

## Agenda – Petitions Committee

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Meeting Venue:

**Committee Room 1 – Senedd**

Meeting date: 17 January 2017

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

**Graeme Francis** – Committee Clerk

**Kath Thomas** – Deputy Clerk

0300 200 6565

[SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales](mailto:SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales)

- 1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**  
(Pages 1 – 21)
  
- 2 New petitions**
  - 2.1 P-05-718 NHS Wales Pay  
(Pages 22 – 26)
  - 2.2 P-05-723 Establish Proportional Representation Voting System for Welsh Local Council Elections  
(Pages 27 – 33)
  - 2.3 P-05-729 Removal of M4 Speed Restrictions at the Brynglass Tunnels  
(Pages 34 – 40)
  - 2.4 P-05-730 Local Government Finance and Funding  
(Pages 41 – 54)
  - 2.5 P-05-731 Land & Access Lane Sale at Abercwmboi  
(Pages 55 – 58)
  - 2.6 P-05-732 Unacceptable Waiting Times for NHS patients in A & E Wrecsam Wrexham Maelor Hospital  
(Pages 59 – 65)
  - 2.7 P-05-733 No Further Actions on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) In Wales At All  
(Pages 66 – 73)
  
- 3 Updates to previous petitions**



## **Health**

3.1 P-04-479 Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition  
(Pages 74 – 75)

3.2 P-04-621 Stop Closure of Consultant-led Maternity Unit at Ysbyty Glan  
Clwyd  
(Pages 76 – 77)

3.3 P-04-663 Food in Welsh Hospitals  
(Pages 78 – 80)

## **Welsh Language**

3.4 P-04-676 Establish a Welsh Language Champion in our Communities in  
Wales  
(Pages 81 – 84)

## **Finance and Local Government**

3.5 P-04-681 Allow Public Recording of Local Government Meetings  
(Pages 85 – 86)

## **Communities and Children**

3.6 P-05-728 Protect Families First Funding  
(Pages 87 – 89)

## **Economy and Infrastructure**

3.7 P-05-721 Penegoes Speed Limit Petition  
(Pages 90 – 92)

**4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the  
public from the meeting for the following business:**

Item 5.

**5 P-04-668 Support Yearly Screening for Ovarian Cancer (CA125  
blood test)**  
(Pages 93 – 111)

**6 Forward Work Programme**

(Pages 112 – 123)

Document is Restricted

# Agenda Item 2.1

## **P-05-718 NHS Wales Pay**

This petition was submitted by Chris Neilsen, having collected 24 signatures.

### **Text of the Petition**

How can it be right that NHS workers in Wales some earning as low as £7.80 per hour doing much needed jobs when the welsh government is funding such non jobs as Future's Commissioner on 100k per annum and a Welsh Language Commissioner on 90k and many such newly created non jobs. These new layers of silly non jobs should be abolished and the money given to low paid NHS staff.

### **Assembly Constituency and Region:**

Newport East

South Wales East

## Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 Ionawr 2017  
Petitions Committee | 17 January 2017

### Research Briefing:

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**Petition number:** P-05-718

**Petition title:** NHS Wales Pay

**Text of petition:** How can it be right that NHS workers in Wales some earning as low as £7.80 per hour doing much needed jobs when the Welsh Government is funding such non jobs as Future Generations Commissioner on 100k per annum and a Welsh Language Commissioner on 90k and many such newly created non jobs. These new layers of silly non jobs should be abolished and the money given to low paid NHS staff.

### Background

The NHS Pay Review Body (NHSPRB) is an independent body that makes recommendations to the UK Government on the pay, terms and conditions of all staff paid under Agenda for Change and employed in the NHS. This includes making recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport in Wales. In reaching its recommendations the Review Body takes evidence from the 4 UK governments, trade unions and NHS Employers. It has to consider the following in making its recommendations:

- the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified staff;
- regional/local variations in labour markets and their effects on the recruitment and retention of staff;
- the funds available to the Health Departments, as set out in the Government's Departmental Expenditure Limits;
- the Government's inflation target;
- the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in the NHS;
- the overall strategy that the NHS should place patients at the heart of all it does and the mechanisms by which that is to be achieved.

The NHSPRB published '[NHS Pay Review Body. Twenty-Ninth Report 2016](#)' which sets out its 2016/17 recommendations on the pay uplift for NHS staff, including a **1 per cent increase** to all Agenda for Change pay points from 1 April 2016 in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The report emphasises that the NHSPRB has to produce recommendations at a time of complex change for the NHS across the UK:

All four countries are aiming simultaneously to meet demanding efficiency targets and deliver transformational change through service redesign and new models of care, whilst continuing to respond to every day service requirements and meet the demands of regulators.

Public sector pay policy has been set out by the UK government for the next four years and provides the context for our recommendations in England. The policy position for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is short term for this year's remit, given that these countries all have elections in May 2016. However, with public money remaining constrained, it seems highly likely that public sector pay restraint will continue for some years. We will have an increasingly important role to monitor the sustainability of this policy for our remit group, in whole or in part. Agenda for Change pay scales need to be seen as competitive, to attract and retain the calibre of staff required to support and deliver high quality patient care. This means taking a longer term view as well as making our annual recommendations.

## Welsh Government action

The previous Health and Social Services Minister, Mark Drakeford AM accepted the recommendations on pay from both the NHS Pay Review Body and the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration – in line with the offers made elsewhere in the UK.

The Welsh Government issued its pay circular [AfC\(W\)1/2016](#) to NHS Health Boards/ Trusts on 30 March 2016, informing them of the pay arrangements for employees covered by the Agenda for Change agreement in Wales and of the agreement to implement the Living Wage increase. It states that:

1. The living Wage will increase from 1 January 2016 for all directly employed NHS staff to £8.25 per hour. Eligible staff will have their pay for January – March 2016 adjusted and arrears paid accordingly. From 2017 onwards, any future changes to the Living Wage hourly rate, which are accepted for implementation in NHS Wales, will be aligned to the NHS pay award date.
2. The revised pay scales for 2016–17, set out in this circular, apply from 1 April 2016.
  - All pay spine points have increased by one per cent, consolidated
  - The on-call allowance will increase by one per cent to £18.54 per session for weekdays and weekends and £37.09 per session for public holidays with effect from 1 April 2016
  - The sleeping-in allowance will increase by one per cent to £31.93 with effect from 1 April 2016.
3. The provisions of incremental pay progression will continue to apply.

The Welsh Government estimated that pay rises, including the living wage, will cost an estimated £40m a year. In highlighting the 1% consolidated pay increase for all Agenda for Change staff in the Welsh NHS, the Welsh Government also stated that there would be no pay rise for NHS Senior Executives.

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.



Vaughan Gething AC/AM  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon  
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-718  
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/06471/16

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
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15 December 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 10 October on behalf of the Petitions Committee.

We are proud that NHS Wales employees have received the Living Wage Foundation's recommended rate since 1 January 2015. The lowest earning employed NHS staff saw an increase of up to 5% and more than 2,100 members of staff were positively affected by this change. The Living Wage Foundation's recommended rate is currently £8.25 per hour, notably higher than the "national living wage" of £7.20 per hour. The Welsh Government will continue to support the concept of a genuine living wage as a route to addressing some of the issues associated with low pay and income poverty.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**Vaughan Gething AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon  
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport

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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 and any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

## Voting system for Welsh local government elections

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 Ionawr 2017

Petitions Committee | 17 January 2017

### Research Briefing:

**Petition number:** P-05-723

**Petition title:** Establish Proportional Representation Voting System for Welsh Local Council Elections.

We the undersigned call on the National Assembly for Wales to establish a proportional representation voting system for 22 Welsh council elections.

### Background

Local councillors in Wales are elected using the First Past the Post (FPTP) System, as they are in England. Each electoral division (more often called a ward) can return one or a number of councillors.

Proponents of FPTP highlight that it provides a clear link between councillors and their electorate. Opponents highlight that FPTP rarely produces a result that reflects the overall view of the electorate and results in a high number of uncontested seats where there is only one candidate.

In 2002, a majority of the [Sunderland Commission](#) recommended introducing the Single Transferable Vote (STV) for local government elections. The Commission was established by the Welsh Government in June 2001 to examine and report on local government electoral arrangements in Wales. However, the minority view of that Commission was that STV would necessitate larger wards which would make councillors less accountable and less local. The minority view favoured retaining FPTP, but with single-member electoral divisions only.

Local councillors in Scotland have been elected using STV system since 2007. Councillors in Northern Ireland are also elected using STV.

Regional Members of the National Assembly for Wales are [elected](#) by a form of proportional representation known as the Additional Member System.

## Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government is currently considering options for local government reform, although, thus far, this has not focused on changing the voting system. However, in his letter to the Committee dated 4 January 2017, the Cabinet Secretary suggests that enactment of the Wales Bill may provide the Welsh Government with additional scope to reform both voting and registration for local government elections. He states that, in due course, he intends to consult on a package of proposals, some of which may be piloted at local by-elections. The Cabinet Secretary's letter also casts some doubt over whether electoral reform in local government is currently a devolved matter.

## National Assembly for Wales action

In the Third Assembly (2007–2011), Liberal Democrat Peter Black proposed a [Legislative Competence Order](#) that would have allowed the Assembly to legislate in respect of “The arrangements for the election of members of local authorities and the electoral system by which they are elected”. This was [debated](#) on 11 June 2008 by the Assembly and not given permission to proceed.

During [Stage 1 scrutiny](#) of the *Local Government Democracy (Wales) Bill* in February 2013, the Minister for Local Government and Communities stated that the Assembly does not have competence in terms of electoral reform.

[Amendments](#) to the *Local Government Bill* were tabled in June 2015, again by Liberal Democrat Peter Black, would have introduced the Single Transferrable Vote for local government elections. However, these amendments were defeated.

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.

*This briefing was corrected on 18 January 2017 to remove a statement which suggested that the Alternative Vote electoral system is a form of proportional representation.*

Mark Drakeford AM/AC  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-723  
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05450/16

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
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15 November 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 31 October regarding the petition to establish a Proportional Representation system of voting for Welsh Local Council elections.

Presently, responsibility for and powers over Local Government electoral systems lies with the UK Government. The Wales Bill, which is currently progressing through Parliament, when passed would transfer competence over Local Government electoral matters to the National Assembly for Wales.

Following the passing of the Wales Bill I would welcome any views in relation to Local Government elections, including the voting system.

Best wishes,

Mark

**Mark Drakeford AM/AC**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

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Mark Drakeford AM/AC  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-723  
Ein cyf/Our ref

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair – Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
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4 January 2017

Dear Mike,

Since I wrote to you on 15 November, I have given more consideration to the implications of the Wales Bill and the opportunity its enactment may offer by way of reforms to voting and registration for local government elections. My intention is to consult on a package of proposals, some of which, in due course, might be piloted at local by-elections.

While it is true that the Assembly already has competence in relation to “electoral arrangements” for local government, any legislative proposal dealing with the voting system would require an assessment of the exceptions to the Assembly’s legislative competence of “electoral registration and administration”. Enactment of the Wales Bill, should that take place, will expand the Assembly’s competence in relation to elections, enabling us to develop future policy in relation to both local and Assembly elections.

Best wishes,

Mark.

**Mark Drakeford AM/AC**  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

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Pack Page 31

**P-05-723 Establish Proportional representation voting system for Welsh Local Council election - Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 11.01.16**

FAO

Chair and committee members

I would like make a formal request to defer my petition for next month meeting because of current Welsh bill on pipe line. And I believe this bill can make a difference for my petition.

Also the two different replies committee needed to looking to.

**P-05-723 Establish Proportional Representation Voting System for Welsh Local Council Elections.**

This petition was submitted by Mohammed Sarul Islam, having collected 202 signatures.

**Text of the Petition**

We the undersigned call on the National Assembly for Wales to establish a proportional representation voting system for 22 Welsh council elections.

**Assembly Constituency and Region:**

Cardiff West

South Wales Central

# Agenda Item 2.3

## **P-05-729 Removal of M4 Speed Restrictions at the Brynglass Tunnels.**

This petition was submitted by Andrew Lewis, which collected 15 signatures.

### **Text of the Petition**

Since 2011 there have been speed restrictions placed in and around the Brynglas Tunnels on east and westbound M4 carriageways causing misery for countless motorists on a daily basis. It is proposed to remove all speed restrictions in this area and revert back to the national speed limit in both east and west directions.

### **Assembly constituency and Region**

- Caerphilly
- South Wales East



# Petition: Removal of M4 Speed Restrictions at the Brynglas Tunnels

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 Ionawr 2017  
Petitions Committee | 17 January 2017

## Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-729

Petition title: Removal of M4 Speed Restrictions at the Brynglas Tunnels

Text of petition:

Since 2011 there have been speed restrictions placed in and around the Brynglas Tunnels on east and westbound M4 carriageways causing misery for countless motorists on a daily basis. It is proposed to remove all speed restrictions in this area and revert back to the national speed limit in both east and west directions.

## Background

The M4 corridor around Newport between Junction 24 (Coldra) to Junction 28 (Tredegar Park) is the busiest section of road in Wales and carries in the region of 100,000 vehicles every day. As the Highway Authority for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network, the Welsh Government introduced a Variable Speed Limit (VSL) along this 8 mile (13km) stretch of road in 2011. The system is known as the M4 South East Wales Variable Speed Limit scheme and, according to the Welsh Government website, was introduced “as a means of reducing congestion and improving safety and journey time reliability”. The VSL system replaced the average speed cameras system installed in 2009 to keep traffic moving at up to 50mph while route improvement works were carried out.

## Motorway Incident Detection and Automatic Signalling (MIDAS) System

Variable speed limits on the M4 between junctions 24 and 28 are operated automatically by a system of sensors built into the road surface called the Motorway Incident Detection and Automatic Signalling (MIDAS). Its underlying principle is to keep traffic moving by adjusting the speed limit, helping to make journeys safer and more reliable.

Volume 9, Section 1, Part 2 ([TD 45/94 \(PDF, 57KB\)](#)) of the [Design Manual for Roads and Bridges](#) contains the standard criteria for MIDAS system and states:

The areas to be covered by these systems are sections of motorways which have features that may lead to frequent queues or incidents. A prime aim of MIDAS is to **protect the back of traffic queues, which have formed or are about to form, by automatically setting suitable signals to warn approaching traffic. This will achieve a speed of operation and accuracy unattainable by manually operated systems.** Such systems can also be used with variable message signs to give advance warning of queues and incidents enabling drivers to seek alternate routes if they so choose.

The VSL scheme is managed by [Traffic Wales](#), whose control room team operate and monitor the system on behalf of the Welsh Government from the [South Wales Traffic Management Centre](#) in Cardiff. The Traffic Wales/Welsh Government [Your Questions Answered \(PDF, 2.9MB\)](#) document states that:

At present, the section is vulnerable to congestion build-up as **traffic flows exceed capacity** (the approximate average traffic flow is 2,188 vehicles per lane per hour compared with 1,800 vehicles recommended by design standards). Combined with varying gradients and tight bends that reduce visibility for the driver, the level of congestion contributes to a **local accident rate higher than the national motorway average**, which included nine fatalities between July 2006 and June 2009.

Through this section of motorway, the mandatory speed limit is adjusted according to traffic conditions to keep vehicles moving steadily. During congestion-free and incident-free periods, the VSL system signage is not operational and the national speed limit applies. During high traffic volume periods or in the event of an incident, the systems sensors detect the build-up of congestion and calculate the optimum speed limit for the amount of traffic. Speed limits are then displayed on the electronic signage located above lanes or at the side of the road to reduce the risk of collisions from vehicles approaching the rear of queues ahead. When traffic flows subside, VSL scheme signage is no longer required and the carriageway returns to normal operation. Alongside the automated system, authorised control centre operators monitor the road network and can intervene if needed.

In a letter to the Chair from the Cabinet Secretary for the Economy and Infrastructure dated the 22 November 2016, the Cabinet Secretary stated that there is currently a “temporary 50mph speed limit in place on the westbound approach to the Brynglas tunnels” due to continuing reliance on a temporary lighting system installed to allow quick reopening of the tunnel after a fire in July 2011. Following prioritisation of [refurbishment works](#) on the westbound bore, “removal of the temporary 50mph speed limit ..... is anticipated by April 2017”.

### **Variable Speed Limit Enforcement**

Speed enforcement cameras are fitted onto overhead gantries with cameras activating following the detection of a vehicle travelling in excess of the speed limit in force at the time. The system has the necessary [Home Office Type Approval](#) (HOTA) which allows its use for

enforcement purposes. Speed enforcement across Wales is managed and coordinated by [GoSafe](#), a multi-agency partnership comprising all Highway Authorities within Wales and the four Welsh police forces. The Welsh Government owns and installs the cameras on the M4 Motorway and the police, as the enforcement authority, are responsible for carrying out enforcement on a day-to-day basis.

## Welsh Government action

On 17 January 2011 the Welsh Government laid the [M4 Motorway \(West of Junction 23A \(Magor\) to East of Junction 29 \(Castleton\)\) \(Variable Speed Limits\) Regulations 2011](#) (the 2011 Regulations) before the Assembly to enable the introduction of an enforceable variable speed limit system on the M4 Motorway between Junction 23A (Magor) and Junction 29 (Castleton) and adjoining slip roads. These regulations were subsequently replaced by the [M4 Motorway \(West of Junction 23A \(Magor\) to East of Junction 29 \(Castleton\)\) \(Variable Speed Limits\) Regulations 2015](#) (the 2015 Regulations) which were laid before the Assembly on 31 March 2015 and came into force on the 21 April 2015. The [Explanatory Memorandum \(PDF, 130KB\)](#) to the 2015 Regulations states that an audit found “minor errors in the scheme length descriptions in the schedule to the 2011 Regulations” and that the 2015 Regulations “correct those errors”. The explanatory memorandum further explains that:

An audit found minor errors in the scheme length descriptions in the schedule to the 2011 Regulations, and there are some overlaps between areas covered by the 2011 Regulations and areas covered by other road traffic orders. This discrepancy is making the police and Go-Safe, who perform a management function for prosecutions relating to exceeding speed limits, **wary of enforcing the lower speed limits on drivers**. The issues about possible conflicts and overlaps with pre-existing SIs at entry/exit slip roads throughout the VSL scheme should not affect the enforcement of the VSL on the M4 itself. However these issues, if not resolved, may be raised as part of any legal challenge and could be used to try and **undermine the validity of the VSL scheme**. Our enforcement partners (the police and Go-Safe) **are unwilling to enforce compliance while this risk of legal action remains**. Data analysis by officials shows that **compliance with the speed limit is gradually diminishing**. For example, at a sample location displaying a 50mph setting, approximately **85% of vehicles were driven below the speed camera capture threshold at the start of the scheme**. This figure is now **approximately 79%**. This shows that the **full benefits of the scheme are not being realised without the enforcement aspect**. In order for our enforcement partners to proceed with confidence, these Regulations correct the errors in the 2011 Regulations.

On the 25 July 2016, the Welsh Government [announced](#) the launch of a new safety campaign for this stretch of the M4. The Welsh Government stated that the campaign would consist of an initial education and awareness phase, inclusive of a “grace period”, followed by an enforcement and prosecution phase. A [tweet by GoSafe](#) on the 20 September 2016 indicates that enforcement began on 26 September 2016.

The Cabinet Secretary’s letter states that “a variable speed limit system is in place along this stretch of the M4 to ensure the safety of road users”. The letter also states that the proposed

[M4 corridor around Newport project](#) is “considered to be the sustainable, long-term solution to the social, environmental and economic problems associated with the existing M4 around Newport”. In a [written statement](#) on the project published by the Cabinet Secretary on the 14 December 2016, the Welsh Government revealed that the “latest assessments indicate that future traffic levels, taking into account our latest Metro proposals, will continue to grow” with the M4 around Newport “well over capacity, with severe and worsening problems”. The statement confirmed that the project shall “proceed to be considered by Independent Inspectors at an Inquiry determined by the Planning Inspectorate to commence on 28 February 2017”.

## National Assembly for Wales action

In response to a [question on the impact of the VSL scheme on traffic flow](#) from William Graham AM in Plenary on the 9 February 2013, the First Minister Carwyn Jones stated:

Current indications suggest that **congestion is less severe following the installation of the system**. The system minimises rather than fully alleviates the queuing that results from demands on the network at peak times. **A full assessment will be undertaken once sufficient information has been gathered to provide a statistically reliable assessment.**

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-05-729  
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/07160/16  
Mike Hedges AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee

government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk

22 November 2016

*Dear Mike*

Thank you for your letter of 4 November regarding petition P-05-729 Removal of M4 Speed Restrictions at the Brynglas tunnels.

A variable speed limit system is in place along this stretch of the M4 to ensure the safety of road users. It uses sensors in the road to detect the start of traffic build up that could cause congestion. If this happens, the mandatory speed limit is automatically adjusted to keep the traffic flowing. When no speed limit is indicated, the section reverts to the national speed limit.

It should be noted that there is only a temporary 50mph speed limit in place on the westbound approach to the Brynglas tunnels. Following the tunnel fire in July 2011 a temporary lighting system was installed to allow the tunnel to reopen as quickly as possible. Usually, the lighting within the tunnel should adjust automatically depending on the amount of natural light outside. This is the case in the eastbound tunnel. However, the temporary system in the westbound tunnel is not variable. As a result, 50mph is the safest speed limit to have in place for the time being. There are no speed restrictions in place in the eastbound tunnel other than when the variable speed limit system is in operation.

We began works to refurbish the Brynglas tunnels on 20 June with completion expected by February 2018. The mechanical and electrical systems, including lighting, will be replaced as part of these works. The westbound tunnel bore will be refurbished before the eastbound bore and removal of the temporary 50mph speed limit on the westbound bore is anticipated by April 2017. Further information on the refurbishment work is available on our website: <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/roads/schemes/m4/brynglas-tunnels/?lang=en>

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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 proposed M4 Corridor around Newport project is considered to be the sustainable, long-term solution to the social, environmental and economic problems associated with the existing M4 around Newport. It forms an essential part of a vision for an efficient integrated transport system in Wales. Further information regarding the project can be found at [www.gov.wales/m4newport](http://www.gov.wales/m4newport).

*Yours ever,  
Ken*

**Ken Skates AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith  
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

# Agenda Item 2.4

## **P-05-730 Local Government Finance and Funding.**

This petition was submitted by UNISON Wales, which collected 2,192 signatures.

### **Text of the Petition**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:

- a. To increase aggregate external financing (revenue) to local authorities to at least the levels that applied in 2013/14 in real terms
- b. Introduce legislation that provides a 'power of general competence' for local authorities in Wales
- c. Encourage local authorities to use their existing powers to provide goods and services to other parts of the public sector in Wales, and to explore and to trade by developing the range of goods and services that can be supplied to members of the public in general and to the private sector more generally
- d. Work with local authorities in Wales to release existing revenue streams through, for example refinancing or replacing PFI schemes on more favourable terms utilising the opportunities afforded by historically low interest rates
- e. Undertake, to support the work of the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance Wales.

We the undersigned value the services provided by local councils in Wales and believe that by implementing these measures the Welsh Government will help to prevent further damage to local public service provision; whilst recognising that these measures are only part of the solution and an end to the Westminster Government austerity programme will be necessary to ensure that public services could be sustainably and adequately funded into the future.

### **Additional information**

UNISON Wales is the largest public sector trade union organising around 100,000 public sector workers in Wales.

UNISON Wales, in addition to campaigning for an end to austerity and for Fair Funding for Wales from the Westminster Government, is also campaigning for the Wales Government to protect Local Government spending and take the necessary

measures to ensure that our council services, which ensure healthy and educated communities, are protected.

### **Assembly constituency and Region**

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central



# Local Government Finance and Funding

Petitions Committee | 17 January 2017

## Research Briefing:

Petition P-05-730

Petition Title: Local Government Finance and Funding

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:

- a. To increase aggregate external financing (revenue) to local authorities to at least the levels that applied in 2013/14 in real terms
- b. Introduce legislation that provides a 'power of general competence' for local authorities in Wales
- c. Encourage local authorities to use their existing powers to provide goods and services to other parts of the public sector in Wales, and to explore and to trade by developing the range of goods and services that can be supplied to members of the public in general and to the private sector more generally
- d. Work with local authorities in Wales to release existing revenue streams through, for example refinancing or replacing PFI schemes on more favourable terms utilising the opportunities afforded by historically low interest rates
- e. Undertake, to support the work of the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance Wales.

We the undersigned value the services provided by local councils in Wales and believe that by implementing these measures the Welsh Government will help to prevent further damage to local public service provision; whilst recognising that these measures are only part of the solution and an end to the Westminster Government austerity programme will be necessary to ensure that public services could be sustainably and adequately funded into the future.

### 1. Introduction

Local Government is one of the largest Main Expenditure Groups (MEGs) for the Welsh Government and in the last budget received the second highest expenditure after the Health,

Well-being and Sport MEG. Local authorities receive the majority of their funding from Welsh Government through the local government settlement.

As described in the Wales Audit Office report [Financial resilience of local authorities in Wales 2015–16](#), since 2010 the UK government has reduced spending on public services as part of its plans to reduce the UK deficit. This in turn has led to lower budgets for the Welsh Government and means Aggregate External Finance for local authorities has reduced each year since 2010.

## 2. Aggregate External Financing (revenue) in local authorities

Aggregate External Finance (AEF) is the name given to the money distributed by the Welsh Government through the settlement. This also includes redistributed non-domestic rates.

Local authorities receive the majority of their revenue funding through the [Local Government Settlement](#), this is published each year following the publication of the budget. The Welsh Government provides approximately 80% of the money allocated to local authorities. Funding is distributed between the 22 local authorities on the basis of a needs based formula.

The [Final Local Government Revenue and Capital Settlement for 2017–18](#) allocated £4.1 billion of revenue funding for local government in Wales. The 2017–18 settlement represented the first cash increase since 2013–14. However, it is still a real terms cut in funding for local authorities.

## 3. General Power of Competence

Local authorities in Wales are able to exercise their functions under the ‘well-being’ power under the [Local Government Act \(2000\)](#). The well-being power enables local authorities to act in any way which they consider would improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area or people in their area, as long as it is not otherwise prohibited from doing so by other legislation.

The [Draft Local Government Bill \(2015\)](#) contained provision for a general power of competence. This draft Bill is no longer likely to proceed and [new reform proposals are currently being prepared](#). The [Localism Act 2011](#) introduced a general power of competence for authorities in England.

The [general power of competence](#) replaces the well-being powers of local authorities and allows those organisations to “do anything that individuals may generally do”. There are a number of limitations, for instance the local authority cannot use the power to raise taxes (beyond current powers), expand power to create byelaws and the authority is limited by anything prohibited by statute.

The Welsh Local Government Association has called for a general power of competence for local authorities and in their evidence to the national assembly regarding the Draft Local Government Bill, [welcomed its inclusion in the proposals](#).

In his letter to this Committee regarding this petition the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government advises:

To provide further support, we are considering the scope to introduce a general power of competence at the earliest legislative opportunity.

#### **4. Provision of goods and services by local authorities and powers to trade**

The [Local Government Act 2003](#) (section 93 to 98) contains provision for local authorities to develop new streams of income. The Act allows local authorities to trade by establishing local authority trading companies where authorities have a statutory power to perform the service which is subject to trading.

The Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office have recently published a [report on the use of local authorities powers to introduce and increase charges on services](#). The Auditor General concluded that:

local authorities are not currently pursuing all options to generate income due to weaknesses in their policies and in how they use data and information to support decision making.

The AGW report also finds that the [Localism Act 2011](#) has provided a clear statement of powers for local authorities in England, such as the general power of competence. This has resulted in more local authorities 'identifying and taking income' raising opportunities. The general power, through allowing a local authority to 'do anything an individual may do', allows local authorities to trade in a wider variety of services. Local authorities in Wales are limited in not being able to trade with individuals where they already have a statutory duty to provide that individual with the service.

In his letter the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government advises that local authorities have a number of financial tools currently available to them:

A range of innovative activities are being undertaken by authorities and it is important for all authorities to learn from these experiences and to adopt good practice. It is particularly important for authorities to continue to look for savings in administrative functions so that the available resources can be channelled towards frontline services. Authorities need to balance the opportunities for generating income with providing for the needs of their communities.

## 5. Refinancing of Private Finance Initiatives

[Private Finance Initiative \(PFI\) projects](#) are a type of public-private partnership (PPP) used to fund major capital investments. A typical PFI project has private sector responsibility for design and build of the asset and for the running of the asset. The private firm is also responsible for raising the finance necessary to do this. The public sector body then buys into a service, rather than acquiring an asset and pays an ongoing 'unitary charge'. Refinancing of PFI is mechanism by which a local authority may negotiate and change the project's original financing arrangements.

The Welsh Government provides financial support for the capital element of previously approved PFI schemes. Local authorities are responsible for securing best value for their schemes. In his letter to this Committee, the Cabinet Secretary advises that the Welsh Government will continue to 'encourage' local authorities to pursue refinancing of PFI and that many local authorities are doing so. [HM Treasury collects data on PFI and PFI 2 projects](#). The most recent data relates to 2014-15. This shows that there are 28 PFI projects operating in Wales, of these 10 were procured by local authorities.

## 6. The Independent Commission on Local Government Finance Wales.

The [Independent Commission on Local Government Finance Wales](#) was established by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). Its Final Report, [Local Government Finance Wales, Ambition for Change: Aiming Higher](#), was launched on 24 March 2016 (a summary of the proposed reforms is outlined in the Annex).

The Welsh Government has indicated that the work of the commission will be considered as part of the wider reform work currently being undertaken. The Welsh Government's programme for government; Taking Wales Forward contains a commitment to:

Reform local government funding to make councils more sustainable and self-sufficient using the findings of the independent commission on local government finance and Welsh Government's Finance Futures Panel.

When asked about the work of the independent commission in his [oral evidence to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee in July 2016](#), the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government outlined that the report contained some 'strong recommendations' which he would look to discuss with the WLGA, but also that there were some which were 'potentially problematic', highlighting the 100% retention of business rates as such an issue.

In his letter to the Petitions Committee the Cabinet Secretary stated the report:

is a helpful contribution to the thinking on the development of a local government finance system which is more resilient.

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.

Mark Drakeford AM/AC  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-730  
Ein cyf/Our ref: MD/05482/16

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

[SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales](mailto:SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales)

22 November 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 9 November regarding petition P-05-730 on local government finance and funding.

I announced the Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2017-18 on 19 October. It will provide over £4.1 billion of revenue funding for local government in Wales for 2017-18. This includes top-up funding which ensures that no authority will see a reduction of greater than 0.5% in its core funding compared to 2016-17.

This is a good settlement for local government, particularly given the many competing pressures on the Welsh Budget. It constitutes the first increase in the core funding for local government since 2013-14.

The Welsh Local Government Association recognised the settlement is considerably better than most in local government had been expecting, describing it as “challenging but fair”.

The reductions to our Budget as a result of the Spending Review 2015 continued the UK Government’s squeeze on public spending and commitment to austerity. Our Budget will be 9% lower in real terms by the end of the decade – equivalent to almost £1.5bn less in real terms for public services in Wales in 2019-20 than in 2010-11.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
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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.

**Pack Page 48**

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.

Despite this, the Welsh Government has afforded relative protection to its funding for local government. This is evidenced by the fact that authorities budgeted to increase their spending in 2016-17 by 0.4% and have continued to add to their reserves.

Authorities currently have considerable scope under existing legislation to introduce new ways of working and alternative delivery models. This should help authorities to manage the financial challenges they face. Alongside this, the Welsh Government has provided a range of practical and financial support to local government to explore alternative approaches. To provide further support, we are considering the scope to introduce a general power of competence at the earliest legislative opportunity.

It is important for authorities to consider the range of financial tools at their disposal in managing the pressures they face. Whilst the annual settlement provides the largest single component of funding for local government in Wales, it is not the only one. A range of innovative activities are being undertaken by authorities and it is important for all authorities to learn from these experiences and to adopt good practice. It is particularly important for authorities to continue to look for savings in administrative functions so that the available resources can be channelled towards frontline services. Authorities need to balance the opportunities for generating income with providing for the needs of their communities.

The Welsh Government continues to provide financial support for the capital element of previously approved PFI schemes and it is for each authority to secure best value for money through these schemes. Authorities are able to explore opportunities to review and refinance existing PFI schemes and many are doing so. We have been encouraging authorities in pursuing this and will continue to do so.

In *Taking Wales Forward*, the Welsh Government has set out its intention to reform local government funding to make councils more sustainable and self-sufficient. The report of the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance Wales is a helpful contribution to the thinking on the development of a local government finance system which is more resilient.

Over the summer, I met local authority leaders and other stakeholders to discuss how we can develop an approach to reforming local government that is deliverable and sustainable. It is in everyone's interests that we get this right and I welcome constructive dialogue with all those with a contribution to make.

Best wishes,  
Mark

**Mark Drakeford AM/AC**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

## **P-05-730 Local Government Finance and Funding – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 09.01.17**

### **UNISON Cymru/Wales submission to the Petitions Committee Tuesday 17 January 2017**

1.1 UNISON welcomes the positive approach taken by Mark Drakeford, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government as outlined in his letter to Petitions Committee' Chair, 22 November 2016 and evidenced in the Provisional LG Settlement for 2017-18 announced on 19 October 2016, ensuring no council will see reductions of greater than 0.5% in their core funding compared to 2016-17 and looking to adopt some of UNISON's measures detailed in our petition.

1.2 However, Local Government services are facing irreparable damage under the policies of austerity and all measures need to be taken to protect our services and our communities.

### **Extracts from UNISON Wales report 'Local Government Wales: Audit of Austerity 2016'**

#### **Introduction**

2.1 The services provided by local authorities are a fundamental element of ensuring the economic, social and environmental health of our communities across Wales.

Every single service provided by a local authority has an impact on the health and wellbeing of communities and individuals. In fact, local authorities are becoming increasingly recognised for the health, social and environmental improvements they deliver. They are an essential tool in our armoury against inequality, poverty, and ill health.

2.2 In addition, they help to build resilient communities by promoting a sustainable local economy and environment – not only through the services they deliver to those communities, but as a significant employer of the local workforce.

Councils are expected to deliver high quality public services and be accountable to the communities they serve. This can only be properly achieved through a directly employed public sector workforce.

2.3 Yet despite the widely recognised benefits of local government services and the growing expectations on local authority provisions, the financial situation in Wales has never looked so bleak and local government services are facing irreparable damage. This report gives some insight into these financial challenges facing Welsh local government.

We urgently need fairer funding for Wales, a halt to the UK government austerity programme, and investment in our vital public services, but this report also outlines



a number of measures that the Welsh Government can immediately take to help to alleviate some of this damage to local public service provision.

### Direct impact on staff who provide our services

3.1 For every seven people who worked for the local council in Wales in 2010 only six people do so in 2016. Yet the public still expect the same level of service – for the bins to be emptied, the roads to be swept, the elderly to be cared for and their children to be well educated.

3.2 According to the ONS Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey between the second quarter 2010 and the second quarter 2016:

- 23,700 fewer people are employed by councils in Wales – 17,600 permanent jobs have gone as well as 6,100 temporary/casual jobs
- 6,900 fewer men and 9,200 fewer women are employed full time
- 2,000 fewer men and 5,400 fewer women are employed part-time

### The Funding Squeeze – Local Government Finance in Wales 2010 to 2016

4.1 The system of local government financing in Wales is built on Standard Spending Assessments’ (SSAs). These are **notional** calculations of what each council needs to spend in order to provide a standard level of service.

4.2 Each year the Wales Government calculates the SSA for each council. It then subtracts the council tax income that it expects the council to receive assuming 100% collection and a standard council tax level – this is called council tax for standard spending. Then it subtracts that council’s share of the business rates – in Wales business rates are collected by councils and paid into a national pool and distributed back to local councils. The balance is the revenue support grant the council gets from the Wales Government.

4.3 For the first three years to 2013/14 the overall SSA grew from £5.090bn in 2010/11 to £5.526bn in 2013/14. Throughout this period the increase failed to keep pace with both the increase in CPI and RPI but it was in stark contrast to the experience of local authorities in England that saw significant cash reductions in the grant from the Westminster Government.

**Table 1**

Year	SSA £'000	Cumulative % increase in SSA	Cumulative % increase in CPI	Cumulative % increase in RPI
2010/11	£5,089,991	0.0	0.0	0.0

2011/12	£5,103,242	0.26	4.5	5.2
2012/13	£5,150,213	1.18	7.4	8.6
2013/14	£5,526,387	8.57	10.2	11.8
2014/15	£5,463,936	7.35	11.9	14.5
2015/16	£5,385,525	5.81	11.9	15.7
2016/17	£5,425,128	6.58	12.7	17.6

4.4 But in 2014/15 and 2015/16 the SSA fell each year and by 2016/17 the gap between the percentage increase in SSA and the percentage increases in CPI has widened from just over 1.5% to 6% and for RPI it has widened from 3.2% to over 11%.

4.5 This report has already established that SSAs – the need to spend – did not keep pace with inflation. It has not kept pace with population growth either. In 2011 the population in Wales was 3.06 million and by 2016 this had risen to 3.168 million or by 3.53 per cent.

Between 2010/11 and 2015/16 SSAs grew by £335m.

4.6 This increase was largely funded by council tax payers. First the tax base has increased by just over 40,000 Band D equivalent properties and secondly the Wales Government has assumed the council tax that would be charged by local councils would rise from £882.17 in 2010/11 to £1,088.26 in 2016/17.

4.7 Business rates are now contributing an extra £86.65m more than they did in 2010/11 but in practice only £48.46m has found its way into council budgets as the Wales

Government has allowed the growth in business rates to allow a £38.19m cut to the revenue support grant it contributes.

**Table 2: The structure of council funding 2010/11 to 2016/17**

	100% taxbase (Band D equivalents)	SSA	Council tax	Revenue Support Grant	Redistributed Non Domestic rates	Aggregate External Finance
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2010/11	1178237	£5,089,991	£1,039,400	£3,209,091	£841,500	£4,050,591

2011/12	1185095	£5,103,242	£1,095,110	£3,299,832	£708,300	£4,008,132
2012/13	1191170	£5,150,213	£1,133,208	£3,197,105	£819,900	£4,017,005
2013/14	1197320	£5,526,387	£1,153,352	£3,423,594	£949,440	£4,373,034
2014/15	1202122	£5,463,936	£1,199,470	£3,296,336	£968,130	£4,264,466
2015/16	1210462	£5,385,525	£1,260,816	£3,235,629	£889,080	£4,124,709
2016/17	1218531	£5,425,128	£1,326,076	£3,170,902	£928,150	£4,099,052

## The Future

5.1 Local councils in Wales face multi-million budget gaps between now and 2020. The consequences can be seen all too clearly in England where councils such as Lancashire have concluded they will not have the resources to meet their statutory responsibilities. UNISON believes there are five things that can be done by the Wales Government to assist in protecting local public services.

- Increase aggregate external financing (revenue) to local authorities to at least 2013/14 levels in real terms.
- Introduce legislation that provides a 'power of general competence' for local authorities in Wales.
- Encourage local authorities to use their existing powers to provide goods and services to other parts of the public sector in Wales, and to explore and to trade by developing the range of goods and services that can be supplied to members of the public in general and to the private sector more generally.
- Work with local authorities in Wales to release existing revenue streams through, for example refinancing or replacing PFI schemes on more favourable terms utilising the opportunities afforded by historically low interest rates.
- Undertake to support the work of the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance

5.2 Clearly we recognise that these proposals are only a part of the solution and an end to the UK Government austerity programme will be necessary to ensure that public services could be sustainably and adequately funded into the future. However, through implementing these measures, the Welsh Government will at least help to prevent further damage to local public service provision.

# Agenda Item 2.5

## **P-05-731 Land & Access Lane Sale at Abercwmboi.**

This petition was submitted by Sue Waterson, which is collected 66 paper signatures.

### **Text of the Petition**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to halt their sale of the land and access road to the rear of properties numbered 1 to 67 Park View Terrace, Abercwmboi until representations from the local community have been heard and other options are explored. This sale is being negotiated without prior consultation or notification to parties who will be affected by such a sale.

### **Assembly constituency and Region.**

- Cynon Valley
- South Wales Central

## Land & Access Lane Sale at Abercwmboi

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 Ionawr 2017

Petitions Committee | 17 January 2017

### Research Briefing:

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**Petition number:** P-05-731

**Petition title:** Land & Access Lane Sale at Abercwmboi

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to halt their sale of the land and access road to the rear of properties numbered 1 to 67 Park View Terrace, Abercwmboi until representations from the local community have been heard and other options are explored. This sale is being negotiated without prior consultation or notification to parties who will be affected by such a sale.

### Background

The Welsh Government document [Managing Welsh Public Money](#) provides information on the management of resources (including assets, land and property) by organisations within the boundaries of the Welsh Government Consolidated Accounts. Page 119 contains a protocol for disposal of land, property and other assets and in particular notes that public bodies (including the Welsh Government) should:

- Value assets at market prices using Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' Red Book ([www.rics.org](http://www.rics.org));
- Consider wider public sector asset collaboration opportunities;
- Dispose of surplus land property within three years.

[Space Cymru](#) advertises public sector property that's available to let or buy in Wales. The land noted in the petition is not currently listed for sale.

### Welsh Government action

The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure has confirmed in a letter to the Committee that his officials are currently in dialogue with Rhondda Cynnon Taf County Borough Council regarding use of the land noted in the petition for access to an adjacent development site. If the land is not required for access to that site, the Cabinet Secretary has confirmed it will be sold on an open market basis.

## National Assembly for Wales action

The Finance Committee's inquiry into Asset Management in 2013 made recommendations to the Welsh Government around strengthening their Asset Management Strategy. The Welsh Government's response accepted that the development of the Corporate Asset Management plan and strategy was a priority. The subsequent Welsh Government Corporate Asset Management 2016–21 states:

Any assets deemed to be surplus after strategic review, will be actively disposed of in accordance with recognised best practice.

[...]

We have embraced the Wales Audit Office published guidance on asset management and we are actively involved with the "Good Practice Exchange" and support shared learning seminars. [www.wao.gov.uk/good-practice/assets](http://www.wao.gov.uk/good-practice/assets)

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-05-731  
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/07383/16

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee

[government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

7 December 2016

*Dear Mike,*

Thank you for your letter of 23 November regarding the sale of land to the rear of Park View Terrace, Abercwmboi.

My officials are currently in dialogue with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council regarding access arrangements to an adjacent development site. The subject land will not be sold until these discussions have concluded.

In the event of the land not being required for access to that site, it is intended that the land will be sold on an open market basis.

*Yours ever,*

**Ken Skates AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith  
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure

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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. Only correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.



# Agenda Item 2.6

## **P-05-732 Unacceptable Waiting Times for NHS patients in A & E Wreccsam/Wrexham Maelor Hospital.**

This petition was submitted by Charles Dodman, which collected 14 signatures.

### **Text of the Petition**

I am petitioning the Welsh Assembly to debate and discuss and implement measures to resolve unacceptable waiting times for the Welsh people at A & E Wreccsam/Wrexham Maelor Hospital. Welsh people look undermined and demoralised by this unacceptable situation.

### **Assembly constituency and Region.**

- Wrexham
- North Wales

## Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 January 2017

Petitions Committee | 17 Ionawr 2017

**Petition number:** P-05-732

**Petition title:** Unacceptable Waiting Times for NHS patients in A & E Wreccsam/Wrexham Maelor Hospital

**Text of petition:** I am petitioning the Welsh Assembly to debate and discuss and implement measures to resolve unacceptable waiting times for the Welsh people at A & E Wreccsam/Wrexham Maelor Hospital. Welsh people look undermined and demoralised by this unacceptable situation.

### Background

The NHS Wales Outcomes Framework 2016–17, released [in WHC \(2016\) 23](#), is used to measure delivery throughout 2016–17. The Welsh Government sets **national targets** for its emergency care services as outlined below.

**Emergency departments:** The targets relating to time spent in A&E departments are:

- 95 per cent of new patients should spend less than 4 hours in A&E departments from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge;
- Eradication of 12 hour or more waits within A&E departments.

The Welsh Government has published statistics on time spent in NHS Wales A&E departments for [the quarter ending September 2016](#), and these figures also show the trend over time. Figures for October and November 2016 are now available via the [NHS Informatics Service](#) and key all-Wales results for November 2016 were:

- 82 per cent of patients spent less than 4 hours from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge in November 2016;
- 2,954 patients spent 12 hours or more from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge in November 2016, meaning that 96.3 per cent of patients spent less than 12 hours from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge during that month.

The position in relation to Wrexham Maelor Hospital, the two other District General Hospitals in Betsi Cadwaladr UHB and the all-Wales figures for July–November 2016 is outlined below, together with comparative data for 2015::

**Table 1: Percentage of patients spending less than 4 hours from arrival in A&E until admission, transfer or discharge.**

	July 2016	August 2016	September 2016	October 2016	November 2016
Wrexham Maelor Hospital	66.4	73	72 (67.2: Sept 2015)	75 (69.8: Oct 2015)	71.6 (67: Nov 2015)
Ysbyty Glan Clwyd	69.7	65.2	69.7	72.6	67.8
Ysbyty Gwynedd	80.2	78.9	78.4	81	76.6
All-Wales	83.2	84.4	82.8	82.4	82

Source: [NHS Wales Informatics Service](#)

**Table 2: Percentage of patients spending less than 12 hours from arrival in A&E until admission, transfer or discharge.**

	July 2016	August 2016	September 2016	October 2016	November 2016
Wrexham Maelor Hospital	95.6	95.4	96 (95.9: Sept 2015)	95.3 (94.5: Oct 2015)	94.4 (94.4: Nov 2015)
Ysbyty Glan Clwyd	92	91.2	89.3	90	89
Ysbyty Gwynedd	96.3	97	96.1	96.2	94.2
All-Wales	97.4	97.6	96.8	96.8	96.3

Source: [NHS Wales Informatics Service](#)

In late 2016 the 5<sup>th</sup> Assembly Health, Social Care and Sport Committee conducted an [inquiry into the preparedness for winter 2016–17](#) of health and social care services in Wales. The Committee’s [inquiry report](#) noted the continued year round pressures on A&E services in Wales, although recognising there are seasonal spikes in demand, especially during the winter months. The Committee heard concerns from the [Royal College of Emergency Medicine](#) (RCEM) about the pressures on A&E across Wales. The RCEM has recently re-iterated those concerns; Welsh Government has noted the continuing pressures on health care services and stated it

will continue to work with the College and health experts to improve the delivery of urgent and emergency care.

This increased demand is also evident in other areas of the UK, with NHS England experiencing significant pressures in relation to A&E services.

## Welsh Government Action

The Cabinet Secretary stated in his [paper to the Committee](#) for its session on 15 September 2016:

The latest published statistics show waiting times in hospital emergency departments in Wales are continuing to improve. Despite around 2,880 attendances every day, 83.2% of patients spent less than 4 hours in emergency departments being triaged, diagnosed and treated from arrival until admission, transfer or discharge. There was also a drop in the number of people waiting over 12 hours. There is more work to be done by health boards, and they are expected to work to improve patients' experiences and eliminate lengthy delays.

The Committee has also received correspondence dated 16 December 2016 from the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport, who states that:

- He believes it is important to recognise that the majority of patients seen in A&E departments are treated and discharged very quickly;
- There has been improvement in the performance against the 4 hour target at Wrexham Maelor Hospital, achieving 75 percent performance against the 4 hour target in October 2016, with 'sustained improvements in waiting times at the hospital over the past 18 months';
- He hopes to see further reductions in A&E waiting times as part of the process of improving unscheduled care, and expects to see all local health boards ensure that the local emergency system is responsive across all healthcare settings to peaks in demand on their services;
- Performance against this is monitored regularly throughout the year and regular contact is maintained between Welsh Government and local health boards. This was also emphasized in the [evidence given by Welsh Government](#) to the Health Social care and Sport Committee's winter preparedness enquiry.

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.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon  
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref VG/06979/16

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

[government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

16 December 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 29 November on behalf of the Petitions Committee and Charles Dodman regarding Petition P-05-732 about waiting times in A&E at Wrexham Maelor Hospital.

In Wales, the national target is for 95% of patients attending A&E to be admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours. Unfortunately, there are occasions when delays can occur but it is important to recognise that the majority of patients seen in A&E departments are treated and discharged very quickly.

In October, 75% of patients at Wrexham Maelor Hospital A&E department were admitted, transferred or discharged within four hours. While this remains below the national target of 95%, I have been encouraged to see sustained improvement in waiting times at the hospital over the past 18 months. I hope to see further reductions in A&E waiting times as the health board pursues its comprehensive programme to improve unscheduled care performance across all its hospital sites over coming months.

I have made it clear to all local health boards that they must continue to manage their local population needs and ensure that the local emergency system is flexible in responding to peaks in demand in all settings. These expectations are monitored through regular contact between the Welsh Government and local health boards throughout the year.

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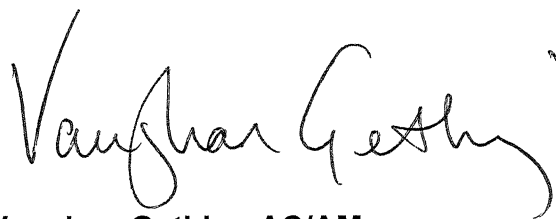
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[Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Vaughan.Gething@gov.wales)

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 hope this has helped to clarify the position on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V' and a long, sweeping tail.

**Vaughan Gething AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd, Llesiant a Chwaraeon  
Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport

# Agenda Item 2.7

## **P-05-733 No Further Actions on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) In Wales At All.**

This petition was submitted by Nicola Savage, which collected 30 online signatures and over 400 paper signatures. An associated petition on Change.org collected 497 signatures.

### **Text of the Petition**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to take no further actions on NVZ in Wales at all. Bringing this directive in would put enormous pressure on an already crippled dairy farming industry and the wider rural communities. We are the backbone of the Welsh Economy, No Farmers, No Food

### **Assembly constituency and Region.**

- Preseli Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales

## Petition P-05-733: No Further Actions on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) In Wales At All

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 17 Ionawr 2017  
Petitions Committee | 17 January 2017

### Research Briefing:

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Petition number: P-05-733

Petition title: No Further Actions on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) In Wales At All

Petition text:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to take no further actions on NVZ in Wales at all. Bringing this directive in would put enormous pressure on an already crippled dairy farming industry and the wider rural communities. We are the backbone of the Welsh Economy, No Farmers, No Food.

### Background

Under the EU Nitrates Directive, Member States are required to identify and designate **Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)** which are areas designated as being at risk from agricultural nitrate pollution. In Wales currently, NVZs are designated by Regulation 7 of the *Nitrate Pollution Prevention (Wales) Regulations 2013* which came into force on 25 October 2013 to implement the Directive.

Diffuse water pollution occurs when pollutants such as nitrates and phosphates are carried into water bodies by rainwater run-off from urban and rural land, usually from many small sources, having a cumulative effect. A key outcome of nitrate pollution is eutrophication. This is where the increase in nitrate or phosphate in the water encourages algae growth, which forms a bloom over the water surface. This prevents sunlight reaching other water plants, which then die. Bacteria break down the dead plants and use up the oxygen in the water so the water body may become lifeless. Nitrate pollution can impact the ecology of lakes, rivers and coastal waters, the quality of groundwater and also the cost of water supplies.



An [Action Programme](#) of ‘Good Agricultural Practice’ applies to designated NVZ areas in an effort to reduce nitrate pollution where the affected landowner must follow the statutory measures. The NVZ Action Programme measures include:

- controlling the dates (closed periods) and conditions under which nitrogen fertiliser and organic materials are spread;
- having sufficient facilities for storage of manures and slurries;
- limiting nitrogen fertiliser applications to the crop requirement only;
- limiting quantities of organic material applied per hectare per year;
- limiting the total quantity of organic material applied at farm level;
- controlling the areas where nitrogen fertilisers can be applied;
- controls on application methods; and
- preparing plans and keeping adequate farm records.

On designation of specific areas of land as NVZs, only landowners within those areas must implement the Action Programme measures with landowners in other areas being subject only to other national baseline standards. Approximately 750 farm holdings are currently subject to pollution controls under the Action Programme in Wales.

Under the Regulations it is required that NVZ designations are reviewed at least every four years. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) reviews NVZ designations and makes recommendations to the Welsh Ministers as to which areas should be designated and also advises on amendments to the measures in the Action Programme. The Welsh Government must publish the recommendations which they are ‘minded to accept’ with or without amendment and send notice of the recommendations to any owner or occupier of a relevant holding.

Compliance with the Nitrates Directive can have costs for farmers in NVZs, for example investment in slurry storage facilities. However, there is currently some support available to farmers. Under the [Rural Development Programme \(RDP\) for Wales \(2014–2020\)](#), eligible farmers can access funding towards nutrient management planning. Financial support is also available through the RDP Sustainable Production Grant Scheme to improve resource and business efficiency.

## Welsh Government action

Following the review of NVZs in 2012, 2.4% of land in Wales was designated as a NVZ. In the current review round, NRW has identified further potential NVZ sites which would result in an increase in NVZ designation to cover 8% of Wales. This would include a significant new designation in Pembrokeshire and smaller new designations in Anglesey and Carmarthenshire. The [maps on the Welsh Government website](#) show the proposed NVZ areas in Wales with detail down to field level.

The Welsh Government has recently [consulted](#) on NVZs in Wales. The consultation states that the outcome of the NVZ review and the consultation will be used to make any appropriate changes to the designated NVZ areas and/or the measures in the NVZ Action Programme. An alternative approach proposed in the consultation is to apply the Action Programme throughout the whole of Wales, requiring all landowners to comply, rather than having targeted NVZ areas. The consultation states that the Welsh Government plans to introduce new Regulations in 2017 following the findings of the review and consultation.

## Stakeholder responses

[FUW has urged members to respond to the NVZ consultation](#) warning that a number of the proposals put forward ‘will seriously impact farmers in Wales’:

The FUW remains resolutely against the option to apply the action programme throughout the whole of Wales as this would require all landowners to comply with the NVZ action programme measures. There is a distinct lack of evidence for a whole territory approach and the difficulties and costs associated with regulatory compliance for farms whose land does not drain into nitrate polluted waters, makes this option both unwarranted and unreasonably excessive.

NFU Cymru is also ‘very much opposed to the proposed designations’. NFU Cymru President Stephen James has [said](#):

NFU Cymru remains wholly unconvinced on the basis of evidence presented by Natural Resources Wales that further NVZ designations are necessary in Wales.

...

Our own NFU Cymru NVZ Survey showed that around one in eight (13%) of farmers would consider leaving the industry if the NVZ proposals are introduced. Nearly three quarters (73%) of farmers surveyed did not have sufficient slurry storage on their farm to meet the proposed NVZ requirements and it would cost, on average, nearly £80,000 for Welsh farmers to upgrade their slurry storage facilities to achieve NVZ slurry storage compliance.

NFU also believes that funding available from the RDP is not sufficient to cover these costs and that farmers would suffer significant economic impacts.

Environmental organisations argue that further designation is required to prevent further pollution of rivers and the decline of biodiversity. Wildlife Trusts Wales (WTW) recommends a compromise between the two NVZ proposals – a partial territory NVZ approach where NVZ designation should be applied at a catchment scale. WTW states that designated areas should include:

areas that it has been shown that the waters are polluted by nitrates (and the land that drains into them); and

based on the precautionary principle, areas that could become polluted by nitrates in the future. The Precautionary Principle is a strategy to cope with possible risks which could create unacceptable harm that is scientifically plausible but uncertain.

Other organisations advocate the proposed whole Wales approach, such as Carmarthen Fishermen's Federation, which has stated that:

There would be wide benefits [to the whole Wales approach] in terms of the compliance with [Water Framework Directive] standards, improved ecology of rivers including fisheries with the associated economic gain to the rural economy through increased tourism and reduced costs for treating abstracted water for potable supply.

## National Assembly for Wales action

In March 2016, the then Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant, was asked questions in a [plenary debate](#) on the Welsh Government's proposed consultation. Questions asked included what support would be provided to farmers in NVZs considering the potential impact on farm businesses, e.g. the additional costs of increased slurry storage. The functions of NRW relating to water quality was also questioned in the light of budget cuts. The Minister said:

We have far too many cases of diffuse pollution across our water courses and it's something that we must tackle together. The issue around the consultation will be around whether that's a localised NVZ or whether it's a national scheme, and that will be something the consultation will have to consider. With regard to support for farm and farm bases that need to make adjustments, I'd be happy to have further discussions. I think the next Government, of course, will have to have further discussions with the industry to see how they can manage this better, but ultimately this is a matter for the sector to deal with and I think Government does need to look carefully at how we can move them and transfer them into a better space.

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 AC/AM  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig  
Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-733  
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/06921/16

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
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13

December 2016

Dear Mike

Thank you for your letter of 2 December regarding Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs) in Wales.

The Nitrates Directive (1991) (The Directive) aims to protect water quality by preventing nitrates from agricultural sources polluting ground and surface waters and by promoting the use of good farming practices. Measures introduced under the Directive in Wales intend to safeguard both human health and the natural environment, for example by avoiding or reducing pollution by toxic substances in drinking water and reducing eutrophication of watercourses. The European adopted targets for Nitrate levels reflect international World Health Organisation guidance which the Welsh Government means to follow.

The main objectives of the Directive are compatible with the Welsh Government's sustainability principles enshrined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Legislation introduced under the Directive is one of the key instruments in achieving improved water quality across Wales and reducing the impact of intensive agricultural practices on our environment.

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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.

Back Page 72

The Directive gives Member States the option to designate discrete targeted NVZs or to adopt a whole territory approach whereby all land within Wales will be subject to the action programme.

I am currently consulting on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in Wales and the consultation closes on 23 December.

This consultation document invites opinions from individuals and organisations on:

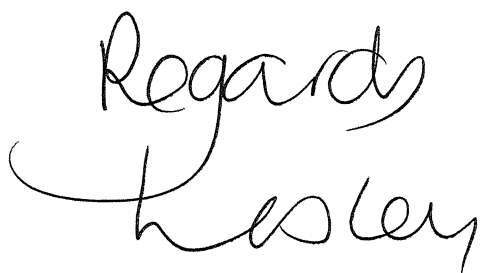
- options for future designation of NVZs – a targeted approach to designation of discrete NVZ areas or applying the action programme throughout the whole of Wales.
- Proposals to modify the Action Programme measures implemented within the NVZs.

These proposed new areas follow the latest evidence and data from Natural Resources Wales about waters in Wales which are classed as nitrate polluted waters under the current Nitrate Pollution Prevention (Wales) Regulations 2013.

Implementation of the proposals in the Action Programme following the designation process will contribute to an integrated approach to tackling diffuse pollution in water courses. This will, in turn, contribute to meeting other water quality requirements and the Welsh Government's wider aspirations for the environment in Wales.

The Action Programme proposals in this consultation document are underpinned by detailed scientific evidence generated through research commissioned by the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) to inform the implementation of the Nitrates Directive in the UK. The existing Action Programme measures and the additional measures contained within this consultation are likely to have greatest operational and financial impact upon dairy and beef farming practices. This is a proportionate response. Between 2010 and 2015, an average of 61% of recorded agricultural pollution incidents per year, were from dairy farms and 19% from beef farms.

The consultation exercise will help the Welsh Government to develop its policies for tackling water pollution with the aim to reduce Nitrate levels in water courses. The UK's withdrawal from the European Union may provide an opportunity in the future to review our approach to tackling diffuse pollution in agriculture. However, it will be imperative for any future policy decision not to have a detrimental effect on public health and Wales' natural resources.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Regards Lesley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Lesley Griffiths AC/AM**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig  
Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs

# Agenda Item 3.1

## **P-04-479 Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition**

### **Petition wording:**

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to stop the withdrawal of X-ray facilities & the reduction in provision of services by the Minor Injuries Unit as a matter of urgency.

**Petition raised by:** Tywyn & District Health Care Action Group

**Date petition first considered by Committee:** 14 May 2013

**Number of signatures:** 4486

**P-04-479 Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition –  
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 06.01.17**

Dear Kathryn, thank you for your e.mail regarding Petition PO 479 Tywyn Memorial X ray and Minor Injuries Petition. If I may, I would like to update you on the current situation which is that as far as I am aware there has been no response from the Health Board to the Petition Committee's question in 2015 of how Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board have addressed the Community Health Council's recommendation that they should provide the population of Tywyn with a strategy for accessing alternative Minor Injuries Service outside the opening hours of Tywyn Memorial Hospital. The Community Health Council's Recommendation was that the Health Board would need to have plans for implementing and communicating it's proposals so that people can be confident that they will get Minor Injuries Services they need from GP's surgeries, Out of hours and Community Hospitals. The current situation is that the Minor Injury Service is available at Tywyn Hospital on weekdays from Monday to Friday during the hours of

10 AM until 6 PM, this Service is unavailable after these hours and is also unavailable at the weekends. The GP's surgery provides a minor illness service but does not provide any Minor Injuries Service. We have not been informed what provision, if any, there is for a Minor Injuries Service from Out of Hours Practice. There are two other Hospitals in Meirionnydd which provide a Minor Injuries Service during seven days of the week from 8AM until 8PM. Access to these other Services would necessitate the use of private transport and at least a

40 mile round trip from Tywyn on difficult roads and often in hazardous conditions during the Winter. We feel therefore that there has been no change to the inferior Service that local residents are offered. We are advised by the Health Board to choose well seven days a week but unfortunately the residents of Tywyn do not have the equality of Service, compared to other Hospitals in the surrounding area, in order to be able to choose well. I will be most grateful if the new Committee would consider whether this issue is worth still pursuing with the Health Board. With kind regards, Jennifer Windsor (on behalf of The Tywyn and District Health Care Action Group)

## Agenda Item 3.2

### **P-04-621 Stop Closure of Consultant-led Maternity Unit at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd**

#### **Petition wording**

We the undersigned request that Betsi Cadwallader University Health Board stop its planned closure of the Consultant-led Maternity Unit at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd. We believe its closure will be detrimental to the welfare of expectant mothers and their families, and will endanger lives. We do not believe it is right or fair for patients to have to travel upwards of 30 miles for treatment, particularly in case of emergency. We believe that the additional pressure placed on staff at Ysbyty Maelor and Ysbyty Gwynedd will be detrimental to maternity services at those hospitals. We ask that the BCUHB consider other options (such as closure of unit to elective procedures ) and retain consultants at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd for the safety of expectant mothers.

**Lead petitioner:** Rebecca Roberts

**First considered by the Committee:**

**Number of signatures:** 562 online signatures.



**P-04-621 Maternity Services – Ysbyty Glan Clwyd North Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Clerking team, 21.12.16**

I apologise for not replying sooner – I watched the video online, but I haven't had time to respond before now. I was delighted and relieved (as were several thousand mothers in the north east) to hear that the maternity unit is going to remain open and that improvements to the service mean that it is no longer cause for serious concern. I am content for the petition to be closed as we have achieved our objectives via our grass-roots campaign.

Regards,

Rebecca

## Agenda Item 3.3

P-04-663 – Food in Welsh Hospitals.

This petition was submitted by Rachel Flint having collected 40 signatures

### *Text of the Petition*

*We the undersigned call on the Welsh Government to examine the standards of food in hospitals in Wales. Each health board's provision must be investigated to ensure it is fit for purpose for patients, those with dietary needs and medical conditions, and impose standards across the whole of the Welsh NHS. Hospital food should be nutritious, fresh and be a major part of a patient's care package and road to recovery – not make things worse. Dietary needs must be catered for – such as gluten free, lactose intolerant, Celiac, vegetarian and vegan – experience shows this is not currently the case and patients are often made to feel awkward. Food tailored for medical conditions – including those who suffer from bowel conditions or have had surgery – must be standardised, to ensure patients are getting the right nutrition at all times. Currently patients on some wards are being fed all the same food regardless of their conditions, weight and dietary needs – this is not acceptable and can be upsetting and potentially damaging. Hospitals should not rely on relatives to bring in food, eat the same bland meal every day, or allow patients to waste away if they can't have any of the food on offer. Nutrition must be a key part of every patient's care package. We are not asking for Michelin Star quality, just meals that help rather than hinder.*

### ***Additional Information***

*My experiences of food in the NHS have shown that the standards vary across wards, hospitals and departments, as well as between England and Wales. The problem is not in Wales alone – as I find providing meals for those on low res or with dietary conditions is something the NHS as a whole struggles to deal with. But my experience in Wales recently showed that the standards are not up to scratch. There were no menus (as in Chester and other English hospitals) and patients were all fed the same regardless of their condition, weight or dietary needs. On one ward people who had just had bowel surgery were offered curry, lentil soup and tuna sweetcorn sandwiches which was totally inappropriate – and potentially damaging. At times the situation was that if you couldn't eat anything on the trolley or were not at your bed, you simply didn't eat, unless a nurse made some toast. This has to change; without the right nutrition I believe people are in hospital longer.*

### **Assembly Constituency and Region**

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

15 December 2016

Dear Mike

**Petition P-04-663 Food in Welsh Hospitals**

As you are aware, the Public Accounts Committee has gathered further evidence on hospital catering and patient nutrition following the publication of the Auditor General for Wales's Memorandum in September 2016. As part of that evidence gathering, I wrote to all health boards and Velindre NHS Trust seeking responses to a standard set of questions. All the organisations responses are published on the Committee's webpage for this issue:

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=15847>

At its meeting on 12 December, the Committee agreed to prepare and publish a short report which you will receive as Chair of Petitions Committee in spring 2017.

Yours sincerely,



**Nick Ramsay AM**  
Chair



## Agenda Item 3.4

### **P-04-676 Establish a Welsh Language Champion in our Communities in Wales**

This petition was submitted by Councillor Sion Jones, having collected 10 signatures.

#### **Text of the Petition**

*I present this petition to you as a starting point in the campaign to establish a Welsh language champion in our communities in Wales. The role would be a voluntary one, based in the community, and the champion would be appointed to promote the use of the Welsh language in Wales and to support developments in our communities.*

*The language champion would lead on issues with regard to the language, which would include having a role within primary and secondary schools and within parish and town councils, as well as close engagement with county councils and county councillors.*

*The champion would be supported by the Welsh Language Commissioner to carry out the role's functions and to ensure that communities in Wales are aligned with local and national policies in Wales.*

#### **Assembly Constituency and Region**

- Arfon
- North Wales



Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-676  
Ein cyf/Our ref ARD/05481/16

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
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6 December 2016

Dar Mike,

I am writing in response to your letter of 16 November, regarding Petition P-04-676 Establish a Welsh Language Champion in our Communities in Wales.

Further to the First Minister's response dated 27 January 2016, thank you for the opportunity to present my views on "the potential scope for community and town councils to consider appointing a Welsh language champion within their structures".

The idea proposed is one that I would be happy to support. Town and community councils have an important role in promoting the Welsh language within their communities.

I will be writing to One Voice Wales, as the body representing the community councils across the whole of Wales, making the case for councils to appoint a Welsh language champion and encouraging them to do so. Although such an appointment would be a matter for each community council to consider and act upon on a voluntary basis, I agree that the role could potentially contribute in strengthening alignment between local and national policies in relation to the Welsh language, as well as strengthening support for the Welsh language at local level through the work of the councils.

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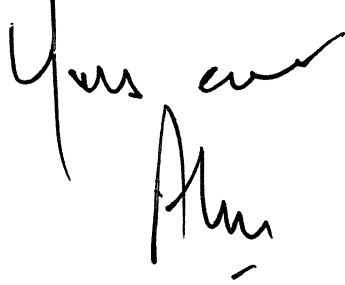
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[Correspondence.Alun.Davies@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Alun.Davies@gov.wales)

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. Correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The *Mentrau Iaith* (Welsh Language Enterprises) are the first point of contact for matters relating to the Welsh language in local communities. There are currently 23 *Menter Iaith*, providing information, guidance and an access to the Welsh language. They have developed and grown over the last 25 years and have a wealth of local understanding and expertise. They are therefore natural partners for community councils in developing their Welsh language understanding and objectives. In my letter to One Voice Wales, I will be recommending that the Welsh Language Champion would want to collaborate with their local *Menter Iaith*.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yours ever Alun', written in a cursive style.

**Alun Davies AC/AM**

Gweinidog y Gymraeg a Dysgu Gydol Oes  
Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language

**P-04-676 Establish a welsh language champion in our communities in Wales –  
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 19.12.16**

Thank you very much,

In response to the e-mail below, I would like to thank the committee for taking the idea forward. This year, the idea has been welcomed by Carwyn Jones and a number of others.

I am grateful to the Minister for the Welsh language for his comments and response to the Chair's recent letter. I welcome the fact that he intends to write to Un Llais Cymru to initiate the process, but I am a little concerned that the issue will be ignored by Un Llais, particularly having dealt with them through the medium of English only in the past.

I would be very willing to lead this work on a voluntary basis on the Government's behalf and to try to establish policies for further discussion in the local government/language committees.

Many thanks,

Sion

Sion Jones



# Agenda Item 3.5

## P-04-681 Allow Public Recording of Local Government Meetings

### In Wales

This petition was submitted by Michael John Powell, having collected 186 signatures.

#### *Text of the Petition*

*We the undersigned ask that the Welsh Government gives the people and electors of Wales the same ability to record their Local Government meetings as their English counterparts have.*

#### *Additional Information:*

*The detailed provisions are contained in the secondary legislation made under the 2000 Act, that is the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. The regulations were enacted in September 2012 and announced on the Department for Communities and Local Government website.*

#### **Assembly Constituency and Region**

- Pontypridd
- South Wales Central

Mark Drakeford AM/AC  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-681  
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/05542/16

Mike Hedges AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

[government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:government.committee.business@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

13 December 2016

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter of 1 November regarding a petition from Councillor Mike John Powell calling for the public recording of Local Government meetings.

I encourage all local authorities to allow, when possible, access to their proceedings and I am pleased to see that broadcasting of council meetings is now a regular practice in many local authorities. I consider the public should also have a right to report live from these meetings through live blogging or using social media.

Our plans to reform broadcasting and engagement will be set out in the White Paper, which will be published for consultation early in the new year. The Draft Local Government Bill consulted upon last year contained proposals to make it compulsory for local authorities to make arrangements to broadcast their full council and executive meetings and to give the public a right to report live from council proceedings. I will consider whether to continue with this policy in a future Bill.

Best wishes,

Mark

**Mark Drakeford AM/AC**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a Llywodraeth Leol  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government

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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.

**Pack Page 86**

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.

# Agenda Item 3.6

## **P-05-728 Protect Families First Funding.**

This petition was submitted by Whitehead-Ross Education and UNISON Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Branch, which collected 24 signatures.

### **Text of the Petition**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to protect the Families First budget in order to protect the most vulnerable families across Wales, including in our own area of Neath Port Talbot (NPT).

Families First is a Welsh Government-funded innovation programme that promotes the development by local authority areas of effective multi-agency systems and support, with a clear emphasis on prevention and early intervention for families, particularly those living in poverty.

At the end of August, the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Communities issued a letter to local authorities about the future of Families First, which is due to end in March 2017. In his letter he outlined the future priorities to address identified gaps in service provision for parents and young people and link the work of the programme clearly with the prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

The Cabinet Secretary is expected to make a formal announcement on the future of the programme in the autumn and budgetary allocations for each local authority will not be known until late December 2016. With Communities First coming to an end in March 2017, this reinforces the need for Families First to be protected.

In its first full year of operation, NPT's 'Think Family' early intervention and prevention programme supported almost 100 families to make positive changes and tackle issues before they became critical. Based on Government estimates that one troubled family can cost the taxpayer in the region of £75,000 per year, this represents a return on investment of £3.32 for every £1 spent and more than £7.3 million savings to the economy.

The Welsh Government reduced the Families First Grant in NPT by £260,000 for 2016/17, with a grant of £1,964,194. 2,586 individuals accessed a Families First service during 2015-16 in NPT.

### **Assembly constituency and Region**

- Aberavon
- South Wales West

**P-05-728 Protect Families First Funding – Correspondence from the  
Petitioner to the Committee, 30.11.16**

We are pleased to learn the budget for 2017/18 will remain at the 2016/17 funding level and have nothing further to add.

Best wishes

# Agenda Item 3.7

## **P-05-721 Penegoes Speed Limit Petition**

This petition was submitted by Isabel Bottoms, Peter Bottoms and Sarah Holgate, having collected 298 paper signatures.

### **Text of the Petition**

We call on the National Assembly for Wales urge the Welsh Government to introduce a 30 miles per hour speed limit throughout the village of Penegoes (from the Penegoes village sign entering from Machynlleth, to the other side of the Maesperthi Caravan Park's Proposed new entrance) on the A489 road towards Newtown; and a 40 miles per hour speed limit from Machynlleth to Pengoes.

### **Assembly Constituency and Region:**

Montgomeryshire

Mid and West Wales

## P-05-721 Penegoes Speed Limit Petition – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee

Good afternoon Graeme

Thank you for your previous email and I hope you have had a good Christmas.

There will be an additional email of the speed profiles over the week's survey following.

Please see the attached breakdown of the vehicle types for the road survey here outside Llwyn, you will see there is a tiny green dot on the map of the main road, which correlates with the photograph of the test site on the first page of each report.

The combined report for the traffic flow of nearly 26,000 vehicles to and from Machynlleth is interesting as it shows that less than half of the vehicles are cars, the rest are LGV's up to 44 tonne 6 axle articulated vehicles, travelling at upto the max speed limit of 60mph.

From the photograph of the site you can see that the bend at the end of the building is almost blind, with an actual road width between curbs of only 19 feet, hence the need for large vehicles to mount the pavement to avoid each other at that point.

Best wishes for the New Year and thank you for your assistance so far.

Regards

Peter Bottoms

Total	Cls 1	Cls 2	Cls 3 (car)	Cls 4 (LGV)	Cls 5	Cls 6	Cls 7	Cls 8	Cls 9	Cls 10	Cls 11
25201	6	42	11742	11642	1056	91	14	234	3	228	143

Good afternoon again Graeme.

Please see the attached speed survey for the A489 outside Llwyn, Penegoes.

In the combined report the really salient part is that there are 390 vehicles travelling at between 60 and 80 mph and that the main body of vehicles are in the 30–50 mph bracket.

Over the length of the village ( 1 mile ), at 30 mph it would take only 2 mins and at 40mph 1.5 minutes extra to travel the distance, reducing risk, pollution, noise and saving some fuel.

The potential for killing pedestrians in road traffic accidents rises significantly above 30 mph, the saving of 2 minutes seems to hardly justify WG's position requiring deaths (and all the distress and costs attached to those fatalities), to have to have occurred before the issues of speed are dealt with pre-emptively. (There have been several deaths on this road within the village in the last 25 years).

The summer figures, especially at weekends are quite different, with many even faster drivers heading for the coast, who are not fully conversant with the road and its dangers.

If the speed limit in the village was to be 30mph and from the village to Machynlleth 40mph the extra time to travel the same distance would be less than 5 minutes, hardly enough to justify a fatality one would think.

Regards

Peter Bottoms

Total	Vbin 5 10	Vbin 10 15	Vbin 15 20	Vbin 20 25	Vbin 25 30	Vbin 30 35	Vbin 35 40	Vbin 40 45	Vbin 45 50	Vbin 50 55	Vbin 55 60
25201	0	2	54	183	310	1248	5146	8547	5790	2603	918

Vbin 60	Vbin 65	Vbin 70	Vbin 75	Mean	Vpp 85
65	70	75	80		
283	84	25	8	43.7	50.1



# Agenda Item 5

**P-04-668 – Support Yearly Screening for Ovarian Cancer (CA125 blood test)**

This petition was submitted by Margaret Hutcherson, having collected 104 signatures.

***Text of the Petition***

*We, the undersigned, call upon the Welsh Government to support yearly screening for ovarian cancer (CA125 Blood Test)*

**Assembly Constituency and Region**

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

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# Agenda Item 6

By virtue of paragraph(s) ix of Standing Order 17.42

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By virtue of paragraph(s) ix of Standing Order 17.42

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