

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee room 1

Meeting date: Monday, 18 November
2024

Meeting time: 14.00 – 15.08

This meeting can be viewed
on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/14176>

Hybrid

Attendance

Category	Names
Members of the Senedd:	Carolyn Thomas MS (Chair) Rhys ab Owen MS Luke Fletcher MS Peter Fox MS
Witnesses:	
Committee Staff:	Gareth Price (Clerk) Kayleigh Imperato (Deputy Clerk) Lara Date (Second Clerk)

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Vaughan Gething MS.



2 New Petitions

2.1 P-06-1457 Re-introduce the right to buy Scheme

The Committee considered the petition and expressed sympathy towards it, however, as the Welsh Government has clearly set out its position on Right to Buy, Members agreed there was little more the Committee could do to take the issue forward. In light of this Members agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

In doing so, Members agreed to forward the petitioners' latest suggestions for mitigation conditions to the Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government, and to the Senedd's Local Government and Housing Committee for awareness.

2.2 P-06-1462 Scrap all Welsh Government policies from Agenda 21 /Agenda 2030/Sustainable Development including Net Zero

The Committee considered the petition and noted there was a very clear difference of opinion between the petitioner and the Welsh Government on the Sustainable Development Goals and Net Zero. Members agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner.

2.3 P-06-1476 1000 meter mandatory buffer zone for all new and existing quarries

The Committee discussed the petition at length, having met the petitioners to hear their concerns first-hand.

It was noted that the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Public Health Wales, the Local Health Board and the Health and Safety Executive were aware of the issues for local people's health and wellbeing, in particular local children, some of whom were involved in the petition and local campaign.

The Committee agreed to write a strong letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning seeking a more detailed response to the specific issues raised by

the petition and in the 16 October debate on Heledd Fychan's Member's Legislative Proposal for a Bill relating to planning processes for quarry development. This would include asking what has been done to address the issues raised when the application was rejected, and confirming whether the Cabinet Secretary will be reviewing the guidance in both PPW and MTAN1, and if so what the timeframe is for that work.

The Committee also agreed to write to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council for more information about the specific issues relating to the Craig Yr Hesg quarry and what actions it was taking to deal with residents' concerns – including how it is engaging with the operator and local communities in light of the expansion of operations, the status of the community liaison group, and the detail of all measures being taken to protect public health locally.

The Committee also agreed to write to the quarry owner, Heidelberg Materials, to ask what mitigation measures it is taking to address all the petitioners concerns and how it is engaging with them.

Members thanked the petitioners again for their persistence in raising this issue in the Senedd, and agreed to keep the petition open pending the responses.

Correspondence related to this petition would be copied to local Senedd Members for awareness, including all Members who raised issues during the 16 October debate.

Members noted that the petition had crossed the 10k threshold for consideration for a debate, but noted that a Member's legislative proposal debate had been held on 16 October: the Committee agreed to defer a decision on requesting a debate until after it received responses to correspondence.

2.4 P-06-1478 Comprehensively review NRW and its failure to deliver its statutory obligations to protect Wales

The Committee considered the petition and agreed to forward the petitioners' correspondence to the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs to seek his views on it, and to copy in the Chairs of the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee and the Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee for their information.

Members noted that the Climate Change and Rural Affairs Committee will continue to scrutinise these issues and there will also be opportunities for Members to continue raising them in plenary.

As previously agreed by the Committee on two separate petitions regarding Natural Resource Wales approach to visitor centre services, the Committee agreed to keep the petition open pending a response from the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs.

2.5 P-06-1485 Introduce a network of Toy Libraries around Wales

The Committee considered the petition and response from the Minister for Children and Social Care, which focused on Welsh Government action to support play.

Members queried whether there was scope for the existing Circular Economy Fund to be extended to cover toy libraries. The Committee agreed to write to the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs to highlight the English example of a toy libraries network, and to seek more clarity on the issue from his perspective.

2.6 P-06-1486 Grant BN(O) Hong Kong students home fee status after three years of residence

The Committee considered the petition following a meeting with the petitioner prior to the meeting. Members noted that the Welsh Government is reviewing the position with respect to holders of the HKBN(O) visa, but expressed their disappointment that this won't take place for at least two more years.

In light of this Members agreed to write back to the Minister for Further and Higher Education to query the timescale of the review and ask what barriers, if any, are preventing it from happening sooner. Members also agreed to ask the Minister to confirm how many Hongkongers might be affected by the current position, and how individuals might be able to contribute their views and experiences to the review. The letter would make the point that Wales was proud to be a Nation of Sanctuary, and note that home fee status was already available to other groups.

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-06-1303 Create, fund and sustain sufficient affordable nursery and childcare places for all working parents

Rhys Ab Owen MS declared the following relevant interest under Standing Order 17.24A:

He is a father of two, who pays for childcare.

The Committee considered the petition and agreed this was a very important issue. Members noted the recent work undertaken by the Equality and Social Justice Committee and in light of this agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner for bringing it forward.

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

The Committee considered the petition and noted the debate which took place in plenary on 23 October and the strong campaign led by Mencap Cymru.

The Chair confirmed the campaigners are due to meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip later this month, and it was agreed to seek an update from the Cabinet Secretary on the outcome of the meeting.

The Committee noted Mencap Cymru had also written to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport to raise issues relating to disabled people being unable to pay for tickets on public transport or buy refreshments with cash. Members agreed to write to Cabinet Secretary for Transport to seek an update on how those issues are being addressed.

Members also agreed to submit a short summary of its report findings to the Treasury Select Committee's current inquiry on Acceptance of Cash, which opened a call for evidence at the start of November.

3.3 P-06-1396 Introduce a vape licence for dedicated vape shops

The Committee considered the petition and noted the forthcoming legislation on the UK Tobacco and Vapes Bill. In light of this Members agreed to close the petition and encourage the petitioner to lobby their MPs and local Senedd Members who will be scrutinising the Bill in detail.

In addition to closing the petition, Members agreed to highlight the petitioners' views to the Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee and to write to the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing for confirmation in writing that the licensing of vape premises will be included in the Bill.

3.4 P-06-1400 Fair and Adequate Resourcing of General Practice in Wales

The Committee considered the petition and noted the debate in plenary on 6 November, and that further detailed work on the issue will continue to be undertaken by the Health & Social Care Committee.

Members agreed to share the petitioner's concerns with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance in light of the current Draft Budget scrutiny process, to copy in the Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee, and to keep the petition open pending responses.

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the remainder of today's business:

The motion was agreed.