

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: Tuesday, 25 June 2019

Meeting time: 08.50 – 10.32

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

<http://senedd.tv/en/5477>

Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	Janet Finch–Saunders AM (Chair) Michelle Brown AM Mike Hedges AM (In place of Jack Sargeant AM) Leanne Wood AM
Witnesses:	Julie James AM, Minister for Housing and Local Government Neil Hemington, Welsh Government Stephen Phipps, Ethics and Regulation Team, Welsh Government
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Ross Davies (Deputy Clerk) Elfyn Henderson Samiwel Davies (Legal Adviser)

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

Apologies were received from Neil McEvoy and Jack Sargeant. Mike Hedges attended in place of Jack Sargeant.



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The Chair welcomed Michelle Brown to her first meeting as a member of the Petitions Committee.

2 Evidence Session: Planning

2.1 P-05-786 Save our Countryside – Revise TAN 1

The Committee heard evidence from the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Neil Hemington and Stephen Phipps.

The Committee agreed to group this petition with [P-05-881 Fix our planning system](#) for future consideration, and to return to both petitions once an announcement has been made by the Welsh Government about the next steps in relation to its review of the delivery of housing through the planning system.

2.2 P-05-881 Fix our planning system

The Committee heard evidence from the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Neil Hemington and Stephen Phipps.

The Committee agreed to group this petition with [P-05-786 Save our Countryside – Revise TAN 1](#) for future consideration, and to return to both petitions once an announcement has been made by the Welsh Government about the next steps in relation to its review of the delivery of housing through the planning system.

2.3 P-05-843 More Third party rights in planning appeals

The Committee heard evidence from the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Neil Hemington and Stephen Phipps.

The Committee agreed to write back to the Minister to request further information in relation to several issues raised during the evidence session, including the potential for appeals where a planning application has been approved contrary to the contents of a local development plan, how decisions of planning inspectors can be challenged and processes for monitoring the performance of planning inspectors.

2.4 P-05-845 End Conflict of Interest in Local Authority Constitution

The Committee heard evidence from the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Neil Hemington and Stephen Phipps.

The Committee agreed to write back to the petitioner to seek their response to the evidence heard and to indicate the Committee's view that there does not appear to be much else that could be achieved at this time, unless the petitioner has any additional information to share.

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

4 Discussion of previous evidence session

The Committee discussed the evidence provided by the Minister for Housing and Local Government and agreed further actions on each of the petitions discussed.

5 New petitions

5.1 P-05-884 Amendment to Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2018 to include UK institutions with operations overseas

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

- write back to the Minister for Education to ask:
 - whether she would consider 'designating' the courses provided by the University of London Institute in Paris to enable Welsh-resident students to receive student support to study there; and
 - whether any discussions have been held with the institution about this.

5.2 P-05-886 Stop the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor)

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to invite the petitioners to attend a future Committee meeting to explore their concerns in relation to the proposed Red Route in more detail.

5.3 P-05-888 Make GCSE Welsh Language compulsory in all schools in Wales

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to write to the Welsh Independent Schools Council to seek their views on the petition and request further information on the teaching of Welsh in independent schools in Wales.

6 Updates to previous petitions

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

The Committee considered further correspondence from the Deputy Minister for Housing and Local Government and the petitioner. The Committee concluded that there is little further that can be achieved at this time in light of the protracted nature of arguments relating to access to inland water, and the approach proposed by the Deputy Minister following the consultation exercise carried out last year,. The Committee therefore agreed to close the petition.

6.2 P-05-775 Put an end to the Cross Border and Sub-contracting Taxi Licensing loophole.

The Committee considered further correspondence from the Minister for Economy and Transport and agreed to await the publication of the report into the Welsh Government's White Paper on Improving Public Transport before considering whether to take further action on the petitions.

6.3 P-05-835 Allow Free Movement of Taxi Drivers to Carry Out Private Hire Work Anywhere in Wales

The Committee considered further correspondence from the Minister for Economy and Transport and agreed to await the publication of the report into the Welsh Government's White Paper on Improving Public Transport before considering whether to take further action on the petitions.

6.4 P-05-827 Roads surrounding Trago Mills/ Cyfartha Retail Park

The Committee agreed to close the petition, given that it is difficult to identify how it could take the issue forward in the absence of contact from the petitioner.

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

The Committee considered further correspondence from the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs outlining the action being taken by the Welsh Government in relation to Refill, and agreed to close the petition and thank the petitioner for raising this matter through the petitions process.

6.6 P-05-855 Small Business Rates Relief Review

The Committee agreed to close the petition, given that it is difficult to identify how it could take the petition forward in the absence of contact from the petitioners.

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

The Committee considered further correspondence from the Minister for Education and the petitioner. The Committee agreed to close the petition following the action taken to remind Headteachers, governing bodies and others of the need to ensure that Design and Technology class risk assessments are up-to-date through the Dysg Newsletter. In doing so, the Committee wished to thank the petitioner for raising this matter.

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

The Committee considered further correspondence and agreed to make the Welsh Youth Parliament aware of the petition in to the context of the work they are taking forward on Life Skills in the Curriculum. The Committee agreed to await their findings before considering further action on the petition.

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

The Committee considered further correspondence from the Minister for Education and agreed to await the views of the petitioner before considering further action on the petition.