

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: Tuesday, 7 May 2019

Meeting time: 09.02 – 10.08

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

<http://senedd.tv/en/5474>

Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	Janet Finch-Saunders AM (Chair) Mike Hedges AM Neil McEvoy AM Leanne Wood AM
Witnesses:	
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Ross Davies (Deputy Clerk) Kathryn Thomas (Deputy Clerk) Sam Davies (Legal Adviser)

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.

2 New petitions

2.1 P-05-873 Free Welsh Lessons for the People of Wales

Mike Hedges declared the following relevant interest under Standing Order 17.24A:



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

His daughter is currently studying Welsh at University and may, in the future, teach Welsh.

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- await the views of the petitioner on the response provided by the Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language; and
- write back to the Minister to ask whether there is sufficient teaching capacity to support an increase in demand for Welsh language lessons.

2.30 P-05-874 Ban the sale of goods packaged in single use plastics on Transport for Wales services

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- await the views of the petitioner on the response provided by the Minister for Economy and Transport; and
- write to Transport for Wales to seek their views on the petition, ask for further details of the initiatives referred to by the Minister for Economy and Transport and ask whether targets for reducing or eliminating single-use plastics could be incorporated into the procurement for a not-for-profit “at seat catering” service.

2.3 P-05-875 The Capping of Council Tax Rises in Wales

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to write to the Welsh Local Government Association to seek their views on the points raised by the petition and the potential impact of a policy to cap or limit Council Tax increases.

2.4 P-05-869 Declare a Climate Emergency and fit all policies with zero-carbon targets

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- write back to the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs to seek an update on the latest actions taken by the Welsh Government, including its declaration of a Climate Emergency on 30 April and the updated advice from the UK Committee on Climate Change published in early May; and

- write to the Business Committee to seek time for the petition to be debated in Plenary.

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-05-717 Establish Statutory Public Rights of Access to Land and Water for Recreational and Other Purposes

The Committee considered a written statement by the Deputy Minister for Housing & Local Government issued on 4 April, and agreed to share the petitioners' latest comments with the Deputy Minister to seek her views on the contents, and ask for more detail about the Welsh Government's intended approach to resolving issues around access to inland waters following her written statement.

3.2 P-05-847 Create water fountains in the centre of cities and towns to eliminate plastic waste

The Committee considered further comments from the petitioner, and agreed to write to the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs to seek her views on the points raised.

3.3 P-05-867 Make the 'Cofiwch Dryweryn' Mural a designated Welsh landmark

The Committee considered further correspondence on the petition and agreed to:

- write to Ceredigion Council to ask what involvement it could have in helping to protect the mural;
- write to Llanrhystud Community Council to ask for information about the work it will be leading to devise a long term management plan, and the likely timescales for this; and
- seek a further update from the Welsh Government in due course.

3.4 P-05-748 School Buses for School Children

The Committee considered further correspondence on the petition and agreed to write to the Minister for Economy and Transport to ask for details of relevant actions taken by Welsh Government since the Children's Commissioner's recommendation that the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 should be reviewed. The Committee also agreed

to propose that safety for pupils travelling on public transport should be incorporated into such a review.

3.5 P-05-783 Ensuring Equality of Curriculum for Welsh Medium Schools e.g. GCSE Psychology

The Committee considered further correspondence on the petition and agreed to write back to Qualifications Wales and the Minister for Education to ask for more information about the steps being taken in relation to securing Welsh and English medium provision from the outset under the new curriculum.

3.6 P-05-789 Review support for asylum seekers accessing further education

The Committee considered further correspondence on the petition and agreed to close the petition, given that the Welsh Government intends to implement the actions called for by the petition from September 2020. Members thanked the petitioner for raising this matter and congratulated her on the success of the petition.

The Committee also agreed to write back to the Minister for Education to ask her to reconsider whether this change could be brought forward to September 2019.

3.7 P-05-802 Protecting Class Sizes in Design and Technology Classrooms and Workshops

The Committee considered further correspondence on the petition and agreed to write back to the Minister for Education to question how effective the article within the Dysg newsletter will be in reminding school leaders to revisit risk assessments relating to Design & Technology classes, and to ask why specific guidance in relation to this subject cannot be produced.

3.8 P-05-821 Reintroduce educational support funding for MEAS and the TES to local authorities

The Committee agreed to close the petition in light of the Welsh Government's reinstatement of grant funding for these services in 2018-19 and 2019-20, and the scrutiny of the Welsh Government's budget undertaken by the Children, Young People and Education Committee, including the Education Improvement Grant.

3.9 P-05-828 Presumption in favour of rural schools

The Committee considered further correspondence on the petition and agreed to request a paper setting out the scrutiny given to the issue of appeals against school closures at the time the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 was passed, together with options for taking forward further consideration of the merits of an appeals mechanism.

3.10 P-05-860 Make curriculum for life lessons compulsory

The Committee considered the petition alongside P-05-861 Make political education a compulsory element of the new national curriculum and agreed to write back to the Minister for Education to ask:

- for an interim solution to be put in place, either through the current PSE curriculum or the Welsh Baccalaureate, to support young people who might be voting for the first time in 2021; and
- for consideration to be given to other ways young people can access information in relation to political education outside the school curriculum, for example through youth work settings.

3.11 P-05-861 Make political education a compulsory element of the new national curriculum

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- for consideration to be given to other ways young people can access information in relation to political education outside the school curriculum, for example through youth work settings.

3.12 P-05-806 We call for all premises in Wales to be awarded an Access Certificate number similar to the Food Hygiene Certificate.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip and agreed to accept the offer of an update on progress and to seek this, and an update from the petitioners and Disability Wales, at the beginning of the autumn term.

3.13 P-05-864 Ban the use of 'Hostile Architecture'

The Committee considered further correspondence on the petition and agreed to write to homelessness charities to seek views on the issues raised by the petition and the impact and prevalence of hostile architecture to deter rough sleeping in Wales.

3.14 P-05-754 Lack of support for children with disabilities at crisis

The Committee considered further comments from the petitioner and agreed to write to the Minister for Health and Social Services to ask what provision there is for children with autism or learning difficulties, in cases where mental health support may not be the most appropriate solution.

3.15 P-05-842 Give young people a voice when commissioning local services in Wales

The Committee considered further correspondence on the petition and agreed to:

- write back to the Minister for Health and Social Services to:
 - accept the offer of a further update on the work underway;
 - ask for this by the start of the autumn term; and
 - share the concerns of the petitioners that the working group does not appear to include representation from children and young people; and
- consider whether it is possible to engage with the Assembly's Youth Parliament on the issues raised.

3.16 P-05-846 Save our Hospital at Prince Philip Llanelli

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and, given that it is not currently clear that there is any significant threat to service provision at Prince Phillip Hospital or in Llanelli from the information received, agreed to contact the petitioners to ask:

- whether they would prefer the Committee to keep a watching brief on the changes affecting Prince Philip Hospital and review the petition towards the end of the year; or
- close the petition at this point, to enable a future petition should this situation change.

3.17 P-05-859 Provide Child Houses in Wales for victims of child sexual abuse

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to write back to the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services to ask for:

- an update on the work currently being carried out by Welsh Government and NHS Wales;
- her reflections following the debate held on 3 April and what changes she may consider following the vote in favour of Bethan Sayed AM's legislative proposal; and
- to share a copy of the comments received from the Children's Commissioner for Wales and ask for her response to the points raised, especially the concerns about Sexual Abuse Referral Centres.

3.18 P-05-865 Guarantee fully plant-based options on every public sector menu to protect the rights of vegans and for our health, the environment and animals

The Committee considered further correspondence on the petition and agreed to write to:

- the Minister for Environment to ask her to incorporate this issue into the Welsh Government's work following its recent declaration of climate change emergency; and
- the Minister for Education and the Minister for Health and Social Services to thank them for the information provided, but ask whether this means that they would expect all daily menus in school and hospital settings to include vegetarian and vegan food options.