.

Accordingly, to comply with the above limits, a reduced 50mph speed limit has been applied at each of these locations to reduce emissions of NO₂. The 50mph speed limit is mandatory for all motor vehicles, with road signs in place to inform motorists that the speed limits have been applied for air quality purposes. The reduced speed limit is based on research which indicated emissions were lowest for light duty vehicles at speeds up to 50mph, whilst heavy duty vehicles did not show an increase at speeds above this level.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Lee.Waters@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lee.Waters@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

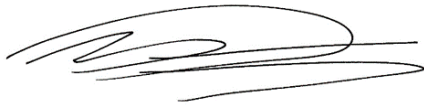
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Our evidence revealed the 50mph speed limits to be the quickest and most effective way to reduce NO₂ levels to improve air quality for our communities. However, we understand that reduced speed limits are not always welcomed, particularly where motorists are not clear on the purpose. This is why we have taken steps to raise awareness of the reason for this action, including through fixed and variable road sign messaging, an educational video, and further information on the Welsh Government website including Frequently Asked Questions. More detailed information on the initial option appraisal of potential measures to support compliance with statutory limits is also publicly available in our [Stage 1 and 2](#) Welsh Government Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) reports, and in our [Stage 3](#) reports which made the case for the 50mph speed limit.

We continually measure air quality at each location where we have introduced 50mph speed limits for air quality purposes, and we have published this data in reports for the [2018 and 2019](#) calendar years, and the [2020 and 2021](#) calendar years. This data has revealed significant reductions in NO₂ pollution levels at these locations. We will shortly be releasing a report detailing measurements for the 2022 and 2023 calendar years.

Further information regarding our actions to tackle high NO₂ concentrations on the motorway and trunk road network can be found here within our [Welsh Government supplemental plan to the UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations](#). Also, Welsh Government actions to improve air quality more widely can be found in our [Clean Air Plan for Wales: Healthy Air, Healthy Wales](#).

Yours sincerely



Huw Irranca Davies AS/MS
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs

cc. Cabinet Secretary for North Wales & Transport

M4 speed limit petitions

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mai 2024
Petitions Committee | 13 May 2024

Reference: SR24/8458 - 5 & 8

This briefing has been prepared to support the Committee's consideration of two petitions relating to 50mph speed limits on the Welsh trunk road and motorway network.

Petition 1

Petition Number: P-06-1413

Petition title: Scrap the 50mph limits on the M4 around Newport and Swansea and on the A470 around Pontypridd

Text of petition: Despite the fact that everyone wants to improve air quality, we need policies that can actually make the difference, no restrictions that affect our livelihood with no clear benefits to the environment. Speed limits affect our economy, the traffic on our roads, our mental health and our freedom. There's no safety issues on those dual carriageways that require such speed limits. We want our government to stop punishing motorists. We are not criminals!

Petition 2

Petition Number: P-06-1416

Petition title: Increase the speed limit on the M4 back to 70mph



Text of petition: The reduced limit is causing congestion and has an impact on drive time. It increases the time a car is located in an area producing the same level of carbon emissions a standard same volume per second over time. A faster speed would therefore allow a higher gear producing fewer emissions and spending less time in the area therefore reducing the emissions.

1. Background

Exposure to Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) has negative health impacts. The Welsh Government has a legal duty to comply with air quality regulations, including limits on NO₂ at the roadside. Legal limits are set at:

- an hourly limit value of an average of 200 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³) (which must not be exceeded more than 18 times in a calendar year); and
- an annual limit value of an average of 40 µg/m³.

Assessment and monitoring previously identified NO₂ levels above the legal limit at several locations on the motorway and trunk road network.

In 2018, both the Welsh Government and UK Government were successfully taken to Court over NO₂ levels which exceeded legal limits.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government consulted on an approach to tackling roadside NO₂ concentrations in the Spring of 2018. In November 2018 it published its plan for Tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations in Wales. In terms of the trunk road and motorway network, which the Welsh Government is directly responsible for, the plan noted:

Exceedances of legal limits for NO₂ have been identified on the following discrete stretches of motorway and trunk road outside the Cardiff and Swansea Urban Areas:

- (i) A494 at Deeside (North Wales Zone);

- (ii) A483 near Wrexham (North Wales Zone);
- (iii) M4 between Junctions 41 and 42 at Port Talbot (Swansea and South Wales Zone);
- (iv) M4 between Junctions 25 and 26 at Newport (South Wales Zone);
and
- (v) A470 between Upper Boat and Pontypridd (South Wales Zone).

The plan made clear that NO₂ concentrations were above the 40 µg/m³ limit at these sites. The Welsh Government determined the introduction of 50mph speed limits as the quickest method of achieving compliance.

In June 2018, 50mph speed limits were introduced at each of the five sites identified in the air quality plan, and made permanent the following year. The Welsh Government has monitored the sites since, and published monitoring reports on its website up to 2021. Data for 2022 has also been published through an FOI response.

Data for roadside NO₂ concentrations for the period 2018 to 2022 at each of the five sites, including the M4 sites addressed by the petitions, are provided in the table below.

Annual Mean NO₂ Concentration at Welsh 50mph trunk road and motorway sites (µg/m³)

Location	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
A470 Pontypridd	64.6 (56.8)	54.7 (48.1)	35.9 (30.5)	38.7 (33.3)	44.4 (38.6)
M4 Newport	72.2 (63.5)	67.3 (59.2)	45.2 (38.4)	45.5 (39.2)	48.4 (42.1)
M4 Port Talbot	55 (48.4)	48.9 (43)	33.1 (28.2)	39.1 (33.6)	39.4 (34.2)
A483 Wrexham	57 (50.2)	46.5 (40.9)	32.3 (27.5)	29.6 (25.5)	33.1 (28.8)
A494 Deeside	47.9 (42.2)	41.6 (36.6)	31.2 (26.5)	32.6 (28)	32.0 (27.8)

Source: Welsh Government

Note: The data has been collected by diffusion tube and has been adjusted using the national bias adjustment factors published by Defra. Adjusted figures are shown in brackets alongside the raw data.

The Welsh Government also published its Clean Air Plan for Wales in August 2020.

While a fixed 50mph speed limit was put in place on the M4 at the Brynglas Tunnels to address air quality, a variable speed limit had already been implemented between junctions 24 and 28.

The South East Wales Transport Commission, established by the Welsh Government to consider alternatives to the M4 relief road, [published its interim report in 2019](#). This recommended the introduction of average speed control cameras between junctions 24 and 28, replacing the previous variable speed limit approach. In doing so, the Commission said:

The VSL system has been effective at regularising speeds during the inter-peak period. However, it has had a limited impact on improving traffic flow during peak periods. The locations of the spot cameras can also cause harsh accelerating and braking from some drivers. These changes in speed contribute to a breakdown of traffic flow.

Our analysis suggests an average speed control would help improve the regularity of traffic speeds across the problematic stretches of the M4. A fixed speed limit should encourage vehicles to travel at a more consistent speed, making many journeys quicker and more reliable. A single speed limit should also reduce driver confusion and improve safety.

We have considered and modelled a range of speed limits from 40mph to 50mph and 60mph. Our analysis demonstrates 50mph to be the optimal speed in terms of journey time reliability and journey speeds, also taking account other important factors such as air quality, emissions and noise.

In September 2021, the [Welsh Government announced](#) enforcement of 50mph at all five locations would begin from 4 October that year.

The Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, has written to the Chair regarding petition P-06-1413 and P-06-1416. He outlines the legal position on air quality and explains the Welsh Government's rationale for the limits. He says he understands that reduced speed limits are not always welcome, and points to action taken to raise awareness of the reason for the reduced limits. He also explains that monitoring data "has revealed significant reductions" in NO₂ pollution levels at the locations where 50mph limits have been introduced.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The Petitions Committee has previously considered a petition calling for the Welsh Government to “Remove the average speed cameras and 50mph speed limit on the M4 between Newport and Cardiff.” The Committee noted the concerns, whilst recognising that the Wales Transport Strategy emphasises environment, air quality and people’s well-being through focusing on sustainable travel and improved public travel infrastructure. It concluded the Welsh Government has no plans to remove the average speed cameras at present, and agreed to thank the petitioner and close the petition.

The issue of 50mph limits in general, and on the M4 in particular, has been discussed in the Senedd. For example, in November 2022 Natasha Asghar MS said the 50mph cameras on the M4 in Newport “simply haven’t worked” as “heavy congestion still plagues that stretch of the road every single day”. She asked, referring to cancellation of the M4 relief road scheme:

... is it not true that the imposition of unrealistic speed limits has less to do with cutting pollution and everything to do with forcing motorists off our inadequate roads to cover up your failure to provide Wales with an effective and efficient road network?

The then Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS, responded:

The provision of 50 mph speed limits, as the Member knows, were, in many cases, court ordered because they were breaching air quality targets, and, far from her saying have proven ineffective, the reverse is true, as she well knows. They have proven effective in bringing down the pollution levels, as well as contributing to smoother flow of traffic.

In Plenary in June 2019, responding to the announcement that the limits were being made permanent, Mark Reckless MS asked about the evidence for their effectiveness “in terms of reducing or otherwise the pollutants we’re concerned about?” He made clear this was in the context of the decision not to proceed with the M4 relief road given that “an inspector [at the public inquiry] on the M4 said that the relief road would reduce climate change emissions and air pollution”.

The then Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths MS, suggested communication about the reason for the speed limit had not been effective, and the reasons were not well understood:

... I don't think people have been adhering to it because I think there has been a little bit of confusion as to what it's for and because if they think it's because of speed and it's not being enforced, then they don't stick to the 50 mph. Certainly, the evidence that I've seen from across the five sites is mixed, but I think if we have signage saying very clearly that poor air quality kills—and I think that you have to sometimes shock people—then people will adhere to the reduction more willingly.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1416
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00545/24

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions Committee

petitions@senedd.wales

29 April 2024

Dear Jack,

Petition P-06-1416 Increase Speed Limit on M4 back to 70mph

Thank you for your letter of 18 March, addressed to the previous Deputy Minister for Climate Change, providing details of *Petition P-06-1416 – Increase the speed limit on the M4 back to 70mph* as provided to the Petitions Committee by Jonathan Jones. Your letter asks me to provide views on the issues raised in the accompanying Petition Text.

Welsh Government has a legal duty to comply with statutory air pollutant limits for the protection of human health. Outdoor air pollution is considered to be the largest environmental health risk of our generation, according to the World Health Organisation, increasing risks of heart and lung disease as well as contributing towards the worsening of pre-existing health conditions such as asthma. These pollutants include nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM_{2.5}/PM₁₀), ground level o-zone (O₃), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), and carbon monoxide (CO).

Vehicle emissions are a major cause of NO₂ levels near roads. [UK compliance assessment](#) identified NO₂ levels above the legal limit at several locations on the Welsh Government motorway and trunk road network. These locations included the M4 at Newport between junctions 25-26, Port Talbot between junctions 41- 42 and also the A470 between Upper Boat and Pontypridd.

Accordingly, to comply with the above limits, a reduced 50mph speed limit has been applied at each of these locations to reduce emissions of NO₂. The 50mph speed limit is mandatory for all motor vehicles, with road signs in place to inform motorists that the speed limits have been applied for air quality purposes. The reduced speed limit is based on research which indicated emissions were lowest for light duty vehicles at speeds up to 50mph, whilst heavy duty vehicles did not show an increase at speeds above this level.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Our evidence revealed the 50mph speed limits to be the quickest and most effective way to reduce NO₂ levels to improve air quality for our communities. However, we understand that reduced speed limits are not always welcomed, particularly where motorists are not clear on the purpose. This is why we have taken steps to raise awareness of the reason for this action, including through fixed and variable road sign messaging, an educational video, and further information on the Welsh Government website including Frequently Asked Questions. More detailed information on the initial option appraisal of potential measures to support compliance with statutory limits is also publicly available in our [Stage 1 and 2](#) Welsh Government Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) reports, and in our [Stage 3](#) reports which made the case for the 50mph speed limit.

We continually measure air quality at each location where we have introduced 50mph speed limits for air quality purposes, and we have published this data in reports for the [2018 and 2019](#) calendar years, and the [2020 and 2021](#) calendar years. This data has revealed significant reductions in NO₂ pollution levels at these locations. We will shortly be releasing a report detailing measurements for the 2022 and 2023 calendar years.

Further information regarding our actions to tackle high NO₂ concentrations on the motorway and trunk road network can be found here within our [Welsh Government supplemental plan to the UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations](#). Also, Welsh Government actions to improve air quality more widely can be found in our [Clean Air Plan for Wales: Healthy Air, Healthy Wales](#).

Yours sincerely,



Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change & Rural Affairs

M4 Relief Road Petitions

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mai 2024
Petitions Committee | 13 May 2024

Reference: SR24/8458

This briefing has been prepared to support the Committee's consideration of two petitions relating to the M4 relief road.

Petition 1

Petition Number: P-06-1415

Petition title: Brynglas Tunnels M4 South Wales relief road to be put into action.

Text of petition:

To see the relief road being built to help Wales grow and thrive once again
To reduce queues and wait times around the Brynglas area.

Millions was spent on surveys and compulsory purchases of land and then lay to the way side without a public vote. Why?

The public want to access and leave Wales without having to queue every day twice a day.



Tourists are reconsidering coming back to Wales due to the shambles that is Brynglas tunnels.

Wales relies on tourism for revenue yet everyone is stuck on an outdated stretch of road that is one of the biggest bottle necks into Wales.

Petition 2

Petition Number: P-06-1421

Petition title: Hold a public poll on whether to build the M4 Relief Road, then implement the result immediately.

Text of petition: The traffic congestion around the Newport tunnels is catastrophic to the economy and well-being of drivers and local residents.

1. Background

The Welsh Government is the highway authority for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network and is responsible for maintenance and improvement of the network, including the M4. Proposals to increase capacity on the M4 around Newport have been discussed since the early 1990s.

M4 corridor around Newport scheme

In 2014, the Welsh Government published M4 Corridor Around Newport – The Plan which set out plans to build a new section of motorway, known as the ‘Black Route’ or ‘preferred route’.

In March 2016 a substantial number of documents, marking a key stage in the planning and delivery process for the project, were published. Ten public exhibitions were also announced where members of the public were able to inspect draft orders, environmental information and other associated reports and materials. Senedd Research previously published an article which explored this in more detail.

Following the public exhibitions, in June 2016 the Welsh Government announced that a public inquiry would be held.

The inquiry began in February 2017, with an independent inspector appointed, and closed in April 2018. The inspector's report found:

...there is a compelling case for the scheme to be implemented in order to relieve an acute problem on the strategic motorway network...It is accordingly my view that the scheme is in the public interest.

However the inspector's report was not binding on the Welsh Government and in June 2019 the former First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS, announced his decision not to proceed with the scheme.

In his decision letter, the former First Minister cited two main reasons for his decision – the costs and environmental impacts of the scheme. Senedd Research published an article exploring this at the time the decision was made.

In 2020 the former Prime Minister, Boris Johnson suggested the UK Government could build the relief road, a claim strongly refuted by the Welsh Government with road infrastructure and land use planning being devolved matters.

The Burns Commission

Following the decision not to proceed with the scheme, the Welsh Government announced a Commission of transport experts would be established and tasked with making recommendations on alternative solutions to the problems on the M4 at Newport.

The South East Wales Transport Commission, chaired by Lord Burns, was subsequently established and published its final recommendations report in 2020. It recommended a “network of alternatives”, centred on public transport.

In 2021 the Burns Delivery Unit was established within Transport for Wales to take forward the recommendations.

The roads review

Should any future scheme to build the relief road be brought forward it would be subject to the Welsh Government's road building tests established as a result of its roads review.

In June 2021 the former Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS, announced that a roads review panel would be established to review planned Welsh Government road investments. The former Deputy Minister announced a pause on all new road schemes while the existing pipeline of schemes was reviewed.

The panel published its final report in February 2023. In response the Welsh Government published a new roads policy statement which sets four road building tests. The former Deputy Minister made clear that the policy “will be a material consideration in the event of any planning dispute”.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has provided the same response to both petitions.

In letters to the Chair dated 10 April and 11 April, the Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport, Ken Skates MS says “the Welsh Ministers have been clear that the decision has been made on the M4 relief road”.

It goes on to highlight the ongoing work to implement the Burns Commission recommendations.

The Cabinet Secretary also recently said in a media interview that he “just can’t see” the road being built due to “astronomical costs”.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The issue has been debated on many occasions in the Senedd, particularly at the time of the decision being made.

The Petitions Committee has also considered various petitions on the road prior to the decision being made including one in support of the preferred route and one calling for the scheme to be scrapped to protect the Gwent Levels.

Most recently, when asked about the road during Plenary (in his previous post as Minister for Economy), the now First Minister, Vaughan Gething MS, said “when it comes to the M4 relief road, the reality is there is not the resource there”.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1415
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00543/24

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee

10 April 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 18 March providing details of petition P-06-1415 - Brynglas Tunnels M4 South Wales relief road to be put into action.

The Welsh Ministers have been clear that the decision has been made on the M4 Relief Road. Following Mark Drakeford MS, the previous First Minister's decision not to proceed with the M4 Relief Road, the [South East Wales Transport Commission](#) (SEWTC) was established to consider the problems, opportunities, challenges and objectives for tackling congestion on the M4 in South East Wales and make recommendations to the Welsh Government on solutions. The Commission's 58 recommendations were endorsed by the Welsh Government in January 2021. The report set out a plan for a modern public transport system for Newport, which will ease congestion around the M4 and improve services for residents of the city.

On 24 March 2021, we announced the appointment of Simon Gibson CBE as the Chair of the Burns Delivery Board, with Dr Lynn Sloman MBE as Vice Chair. Together they oversee a dedicated Unit in Transport for Wales that are pressing ahead to deliver on the recommendations.

This team has made good progress on development of the South Wales Mainline and new stations on it, as well as regional and local measures such as secure cycle storage, free bus trials and improving regionally important active travel and bus infrastructure.

It is notable that the Union Connectivity Review led by Sir Peter Hendy also recognised the need to improve non-devolved rail provision in south Wales, and the Delivery Unit secured £2.7m of UK Government funding to take forward the Business Case.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We continue to work with all partners to deliver improvements to transport in South East Wales.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke above the letters.

Ken Skates AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport

M4 Relief Road Petitions

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mai 2024
Petitions Committee | 13 May 2024

Reference: SR24/8458

This briefing has been prepared to support the Committee's consideration of two petitions relating to the M4 relief road.

Petition 1

Petition Number: P-06-1415

Petition title: Brynglas Tunnels M4 South Wales relief road to be put into action.

Text of petition:

To see the relief road being built to help Wales grow and thrive once again
To reduce queues and wait times around the Brynglas area.

Millions was spent on surveys and compulsory purchases of land and then lay to the way side without a public vote. Why?

The public want to access and leave Wales without having to queue every day twice a day.



Tourists are reconsidering coming back to Wales due to the shambles that is Brynglas tunnels.

Wales relies on tourism for revenue yet everyone is stuck on an outdated stretch of road that is one of the biggest bottle necks into Wales.

Petition 2

Petition Number: P-06-1421

Petition title: Hold a public poll on whether to build the M4 Relief Road, then implement the result immediately.

Text of petition: The traffic congestion around the Newport tunnels is catastrophic to the economy and well-being of drivers and local residents.

1. Background

The Welsh Government is the highway authority for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network and is responsible for maintenance and improvement of the network, including the M4. Proposals to increase capacity on the M4 around Newport have been discussed since the early 1990s.

M4 corridor around Newport scheme

In 2014, the Welsh Government published M4 Corridor Around Newport – The Plan which set out plans to build a new section of motorway, known as the ‘Black Route’ or ‘preferred route’.

In March 2016 a substantial number of documents, marking a key stage in the planning and delivery process for the project, were published. Ten public exhibitions were also announced where members of the public were able to inspect draft orders, environmental information and other associated reports and materials. Senedd Research previously published an article which explored this in more detail.

Following the public exhibitions, in June 2016 the Welsh Government announced that a public inquiry would be held.

The inquiry began in February 2017, with an independent inspector appointed, and closed in April 2018. The inspector's report found:

...there is a compelling case for the scheme to be implemented in order to relieve an acute problem on the strategic motorway network...It is accordingly my view that the scheme is in the public interest.

However the inspector's report was not binding on the Welsh Government and in June 2019 the former First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS, announced his decision not to proceed with the scheme.

In his decision letter, the former First Minister cited two main reasons for his decision – the costs and environmental impacts of the scheme. Senedd Research published an article exploring this at the time the decision was made.

In 2020 the former Prime Minister, Boris Johnson suggested the UK Government could build the relief road, a claim strongly refuted by the Welsh Government with road infrastructure and land use planning being devolved matters.

The Burns Commission

Following the decision not to proceed with the scheme, the Welsh Government announced a Commission of transport experts would be established and tasked with making recommendations on alternative solutions to the problems on the M4 at Newport.

The South East Wales Transport Commission, chaired by Lord Burns, was subsequently established and published its final recommendations report in 2020. It recommended a “network of alternatives”, centred on public transport.

In 2021 the Burns Delivery Unit was established within Transport for Wales to take forward the recommendations.

The roads review

Should any future scheme to build the relief road be brought forward it would be subject to the Welsh Government's road building tests established as a result of its roads review.

In June 2021 the former Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS, announced that a roads review panel would be established to review planned Welsh Government road investments. The former Deputy Minister announced a pause on all new road schemes while the existing pipeline of schemes was reviewed.

The panel published its final report in February 2023. In response the Welsh Government published a new roads policy statement which sets four road building tests. The former Deputy Minister made clear that the policy “will be a material consideration in the event of any planning dispute”.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has provided the same response to both petitions.

In letters to the Chair dated 10 April and 11 April, the Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport, Ken Skates MS says “the Welsh Ministers have been clear that the decision has been made on the M4 relief road”.

It goes on to highlight the ongoing work to implement the Burns Commission recommendations.

The Cabinet Secretary also recently said in a media interview that he “just can’t see” the road being built due to “astronomical costs”.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The issue has been debated on many occasions in the Senedd, particularly at the time of the decision being made.

The Petitions Committee has also considered various petitions on the road prior to the decision being made including one in support of the preferred route and one calling for the scheme to be scrapped to protect the Gwent Levels.

Most recently, when asked about the road during Plenary (in his previous post as Minister for Economy), the now First Minister, Vaughan Gething MS, said “when it comes to the M4 relief road, the reality is there is not the resource there”.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1421
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00554/24

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee

11 April 2024

Dear Jack

Thank you for your letter of 19 March providing details of Petition P-06-1421 Hold a public poll on whether to build the M4 Relief Road, then implement the result immediately.

The Welsh Ministers have been clear that the decision has been made on the M4 Relief Road. Following Mark Drakeford MS, the previous First Minister's decision not to proceed with the M4 Relief Road, the [South East Wales Transport Commission](#) (SEWTC) was established to consider the problems, opportunities, challenges and objectives for tackling congestion on the M4 in South East Wales and make recommendations to the Welsh Government on solutions. The Commission's 58 recommendations were endorsed by the Welsh Government in January 2021. The report set out a plan for a modern public transport system for Newport, which will ease congestion around the M4 and improve services for residents of the city.

On 24 March 2021, we announced the appointment of Simon Gibson CBE as the Chair of the Burns Delivery Board, with Dr Lynn Sloman MBE as Vice Chair. Together they oversee a dedicated Unit in Transport for Wales that are pressing ahead to deliver on the recommendations.

This team has made good progress on development of the South Wales Mainline and new stations on it, as well as regional and local measures such as secure cycle storage, free bus trials and improving regionally important active travel and bus infrastructure.

It is notable that the Union Connectivity Review led by Sir Peter Hendy also recognised the need to improve non-devolved rail provision in south Wales, and the Delivery Unit secured £2.7m of UK Government funding to take forward the Business Case.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Back Page 84
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We continue to work with all partners to deliver improvements to transport in South East Wales.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Ken', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke above the letters.

Ken Skates AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport

P-06-1423 Reinstate the 552 Cardi Bach coastal bus service in South Ceredigion!”.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mai 2024
Petitions Committee | 13 May 2024

Reference: SR24/8458-13

Petition Number: P-06-1423

Petition title: Reinstate the 552 Cardi Bach coastal bus service in South Ceredigion!

Text of petition:

Recently it was announced by Deputy Minister for Climate Change Lee Waters that the Cardi Bach service was to continue. Then, as a bolt from the blue, came the news that the service is to be scrapped. The reason, so we are told, is that ‘European funding has not been replaced as promised.’ This is very bad news indeed for local residents who don’t have access to a car, as well as for the tourist industry.

The Welsh Government is working to reestablish a service as part of the new contract for the T5 service. It is vital that this happens as soon as possible to ensure that communities along the route are not isolated for a moment longer than necessary.

Launching the Year of Trails 2023, Economy Minister, Vaughan Gething, stated: ‘This year is all about finding forgotten treasures, embracing journeys



of the senses and making memories along pathways around attractions, activities, landscapes and coastlines. We're starting 2023 with a new campaign to make sure Wales is visible and look forward to encouraging visitors to different corners of the country throughout the year ahead.'

The visitor economy is a key contributor and driver of the economy in Wales. It has been hard hit by Covid. Services such as the Cardi Bach are absolutely vital to help restore that damage!

1. Background

The Cardi Bach bus service was established in 2015-16 and operated between Cardigan and Newquay. The service was part of the wider Bwcabus scheme.

Bwcabus was a demand responsive bus service connecting rural communities to mainline bus services in Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. The scheme had been funded from a range of sources including the Welsh Government, local authorities, and the European Regional Development Fund.

The service was set up following an idea put forward by Professor Stuart Cole in 2009. A number of other demand responsive bus services have since been developed - collectively known as the Fflecsi service.

In September 2023 it was announced that the Bwcabus service would be withdrawn in its current form on 31 October due to a lack of funding. This prompted concerns from regular passengers who rely on the service.

In announcing the service would end, Ceredigion County Council stated this was a result of the Welsh Government no longer being able to provide funding. It had previously been funded through the European Regional Development Programme (RDP) grant, however the Welsh Government had been fully funding the service since the RDP funding ended in July 2023.

Following the announcement the service would end, in response to topical questions during Plenary the former Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS said:

I was very sorry to hear that the Bwcabus service will be coming to an end...the UK Government has failed to replace funding for rural transport schemes previously supported by the EU. We're therefore unable to continue supporting Bwcabus, but we are working with Transport for Wales and the local authorities to explore alternative options...

In the same exchange, the former Deputy Minister said:

... we've worked very hard with the bus industry and with local authorities over the summer to try and safeguard as many services as possible... for example, funding for the Cardi Bach in Ceredigion will continue as part of the Transport for Wales T5 procurement.

However the latest correspondence from the Welsh Government on the issue (see Welsh Government action below) makes no reference to this.

Wider bus funding and reform

More generally, the Welsh Government has been providing emergency support to the bus industry following the collapse in passenger numbers as a result of the pandemic. Most recently it announced £39m in the form of the Bus Network Grant (BNG) for local authorities to "secure bus services that they deem socially necessary that the commercial market will not provide". The statement says the BNG will "act as a bridge from the emergency funding that has been provided to bus franchising". The Welsh Government is expected to introduce a Wales-wide system of franchising through a new Bus Services Bill this year.

2. Welsh Government action

In his letter to the Chair dated 19 April, the Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport, Ken Skates MS says that although Transport for Wales (TfW) has invited bids for operators to run the Cardi Bach service, none came forward.

The Cabinet Secretary states he has asked Welsh Government officials to meet with TfW and Ceredigion County Council to discuss alternative options.

3. Welsh Parliament action

The situation regarding the Bwcabus service was referenced by several Members during a Plaid Cymru debate on bus services on 4 October 2023. Neither the

motion tabled by Plaid Cymru, which included a call for the Welsh Government to reinstate the service, nor the Government's amendment was agreed.

On 13 October 2023, Andrew R.T. Davies MS tabled a written question asking if the Welsh Government intends to repurpose any funding to ensure the service can still operate. In response the Welsh Government highlighted funding issues referred to earlier in this briefing.

In November 2023 you considered a petition calling for the Bwcabus service to be saved. You agreed to keep the petition open and keep watch on the issue.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Ken Skates AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1423
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00563/24

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee

19 April 2024

Dear Jack

Thank you for your correspondence of 19 March to my predecessor regarding - "Petition P-06-1423 Reinstate the 552 Cardi Bach coastal bus service in South Ceredigion!".

I appreciate that the Cardi Bach bus service provides a valuable link to rural communities along the Ceredigion coast.

Transport for Wales have recently invited bids from operators to run the Cardi Bach service. Unfortunately, no operators submitted bids so we cannot reinstate the route at this present moment in time. In line of these developments, I have asked Officials to meet with Transport for Wales and Ceredigion County Council to look at possible alternative options.

I will update the Committee once we have an agreed way forward.

I apologise that this is not more positive news.

Yours sincerely,

Ken Skates AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

P-06-1423 Reinstate the 552 Cardi Bach coastal bus service in South Ceredigion! – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 23 April 2024

Dear Petitions Committee,

After receiving the email below from the petitions committee I approached Pandstravel.wales to find out why they had not put in a bid. Please find their answer below. I understand that they would be keen to run the service again, but that the process of submitting a bid made it impossible for them to do so. Since it seems to me that Ken Skates and the Senedd are also keen for the service to be reinstated, I really do hope that a solution can somehow be found!

Kind regards,

Wyck Gerson Lohman

Agenda Item 3.1

P-06-1344 Moderate quality agricultural land (grade 3b) should be used for food security not solar farms

This petition was submitted by Campaign Against East Vale Over Development (CAEVOD), having collected a total of 263 signatures.

Text of Petition:

We must conserve 3b land to safeguard food security:

- Only 10–13% of Wales is Best & Most Versatile land (grades 1–3a). Climate change risks change to agricultural land grades
- 3b land supports crops
- Solar farms with 3a land within 3b land parcels are being approved (contrary to Welsh Government policy). Construction/decommission permanently damage land; 3a land will be lost
- Dual-purpose claims to offset land loss have no contractual obligation – sheep rarely graze under solar panels.

Additional Information:

Developers target Welsh Government's (WG) more permissive planning policies: WG decides proposals above 10MW, England & Scotland local planning authorities decide up to 50MW. Solar panels belong on brownfield sites, residential properties & commercial buildings: use existing grid connections, reduce local electricity bills and supply surplus electricity to the National Grid = less demand for grid electricity, and agricultural land (our food security) is maintained.

- Welsh Government Soil Policy & Agricultural Land Use Planning Unit 2018–19 Soil Policy Evidence Programme Feb 2020
- <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-05/agricultural-land-classification-frequently-asked-questions.pdf>
- PEDW DNS/3245065 Welsh Minister Decision 27/10/22
- PEDW DNS/3267575 2022-12-19 REPS009WGClimateChange

CAEVOD is against overdevelopment in East Vale of Glamorgan. We support renewable energy in the right location: carbon neutrality in Wales without destroying our countryside.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

P-06-1344 Moderate quality agricultural land (grade 3b) should be used for food security not solar farms - Petitioner to Committee, 26 April, 2024

CAEVOD's response to Welsh Government report: The impact of solar photovoltaic sites on agricultural soils and land quality: review of impacts.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report.

1. It is good to see the clear linking of construction/decommission activities to soil compaction and the consequential reduction in agricultural land grade regardless of the initial wetness class of the soil. Unfortunately, this report concentrates on BMV land and gives little evidential consideration of grade 3b agricultural land, which is the subject of our petition. We have previously highlighted how important 3b land is given the small amount of BMV land in Wales. The report reminds us that grade 3b is perfectly capable of contributing to our food security, producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year. The Welsh Government's Soil Policy and Agricultural Land Use Planning Unit state that there is often only a very fine line between grades 3a & 3b, which suggests that a similar link between construction/decommission activities and reduction in land grade would be expected. This finding supports our argument that if 3b land is used for solar farms then it will not be possible to return it to its previous use to grow commercially viable crops after decommissioning, leading to a reduction in Wales' food security. It is good to see that some compaction effects can be reduced for example by the use of tracked vehicles but 3b land is already limited in its ability to produce commercially viable crops. It seems likely that any construction compaction would have permanent consequences.

We welcome the inclusion of 8.3 BMV v non-BMV agricultural land in the report but suggest that its position at the end may result in the report's most relevant key findings for Wales and the importance that needs to be attached to the protection of 3b land may be overlooked so they are stated below:

- 'in many instances the soils on BMV agricultural land may potentially be easier to restore after decommissioning than non-BMV.'
- 'On any land with heavier soil types in wetter, cooler climates the soil is likely to be more susceptible to damage during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases.'
- 'There will be a shorter safe window for construction, decommissioning, aftercare and even sheep grazing through the operational phase.'
- 'Where droughtiness is the main limitation the characteristics of a sandy soil profile with a moderately stony subsoil may be altered during soil handling and affect the water holding capacity of the soil profile at decommissioning, leading to a change in the ALC grade.'
- 'The management history of non-BMV agricultural land will influence the baseline soil reference values and the potential carbon capture benefit of solar PV sites.'
- 'There may also be greater environmental risks during construction, operation and decommissioning on non-BMV agricultural land. Soils may be at field capacity or

have a clayey or silty soil texture with a landform resulting in surface water runoff. In such instances there may be a greater risk of soil erosion and pollution of water courses.'

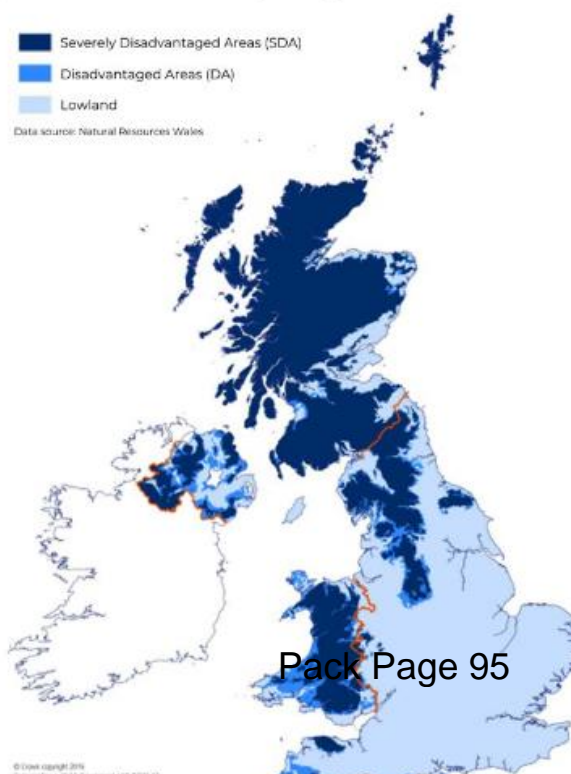
2. The report clearly describes the large amount of soil disturbance that happens during the construction of a solar farm. In addition, our own research similarly found that runoff from solar panels can result in rivulets. Both scenarios can lead to soil loss by erosion. As described in the 4.4 The Influence of Solar Developments on Soil Loss and Erosion 'However, the steepness of the slope would be an even stronger influence.' highlighting the importance of ensuring that solar farms avoid sloping land.
3. We object to the inclusion of unsubstantiated statements advocated by solar developers: 2.2 Overview of Operational Phase 'Grass on the site is often grazed by sheep, particularly in Wales.' and 2.4.4 Operational Phase 'Land between and underneath the PV panels is often grazed by sheep...' Whilst it is true that sheep farming is important in Wales, these are meaningless comments without factual evidence to support them. Our observations of solar farms both locally and further afield is that sheep rarely graze under solar panels; the vegetation is cut by machine instead.

Most cattle and sheep farming actually happens on Less Favoured Areas of land in the UK which are not profitable for crop production. '79% of all land in Wales is classed as Less Favoured Area (LFA). This EU designation refers to areas where geographic, soil or climatic conditions constrain productivity and make farming more difficult. In Wales this reflects the mountainous terrain, steep slopes on upland farms and high rainfall.'

<https://research.senedd.wales/media/iuch3jz1/22-47-farming-sector-in-wales.pdf>

The following map illustrates where these areas are in comparison to the more favoured lowland areas which are most commonly used for commercially viable crop production.

Figure 6: Map of Less Favoured Areas (LFA) showing the proportion of agricultural land classed as LFA by country.



It is clear that the very areas that are most suitable for crop production are being sought after by solar developers due to their flatter land, better transport links and grid connections making construction easier. Sheep are being promoted in solar farm proposals in an attempt to offset the loss of crop producing land, not because the land is only suitable for grazing by sheep (or cattle). The report highlights in 2.4.4. Defra's blog (2021) <https://defrafarming.blog.gov.uk/sustainable-farming-incentive-pilot-guidance-remove-soil-compaction/> that sheep 'in high numbers can produce a solid compaction layer 2cm to 6cm deep over a wide area' suggesting their introduction to a solar farm would compound soil compaction and degrade land quality further, not enhance it. 4.1 Potential Impacts on Soils during Operational Stage 'Grazing of grassland by sheep required careful management. Excessive stocking rates and/or grazing on soils susceptible to damage during wet weather, may negatively impact the soil during the operation phase and may pose environmental issues such as increased surface water runoff.' Unfortunately, this report has not had the remit to explore how often the vegetation under solar farms is actually grazed by sheep, what stocking rate would avoid compaction issues and whether sheep grazing would continue to be viable over the lifetime of a solar farm as the nutritional quality of the grass becomes depleted over time (the stated intention of solar proposals is not to use fertilisers to maintain it). Given that Wales is trying to reduce its carbon emissions, is introducing sheep grazing at all onto agricultural land that can be used to grow crops really going in the right direction?

4. It is of concern that in 2.4.5 Decommissioning 'the impact of pile pull-out on agricultural land and soil is a 'grey' area with few conclusions having been drawn to date.' Huge numbers of piles would need to be removed at this stage – surely the impact of this should be determined before they are put in in the first place?
5. The report only explores the impact of solar voltaic panels on the BMV agricultural soils and land quality. Consideration of their effect on agricultural productivity is only given a cursory reference, 'The impact of soil compaction is well documented (Batey, 2009) and crop growth, yield and quality may be adversely affected.' 3.3 Soil Compaction and Droughtiness 'On solar PV sites both disturbed and undisturbed land at decommissioning may be affected by the introduction of unremediated soil compaction. This could reduce the crop available water of the soil profile, changing the ALC grade in the soil droughtiness assessment and may result in downgrading and /or loss of BMV'. 5.2 Evidence Base 'At the point of decommissioning there is likely to be a residual impact of soil compaction across solar PV sites. The impact may affect the agricultural use of the land and decisions about cropping and yields.' Figure 6 in the report clearly shows the discrepancy between vegetation growth under solar panels compared to between rows of solar panels. 4.3 The Influence of Shading and Microclimates beneath panels on soil microbial activity 'The above ground plant biomass was four times higher in the gap between arrays and the control areas compared to the biomass under the PV arrays.' 5.3 The Main Issues affecting Reversion to Agriculture 'Most standard steel products corrode, particularly in the upper part of the pile and this may adversely affect the ability to extract the piles after

40 years.’ These piles will either be left in the ground or dug out, both solutions will further damage the soil and the former is likely to result in a downgrade of even BMV land to grade 4 or 5.

It is clear from the above points that the effect of solar farms on short- and long-term agricultural productivity must be investigated further as a matter of urgency to protect our food security. The Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) at the University of Aberystwyth has a long history of crop research and perhaps would be well placed to explore the effect of solar voltaic cells on agricultural productivity on all agricultural land grades and so provide guidance on the best agricultural use of land beneath solar panels.

6. Whilst it is welcomed that the report comments on the unknown effects of contamination of the soil by the zinc coating on the galvanised metal posts, it is disappointing that there is no reference to the unknown effects of contamination of the soil by the coating applied to solar panels or the chemicals used to clean them. Once in the soil, how will these be removed so that the food produced from the site either during operation or after decommissioning is safe to eat?
7. It is concerning that without remediation the report finds that there is the introduction/ reduction in the depth of a slowly permeable layer after compaction which ‘prevents the downwards movement of water in the soil profile and can lead to surface water perched at shallow depth for periods of the year, particularly autumn through to spring, and particularly problematic in wetter soil types or wetter areas. This can negatively impact the flexibility of agricultural land, potentially lowering quality and ALC grade.’ What has been left out here is the potential increase in flood risk to the surrounding area if the water that previously descended further into the soil profile can’t do so.
8. The report states that ‘further evidence is required to substantiate the benefits of SOM at solar PV sites and the claims cited by developers in planning applications.’ We would add that this needs to be done now and before further agricultural land in Wales is approved for solar farm use. 4.5 A Summary of Claimed Benefits to Soil from previous cases ‘The case studies do not give any site-specific detail on benefits to soil in the supporting documents for the planning application.’ This is alarming given that benefits to the soil are often cited in by developers yet this suggests at planning approval level no real consideration is given to whether such benefits are attainable in reality.
9. 5.3 The Main Issues influencing Reversion to Agriculture raises some concerning points:
 - ‘A soil in West Wales with a medium clay loam texture and clay content of 24% will have a shorter window for soil handling and trafficking than the same soil in East Anglia. The impact of climate and climatic zones should be built into the design statement at the pre-planning stage of a site.’ Is this really being considered when assessing suitable site selection in the DNS process?

- The report highlights the lack of real planning for the decommissioning of a solar farm at the planning approval stage. Our observations of local planning applications for

solar farms are similar; because 40 years is a long way off detailed planning is kicked into the long grass. 5.4 Summary 'The finance available for the required decommissioning and the timings of these operations may be an influencing factor on the reversion to agriculture. There may be financial constraints, time penalties and contractual performance issues that affect the decommissioning programme and the quality of remediation works.' This illustrates that there are no guarantees that it will be financially possible to redress the damage to soil structure and agricultural productivity.

- The report highlights in several places that conditions for soil handling (such as those used in construction/decommission activities) are not suitable during the winter months. 8.2 Restoration of Agricultural Land 'Commercial pressures can influence a restoration programme, resulting in work taking place in unsuitable conditions, resulting in damage to the soil and potentially loss of BMV.' Are non-soil handling periods included in the timescales cited by solar developers or included in planning conditions attached to planning approvals?

Although the UK government has so far been unwilling to protect 3b land, we understand from our local MP Alun Cairns that there is increasing concern about the long-term effects of solar farms on all grades of agricultural land. We hope that the petitions committee will consult with the new Welsh Minister for Climate Change and Rural Affairs and express our continued concerns that the use of 3b land for solar farms is threatening our future food security because the amount of BMV land in Wales is so limited.

Agenda Item 3.2

P-06-1403 Reconsider cuts to Postgraduate funding and increase Doctoral Loans to match UKRI Stipend

This petition was submitted by Micaela Panes, having collected 2,026 signatures online and 130 signatures on paper, making for a total of 2,156 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Postgraduates play a pivotal role in advancing knowledge, innovation, and cultivating expertise. However – the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2024/25 announced the removal of £12.8m from Postgraduate grants and bursaries. This will discourage aspiring Postgraduate students due to increased financial burdens, jeopardise the diversity of our academic programmes, hinder the competitiveness of our institutions globally and have an impact on the growth of the Welsh economy and communities.

Additional Information:

This petition also calls for the Welsh Government to increase Doctoral Loans to match the annual UKRI Stipend. Doctoral students who receive a loan from Student Finance Wales, receive £28,395 to cover tuition fees and living costs overall for three to four years of full-time study (anyone who meets the requirements can apply to these). Whereas those on a UKRI Stipend (only available to students funded by a Research Council) receive £18,622 per annum solely for living costs. This disparity leaves Doctoral Students on loans in very precarious positions, with many working multiple jobs while in full-time study, using food banks, and even leaving their Doctoral study. With the current cost-of-living crisis, the decline in funding and studentships available, and the pitiful rate of Doctoral loans, Wales runs the risk of a substantial decline in students pursuing Doctoral study which will have a serious impact on innovation and research.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central

Lynne Neagle AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1403
Ein cyf/Our ref LN/05124/24
Jack Sargeant MS
Chair – Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

25 April 2024

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 2 April 2024 regarding 'Petition P-06-1403 Reconsider cuts to Postgraduate funding and increase Doctoral Loans to match UKRI Stipend'. You note that the petitioner has raised further points.

Impact assessment was undertaken in connection with the change to the provision of statutory student support to postgraduate Master's students. The regulations made to remove postgraduate Master's grants, laid with the Senedd on 15 April 2024, were accompanied by an Explanatory Memorandum and Regulatory Impact Assessment which is available on the Senedd's website at <https://business.senedd.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=43664>. Stakeholder engagement is recorded in that document. In addition, an Integrated Impact Assessment, which includes an Equality Impact Assessment, was completed. In accordance with Welsh Government policy, certain sections are published and are available at <https://www.gov.wales/postgraduate-masters-support-2024-2025-academic-year-impact-assessment>.

The Welsh Government does not collect any data regarding the outcomes for postgraduate Master's students whose study has been supported by the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Neagle AS/MS
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Lynne.Neagle@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lynne.Neagle@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



Cardiff Students' Union
Undeb Myfyrwyr Caerdydd

Dear Kayleigh,

Thank you for sharing the Cabinet Secretary for Education's response to my request for further information.

I am pleased the impact assessment report has finally been published. However, I am disappointed and concerned with the decision to proceed with cutting Postgraduate grants despite formally acknowledging that it disproportionately impacts such vulnerable and under-represented groups by increasing student debt.

I have no further comments or questions, thank you.

Best wishes,
Micaela Panes (Vice-President Postgraduate Students)



The heart of Cardiff student life
Calon bywyd myfyrwyr Caerdydd

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair, Petitions Committee

30 April 2024

Petition P-06-1387 Provide humanitarian aid to Gaza

Dear Jack

Thank you for sharing your letter dated 23 February 2024, to the then Minister for Social Justice. It was noted and discussed at our meeting on 17 April 2024.

Members were grateful to you for bringing this petition to our attention. We would be grateful if you could keep us informed about any response you receive from the Welsh Government about any discussions that have taken place with humanitarian charities involved in the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal in Wales, and any further action the Government may consider taking to provide humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Thank you again for bringing this matter of shared interest to our attention.

Yours sincerely,



Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Document is Restricted