

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: 1 October 2019

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Graeme Francis – Committee Clerk

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0300 200 6565

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1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(Pages 1 – 21)

2 New petitions

2.1 P-05-898 Ban the use of A boards in Wales

(Pages 22 – 29)

2.2 P-05-899 Buses for people not profit

(Pages 30 – 43)

2.3 P-05-900 Look into the way parents are being treated by public services

(Pages 44 – 53)

2.4 P-05-901 Ban the Sale of Real Fur in Wales

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2.5 P-05-902 Paternal Mental Health (New Fathers Mental Health)

(Pages 66 – 76)

2.6 P-05-903 Filming and Recording of Council Meetings

(Pages 77 – 84)

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-05-797 Ensure access to the cystic fibrosis medicine, Orkambi, as a matter of urgency

(Pages 85 – 92)



3.2 P-05-869 Declare a Climate Emergency and fit all policies with zero-carbon targets
(Pages 93 – 99)

3.3 P-05-891 National Reading and Numeracy Tests for children from as young as age 6 need to be discontinued with immediate effect
(Pages 100 – 101)

4 Evidence Session 1: P-05-886 Stop the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor)
(Pages 102 – 118)

- Tom Rippeth, petitioner
- Mike Webb, petitioner

5 Evidence Session 2: P-05-886 Stop the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor)
(Pages 119 – 123)

- Iwan Prys Jones, Programme Manager, North Wales Economic Ambition Board
- Stephen Jones, Chief Officer for Streetscene and Transportation, Flintshire County Council
- Cllr Carolyn Thomas, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside, Flintshire County Council

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

Item 7

7 Discussion of previous evidence session

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

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 2.1

P-05-898 Ban the use of A boards in Wales

This petition was submitted by Angharad Paget-Jones having collected a total of 80 signatures.

Text of Petition

A petition to ban the use of A board advertising in Wales. A boards not only clutter our pavements but pose a huge risk to disabled people as getting past them in a wheelchair or if you're visually impaired often means you're forced onto the road to by-pass them.

This is especially an issue on shared spaces such as city centres as well as coastal towns where the pavements are narrower.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Aberavon
- South Wales West

P-05-898 Ban the use of A boards in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Hydref 2019
Petitions Committee | 1 October 2019

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-898

Petition title:

Text of petition: A petition to ban the use of A board advertising in Wales. A boards not only clutter our pavements but pose a huge risk to disabled people as getting past them in a wheelchair or if you're visually impaired often means you're forced onto the road to by-pass them.

This is especially an issue on shared spaces such as city centres as well as coastal towns where the pavements are narrower.

Background

'A Boards', or 'Advertising Boards' are portable advertising boards placed outside businesses and other premises. Their use in Wales is regulated through both the planning process and highway law.

From a planning perspective, advertising in general is addressed through legislation and policy. In Wales, the *Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992* (as amended) (the Regulations), made under the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*, apply.

Additionally, the Welsh Government's guidance for controlling outdoor advertisements is set out in [Technical Advice Note \(TAN\) 7: Outdoor Advertisement Control \(1996\)](#) which is further supported by two planning circulars: [circular 14/92](#) and [circular 70/94](#).

The Regulations set out five standard conditions in Schedule 1 which cover all adverts: that they are maintained in a clean and tidy condition; are safe; have permission of the site owner; do not obscure certain official signs and are removed carefully where required by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

More generally, the Regulations state that advertisements cannot be displayed without the 'express consent' of the LPA, unless:

- They fall into one of 10 categories of advert, set out in Schedule 2, which are normally excluded from the LPAs control – these include, for example, adverts on enclosed land such as inside a bus or rail station; and
- Adverts which are automatically granted ‘deemed consent’ by falling into one of 14 ‘classes’ set out in Schedule 3. These include, for example, adverts (including A Boards) which are on the forecourt of business premises and which relate to that business, certain temporary adverts, small notices such as a company name displayed on premises etc..

In both cases adverts in each category are often subject to requirements relating to, for example, overall size, letter size and whether they can be illuminated etc.

Unless the A Board falls into one of these categories, ‘express consent’ will be required. However, Regulation 4 states that the LPA will exercise its powers ‘only in the interests of amenity and public safety’.

In addition to the planning process, A Boards which are on highways, including footways, will also require consent from the relevant ‘council’ under [s115E of the Highways Act 1980](#). [Section 130 of the Act](#) also imposes a duty on highway authorities, including local authorities as highway authority for the local road network, to:

... assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are the highway authority, including any roadside waste which forms part of it.

Section 130 also imposes a duty on councils to ‘to prevent, as far as possible, the stopping up or obstruction of’ any highway. Wilful obstruction of the highway is an offence under [section 137 of the Act](#).

The Impact of A Boards

The use of A Boards has been criticised by a range of organisations. For example, the [RNIB website](#) comments:

By their very nature A-boards obstruct pedestrians from being able to move in a straight line along the pavement. They present a trip and collision hazard, especially to people who cannot see them and who use mobility aids.

In a February 2015 report – [Who Put That There: the barriers to blind and partially sighted people getting out and about](#) – RNIB sought to set out evidence demonstrating ‘how unsafe local neighbourhoods and the street environment can be for those with sight loss’. While focused on England, the report considered a range of obstacles and issues, including A Boards.

Referring to a survey of over 500 blind and partially sighted people in England, this indicated that 49% had collided with A Boards in the previous three months. The RNIB called for national guidance to be reviewed and strengthened, as well as implementation of a street charter at a local level, and for local authorities to review policies on the most common obstacles – including A Boards.

Issues related to ‘street clutter’ have also been raised by Living Streets, through its [Pavements for People Campaign](#), and Guide Dogs through its [Streets Ahead Campaign](#).

In May 2018 [Edinburgh Council’s Transport and Environment Committee approved a city wide ban](#) on ‘all temporary on–street advertising structures, such as advertising boards.’ The ban took effect from November 2018. Previously the Council had a policy banning use on four selected city centre streets. Both Living Streets and RNIB were involved in campaign for the ban – with Living Streets [citing it as a campaign success](#).

However, in April 2018, prior to the decision being approved, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Scotland [published a briefing for Edinburgh Council](#) on the proposed ban. The report indicated that many local businesses were ‘sympathetic’ to the aim of decluttering streets. However, the paper highlighted a range of obstructions including:

street furniture, moveable waste and recycling bins, irresponsibly and illegally parked vehicles, as well as commercial related activities such as on–street eating and drinking areas, merchandise and advertising boards.

It said the Council’s approach must be ‘holistic and must not focus on just a single aspect of the problem’. The report cites evidence from local businesses stressing the importance of A Boards in making customers aware that the business is there, including quotes from FSB Members:

“[A] ban could prove a significant blow to many struggling small businesses throughout Edinburgh.” – FSB Member

“This will have a detrimental effect on small shops, cafes and galleries.” – FSB Member

“The ban on A–boards would I am sure be the final nail in many small business's coffin.” – FSB Member

“It is tough as hell having a business in a basement – customers can't find you, don't notice you and don't look down at your shop when they are walking along the road.

My A–board brings me ALL the footfall that I get. Customers constantly tell me they only noticed us because they saw our sign.” – FSB Member.

Welsh Government Action

The letter from the Minister for Housing and Local Government to the Chair points to sections 130 and 137 of the *Highways Act 1980* (discussed above). She states:

I am not convinced that there is sufficient evidence to suggest a need for specific and further action at a national level. In cases where A boards are being deployed irresponsibly, then there is capacity to deal with these at a local level and through the enforcement of existing regulations.

The Minister draws attention to Welsh Government funding provided to Disability Wales to act as the representative body for disabled people and their organisations in Wales. She also states:

The Disability Equality Forum, of which the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip is the Chair, will consider this issue at the next meeting in the autumn.

National Assembly for Wales Action

The use of A board advertising does not appear to have been considered previously by the Assembly.

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.

Julie James AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/06248/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair – Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

13 August 2019

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July asking for my views regarding a petition the committee has received calling for a ban on A board advertising in Wales.

In Wales there is legislation that local authorities can use to remove obstructions to the highway. For example, under Section 130 of the Highways Act it is the duty of the highway authority (which all local authorities are in Wales) to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway. Also, under Section 137 of the Act, it is an offence to wilfully obstruct the free passage of the highway.

I am not convinced that there is sufficient evidence to suggest a need for specific and further action at a national level. In cases where A boards are being deployed irresponsibly, then there is capacity to deal with these at a local level and through the enforcement of existing regulations.

Disability Wales has been awarded grant funding of £537k over the 3 years 2017-20 from the Equality and Inclusion Grant to act as the representative body for disabled people and their organisations in Wales. This includes working with the Welsh Government and other public bodies to ensure the views of disabled people are heard. Disability Wales sit on a large number of our stakeholder groups and are frequently asked to advise on WG consultation documents.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Julie.James@gov.Wales

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

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

The Disability Equality Forum, of which the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip is the Chair, will consider this issue at the next meeting in the autumn.

Yours sincerely,

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

Julie James AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol

Minister for Housing and Local Government

P-05-898 Ban the use of A boards in Wales, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 23.09.19

Hi,

Thank you for sending this though.

I've put some comments together:

I would like to firstly point out that this petition is backed by the RNIB there will be a representative of the charity coming with me to hand over the petition on Wednesday, and I'd like to suggest getting in touch with your Scottish counterparts to see how they have made this a success, I'm sure they'd be more than happy to explain why it's important.

Disabled people already have to contend with so much in public places, as they weren't build for us in mind in the first place. I can only speak on behalf of a blind person but in my experience I have to try and avoid street furniture, bikes, skateboards and cars in shared spaces, pavement parking, uncontrolled tactile paving and much more on a daily basis. This petition isn't asking for the world it's already a reality in Scotland all I'm asking is for A-Boards to be banded they take up valuable pavement space which results in disabled people often having to go onto the road. Please don't wait until someone is seriously injured or killed as a result to take action.

The fact your unable to see a reason why it's needed is exactly why it is, you're looking at it from an abled bodied point of view, please try looking at from someone who's sight is severely impaired.

Yes, councils do have the power to remove obstruction but the fact is they don't. They don't show compassion and it shouldn't be down to disabled people who have faced an issue to report it.

I'd be happy to go though and meet with the health and safety or transport minister to highlight the issue and I gladly invite all to meet on Wednesday.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to me.

Kind regards,

Angharad Paget-Jones

Agenda Item 2.2

P-05-899 Buses for people not profit

This petition was submitted by Cllr Carolyn Thomas having collected 514 signatures online and 3,164 on paper, a total of 3,705 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge Welsh Government to regulate commercial bus operators and give powers and funding to Local Authorities to run services that best meet the needs of local people. As well as providing access to employment and education, public transport is a social, health and wellbeing issue which is growing as bus services are being rapidly reduced, affecting the mental and physical health and well being of many residents who will become socially isolated and unable to get to basic services.

Additional Information

Bus operators are cutting many core services which were previously operating with little or no subsidy. Operators are not tendering for new contracts and some are requesting 6 figure sums as a subsidy to continue which is unaffordable for Local Authorities who are facing budget pressures. Local Authorities cannot run services in competition with operators. Passenger journey times for those accessing employment take too long as direct services are being cut if still exist at all and some are overcrowded. The majority of residents attending the many public meetings we have held are older people who are concerned about accessing services, attending health appointments and becoming isolated. Loneliness is a huge issue in our society. It is our aim to enable older people to live in their own homes longer. It is our aim for them to stay mentally and physically fit and active. Public bus transport is now a huge urgent issue that needs addressing quickly.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Alyn and Deeside
- North Wales

Petition: Buses for people not profit

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Hydref 2019
Petitions Committee | 1 October 2019

Research Briefing:

Petition Number: P-05-899

Petition title: Buses for people not profit

Text of petition:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge Welsh Government to regulate commercial bus operators and give powers and funding to Local Authorities to run services that best meet the needs of local people. As well as providing access to employment and education, public transport is a social, health and wellbeing issue which is growing as bus services are being rapidly reduced, affecting the mental and physical health and well-being of many residents who will become socially isolated and unable to get to basic services.

Bus operators are cutting many core services which were previously operating with little or no subsidy. Operators are not tendering for new contracts and some are requesting 6 figure sums as a subsidy to continue which is unaffordable for Local Authorities who are facing budget pressures. Local Authorities cannot run services in competition with operators. Passenger journey times for those accessing employment take too long as direct services are being cut if still exist at all and some are overcrowded. The majority of residents attending the many public meetings we have held are older people who are concerned about accessing services, attending health appointments and becoming isolated. Loneliness is a huge issue in our society. It is our aim to enable older people to live in their own homes longer. It is our aim for them to stay mentally and physically fit and active. Public bus transport is now a huge urgent issue that needs addressing quickly.

Background

The [Transport Act 1985](#) deregulated local bus services in the UK outside of London. This means an appropriately licensed operator can register any service it chooses on a commercial basis. Currently, whilst local authorities can invite tenders for additional routes or services where they consider that social needs are not met commercially, a tendered service cannot compete with a commercial one.

However the [Wales Act 2017](#) devolved a number of key transport powers and in December 2018 the Welsh Government published its '[Improving Public Transport White Paper](#)'. The proposals could result in big changes to how bus services in Wales operate. These include giving local authorities powers to run their own bus services, as called for by the petitioners, and powers to implement bus franchises – a form of regulation.

Wales Act 2017

As outlined, the *Wales Act 2017* devolved a number of key transport powers and in preparation for the Act coming into force, during 2017 the Welsh Government consulted on [proposals to improve local bus services](#), on its [concessionary fares scheme](#) and on [taxi and private hire vehicle licensing](#).

These consultations were used to inform the White Paper proposals published in December 2018. The formal public consultation closed on 27 March 2019 and [a summary of responses has been published](#).

Legislative statement

On 16 July 2019, the First Minister, Mark Drakeford, [announced the Welsh Government's legislative programme](#) for the remainder of the current Assembly term. The First Minister stated that the Welsh Government:

...will introduce a public transport Bill in this Assembly term [emphasis added by Research Service], building on the proposals in the 'Improving Public Transport' White Paper. This Bill will be a key part of wider reforms to bus services here in Wales [emphasis added by Research Service] ...

White Paper proposals for bus services

On 24 July 2019, the Minister for Economy and Transport, Ken Skates, issued a written statement providing an [update on the Public Transport \(Wales\) Bill and the wider bus reform agenda](#).

In the statement, the Minister outlines that:

...the Bill will put in place enabling provisions that will provide a suite of tools for local authorities to consider using when planning and delivering bus services, including enhanced partnership working, franchising and local authority run bus services [emphasis added by Research Service].

A [draft Regulatory Impact Assessment](#) for the Bill has also been published.

Enhanced Quality Partnerships

Local authorities are currently able to establish voluntary and statutory quality partnership schemes (QPSs) with bus operators. A QPS is an agreement between a local authority and one or more bus operators where the authority provides particular facilities along bus routes such as bus lanes, and in return, operators who wish to use those facilities agree to provide services of a particular standard. Statutory partnerships are backed by a legally enforceable agreement.

The White Paper makes clear that the Welsh Government intends to retain these current options but to also allow **Enhanced Quality Partnerships (EQPs)** to be established.

EQPs would require local authorities and bus operators to work together to develop a plan for the delivery of improved bus services and enable local authorities to place a much broader range of service standards onto operators than is possible under an existing QPS.

Bus franchising

The White Paper proposed that local authorities should have powers to franchise bus services. Franchising is essentially re-regulation of the bus industry. Local authorities would specify what bus services are to be provided in an area including routes, vehicle standards, timetables and fares. Contracts to deliver these services would be awarded to operators via tender. The successful operator would have the exclusive right to deliver services within the franchise area.

Local authority run bus services

The *Transport Act 1985* currently prohibits local authorities from operating bus companies, except under certain limited circumstances. **The White Paper sets out proposals to give local authorities the power to run local services either directly or via an arm's length company, owned by the local authority and established for this purpose.**

The Welsh Government argues that this would overcome issues that arise when commercial services do not meet local needs. For example where very few tenders are received for contracted services which the Welsh Government considers reduces competition and increases cost.

Other proposals

The White Paper also proposes to introduce powers allowing the Welsh Ministers to require bus operators and others to release information on bus services. The proposals would enable local authorities to require operators to provide information where services are varied or cancelled, with the aim of ensuring passengers are always able to access accurate information.

The Welsh Government is also proposing to increase the eligibility age for a free bus pass under its [Concessionary Fares Scheme](#). The White Paper proposes that eligibility age is increased to bring it in line with a woman's pensionable age. It also states that the eligibility

age would increase incrementally rather than in a single step and that any person who holds a pass at the time of the changes would not lose their entitlement.

Welsh Government action

As set out in the Minister for Economy and Transport's letter to the Chair, dated 15 August 2019, the Welsh Government:

...will introduce a Public Transport Bill in this Assembly term, building on the proposals in the 'Improving Public Transport' White Paper that was launched for consultation last year.

The Minister also highlights that the Bill "will be a key part of wider reforms to bus services in Wales" and that Transport for Wales has been commissioned "to review how bus services could be delivered in future".

National Assembly for Wales action

In 2018, the Assembly's [Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee](#) undertook an inquiry to consider the new powers devolved by the *Wales Act 2017*. Following the Committee's inquiry, '[New Powers: New Possibilities](#)', it [wrote to the then Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport](#) (PDF,744KB) providing a summary of the key issues raised. The Committee highlights that during the inquiry:

...witnesses felt is unlikely that local authorities would set up bus companies unless there was a serious failure in the provision of services in an area.

In May 2019, the Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee also undertook an [inquiry into the Welsh Government's White Paper proposals](#). The Committee invited stakeholders to share their responses to the Welsh Government's consultation, and hosted its own stakeholder event to gather views. The Committee also heard [evidence from a panel local government representatives](#) and discussed the proposals with the Minister [during a general scrutiny session](#).

The [Committee's report](#) (PDF,192KB) summarises its views on the evidence gathered. The Committee highlights that it heard:

...a number of strong concerns expressed about the franchising model, and for local authority-run bus services but strong support from stakeholders for enhanced quality partnerships.



Ein cyf/Our ref KS/07186/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

15 August 2019

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July regarding petition P-05-899 Buses for people not profit.

Most bus services across Wales are provided in response to bus operators' analysis of demand, cost and profitability. Neither the Welsh Government nor a local authority is able to require a bus operator to run a particular service without subsidy. Under the current legislative framework, local authorities are able to enter into contracts to pay subsidies to support local bus services where bus services are not available or not provided to the required standard without public funding.

Each local authority is responsible for determining which services – bus or community transport – to subsidise, based on its assessment of local circumstances and priorities. Local authorities use whatever budgets they have set aside for that purpose, supplemented by our grant funding. It is important to emphasise that the Welsh Government's funding is provided to supplement local authorities' expenditure in support of bus and community transport services from their own budgets, not as a replacement.

The Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG) is allocated in accordance with an agreement reached by all 22 local authorities about how much of the total each region and local authority should receive. Although we determine the overall total for Wales, local authorities decide amongst themselves how much of the grant each will receive. For 2019-20, I have agreed BSSG funding of £25m to local authorities, matching previous years' allocations, despite challenging budget settlements by the UK Government. One requirement of this year's allocations is that local authorities must confirm the sum they have committed to subsidise bus and community transport services from their own budgets. From next year we will link each authority's BSSG allocation to its funding from its own budget, to ensure that Welsh Government allocations are not being used to replace authorities' own funding.

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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.

It is clear that local scheduled bus services are the foundation of our public transport system. On 16 July the First Minister confirmed in his legislative statement that we will introduce a Public Transport Bill in this Assembly term, building on the proposals in the 'Improving Public Transport' White Paper that was launched for consultation last year. The Bill will be a key part of wider reforms to bus services in Wales and will help us to achieve our ambition of creating an integrated public transport network, planned and provided in the public interest, and which meets the needs of the travelling public. The Bill proposals will provide the Welsh Government and local authorities with the tools needed to drive change.

Bus is a critical component of public transport and remains a key focus for both the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales (TfW). We have commissioned TfW to review how bus services could be delivered in future to ensure that urban and rural communities across Wales benefit from a modern, integrated public transport service. TfW is engaging with local communities, local authorities and bus operators to discuss how they participate in and benefit from an integrated regional transport system, and its work will be taken into account in taking forward the Bill proposals.

In April, I announced up to £1m of funding for four pilot projects that will test innovative forms of demand responsive bus travel across Wales. Two of the four trials will take place in north Wales, with the other two in west Wales and in the Valleys Taskforce area. I will shortly be providing an update on developments with these pilots.

These trials will test different models of demand for bus services and where appropriate, build on existing delivery models. TfW will be assisting us with these pilots and the findings from these initiatives will inform the development of integrated demand responsive travel services in Wales over the next few years.

Yours sincerely,



Ken Skates AC/AM
Gweinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy and Transport



Cllr Carolyn Thomas
Flintshire County Council
County Hall
Raikes Lane
Mold
Flintshire CH7 6NB

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee

Dear Janet

Bus Petition – Buses for People Not Profit

I have submitted the background information as requested which was attached to the petition, I hope you find it useful. It covers the consultation process we started undertaking with residents three years ago when we knew there was an issue regarding the sustainability of the public services. Commercial operators started pulling out of areas they were regarding as non profitable and we could not keep increasing subsidies as a result of decreasing Council funding. We gathered a lot of information at the community meetings and via questionnaires.

In response to the Minister's letter forwarded to me by the petitions Clerk I welcome that he will be introducing a Public Transport Bill in this Assembly term and hope to work with Welsh Government, Transport for Wales and Neighbouring Authorities across Wales (and across the border in England for border Counties) in delivering a sustainable, integrated public bus (&rail) transport solution for our residents.

The Bus Services Support Grant, although significant, even with match funding from Local Authorities isn't enough to sustain bus transport without reform. When divided, it equates to approx £500k for Flintshire, the Council matches this, however, one route can cost £200k - £300k and many operators have been requesting six figure sums as subsidies for them to continue to operate routes which were recently commercially run with no subsidies. The amount of operators is diminishing affecting the market and pushing up the cost as well as inflationary costs such as fuel. School transport costs have increased by 10%.

I would be interested to hear the outcomes of the four pilot projects or indeed how many have taken place. In Flintshire we were in dialogue with an operator regarding a demand responsive service but they wanted £500k subsidy, they would not take concessionary passes and the fare was estimated at £5 per journey.

I know that funding comes from the Environment service area regarding access to employment, education and social activities. However, the impact on health is a huge part of providing a public bus service and residents wanted to do something to help me raise this with Welsh Government. Providing a bus service helps people stay physically and mentally fit and independent in their own homes longer, it has a social impact and combats loneliness and isolation. When I travelled by bus from Cardiff station to Cardiff Bay last week, I chatted to a mental health nurse from Bridgend who said that her patients were devastated to discover that the public service bus they used would be reduced to just two per day, she said they would not walk to town, further impacting on their health and wellbeing. I know funding priorities focus on the NHS but preventative measures and services are vital and will save in the long run.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn

Cllr Carolyn Thomas, Cbinet member for Streetscene & Countryside
Deputy Leader
Flintshire County Council



Buses for People not Profit

Background information



In Flintshire, over the last few years we have seen bus companies collapse or cut routes that they deem no longer commercially viable, this has increased greatly over the last year. **One bus operator made 14 changes to their services in one year**, and we were unable to keep up with the all these in order to update all the bus stops, which then impacts on passengers confidence in using the bus transport. Another pulled out of a core network route and **when we offered to double the subsidy we were told that we wouldn't be able to afford what was required and to go out to tender. When we did they asked for a six figure sum which was over ten times the subsidy we were previously paying and a third of our budget for the whole of public bus transport subsidies in Flintshire.** They were

the only ones who put in a price for the route and it ended up being terminated. Being a core route it impacted greatly on many residents wanting to access the rail network, employment, education and medical appointments. It was difficult for us to understand why it was not commercially viable and it highlighted that **there is a lack of operators to create a market.**

Residents have been rightly upset, angry and frustrated. They sent in petitions to the Council and demanded we attend community meetings which were very traumatic.

With limited funds, staff resources and powers we have been limited in where we can help.

However, we continued to consult to find out what service would best suit residents and where they need to travel from and to, and for what purpose. We listened to their views regarding timetables, discussed the merits of scheduled services and demand responsive and asked them to fill in questionnaires.

We have tried to fill gaps in services wherever possible and directed them to other services where available but they didn't like having to connect to an onward journey.



In one instance we put together a new timetable around the hours best suited to residents to ensure a full bus, **and no operator bided for the service**. We had to hire a taxi minibus and a taxi so the residents were not isolated. This caused issues for a disabled resident who needed step on step off access and sometimes there were not enough seats for everyone. We also soon learned that many residents bring shopping trolleys and have slight mobility problems regarding hips and knees **so level access was really important**.

We were very grateful when an operator offered to step in with one of the Welsh Government grant funded buses used for Deeside Industrial Park utilising it at off peak times and swapping it for one of the mini buses.



At the consultation events we attended **most of the people were sixty plus, the majority did not use the internet and wanted a scheduled service**, not demand responsive. They were worried about social isolation, not being able to get to medical appointments, or able to go shopping, they wanted stability. **Some people were in tears and it was heartbreaking**.

Providing a bus service helps people stay physically and mentally fit and independent in their own homes longer.



At the meetings we explained that although the **Council kept £500k in the budget for subsidising public bus transport to match fund the £500k from Welsh Government (via the BSSG), it wasn't enough to replace all the routes that were being cut. A bus route can cost between £200k and £300k, this shocked and surprised them. Time and time again the social, health and well being impact was raised.**

I know that funding comes from the Environment service area regarding access to employment, education and social activities. However, the impact on health is a huge part of providing a public bus service and residents wanted to do something to help me raise this with Welsh Government.



It is because of this that I set up the petition not only to Ken Skates, Minister for Economy and Transport but also to the Minister for Health and social services Vaughan Gething.

“The petition calls up Welsh Government to regulate commercial bus service operators and give powers and funding to Local Authorities to run services that best suit the needs of local people. As well as providing access to employment and education, public transport is a social, health and wellbeing issue which is growing as bus services are being rapidly reduced, affecting the mental and physical health and well being of many residents who will become socially isolated and unable to get to basic services.”



In Flintshire, three years ago, we knew there was an issue regarding the sustainability of the public bus service and we could not keep increasing subsidies while also having to deliver efficiencies as a result of decreasing Council funding so developed a strategy. We held a wide consultation with Councillors, Town and Community Councils and residents. The plan was to have a core network and feed into it with Local Travel Arrangements adapted to meet the needs of the local communities. Questionnaires were completed and analysed and new timetables put together, it was very time consuming and extensive.

Following this, we started a now very popular medical appointments transport initiative and some local transport arrangements.

However, the goalposts changed when operators started pulling out of the core network and we were unable to continue and cover all the extra routes, we just did not have enough financial or officer resources.

During the consultation, it was revealed that many residents prefer to travel to town in the morning on a scheduled service. This would be viable because of peak numbers at peak times, then a demand responsive service could be offered around hours in the afternoon and help those travelling to and from work.

(We use Community Benefit to help with the provision of the Medical Appoints transport service. Taxi and bus operators who bid for school transport give some miles as Community Benefit. Residents pay an annual £10 administration fee and 50p per mile which is subsidised.)

TEITHIO CYMUNED
SIR Y FFLINT

FLINTSHIRE
COMMUNITY TRAVEL

**Community Ring
& Ride Service**

Providing assistance in travelling to
GP Appointments, Hospital Appointments
and other Health related Appointments

I also met with the **youth council** who highlighted that **not all young people have a smart phone** and the prospect of learning to drive or owning a car is a distant dream. I told them about the **young person's saver concessionary pass which they were unaware of**. I also learned that some people **with mobility issues** did not realise they could apply for a concessionary pass, **they thought they were just for older people**.

We need to have **integrated ticketing** so that one ticket can be used between different operators and also that services should integrate with the rail network. In many places across Europe and the world, it is possible to plan a journey smoothly and seamlessly using various modes of transport with easily available online information.

I am aware that the Welsh Government is moving towards Improving Public Transport and has introduced a public transport bill; I hope this petition supports their aims.

However, funding needs to back up legislation and one solution does not fit all there has to be a pick and mix solution between Enhanced Quality Partnerships along the Core network, Franchising with guaranteed long term investment of at least 5 years and contract bundles with some social benefit to less commercially viable routes. Plus local authorities should also be able to bid for funding to operate in areas for social and health benefit but not profit related.

Local Authorities have been cut to the bone over the last 10 years. In Flintshire we have restructured and made efficiencies, we also work in collaboration across Authorities sharing resources. Staff have been cut by 40%, but demands on services, especially social health care has increased. One of our Waste & Recycling Manager helped out with the bus consultation and review! In Flintshire, since being a Cabinet member, I have fought hard to keep £500k for bus subsidies in place, I have set bus transport as a priority in our Council plan, but I know other Authorities have cut them and they will find it hard to put the funds back in the budget with further unfunded legislation and inflation forecast.

Twenty five percent of the population in Wales are totally dependant on public transport as their only means of transport and would be isolated without it.

Most elderly people at the events suggested paying a nominal fee.

I hope you find this information useful and if you require any more, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Cllr Carolyn Thomas
Cabinet member for Streetscene and Countryside
Flintshire County Council

Email: carolyn.thomas@flintshire.gov.uk



Agenda Item 2.3

P-05-900 Look into the way parents are being treated by public services

This petition was submitted by Reann Jenkins having collected a total of 121 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to review the way parents and families, particularly those with disabled children, are treated by public services including the NHS, schools and social services.

Families are being wrongly threatened and treated badly by professionals such as social services, doctors, nurses and staff in schools. This must stop.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Bridgend
- South Wales West

Look into the way parents are being treated by public services

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Hydref 2019
Petitions Committee | 1 October 2019

Reference: RS19/10342-1

Petition Number: [P-05-900](#)

Petition title: Look into the way parents are being treated by public services

Text of petition: We call on the National Assembly for Wales to review the way parents and families, particularly those with disabled children, are treated by public services including the NHS, schools and social services. Families are being wrongly threatened and treated badly by professionals such as social services, doctors, nurses and staff in schools. This must stop.

1. Background

1.1. [Support for parents](#)

In addition to a focus on how children and young people are involved in decisions which affect them, the Welsh Government has published a number of documents which may be relevant to the petition in terms of parents. Some examples include:

- [Support for parents](#);
- [Parenting engagement and support: guidance for providers](#).



1.2. Schools and Education

In terms of guidance and policy there are a range of references to parents depending on the aspect of education being looked at, for example:

- [Special educational needs guidance for carers and parents](#);
- [Additional learning needs factsheet for children, young people and parents](#).

Section 29 of the [Education Act 2002](#) requires governing bodies of all maintained schools in Wales to establish procedures for dealing with complaints and to publicise such procedures. Governing bodies may put in place a complaints procedure of their choice but the Welsh Government recommends that they adopt the model complaint procedure set out in their 2012 guidance, [School Governing Body Complaints Procedures](#).

1.3. Social services and well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The [Social Services and well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) came into force in April 2016. It aims to improve the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support. The Act changes the way people's needs are assessed and the way services are delivered. As a result, people should have more of a say in the care and support they receive. The Act imposes a number of duties on local authorities, health boards and Welsh Ministers. It requires them to work to promote the well-being of those who need care and support, or carers who need support. The *Social Services and Well-being Wales Act* aimed to change the social services sector, so that:

- People have more control over what support they receive, and make decisions about their care and support as an equal partner;
- People receive an assessment of their care and support needs which looks at capacity, resources and the outcomes people need to achieve, and then identify how they can best be supported to achieve them;

- Carers have an equal right to assessment for support as those people for whom they care;
- Easy access to information and advice is available to all;
- Powers to safeguard people are stronger;
- A preventative approach is taken to meeting care and support needs; and
- Local authorities and health boards come together in new statutory partnerships to drive integration, innovation and service change.

The Welsh Government has published a document which explains the [essential elements](#) of the Act. Each local authority will have its own complaints procedure in terms of social services and this should be detailed on their individual websites.

1.4. NHS Wales

This [NHS Wales webpage](#) refers to 'patient centred care' and states:

Co-production can support the delivery of person-centred care, which prioritises putting patients, their families and carers at the heart of all decisions and plans about health care.

It also refers to [health and care standards with supporting guidance](#). There is also information on [accountability in the NHS in Wales](#) and on '[putting things right](#)'.

1.5. Equality Act 2010

The majority of public authorities are covered by 'the general duty' under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. The aim of the general duty is to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. Public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Guidance for public authorities on implementing their duties was published by the EHRC in 2014.

The [Equality Act 2010 \(Statutory Duties\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2011](#) sets specific duties that came into force in April 2011. This includes Regulation 10 that requires an authority to make such arrangements as it considers appropriate for promoting amongst its employees knowledge and understanding of the general duty and of the duties in these Regulations. An authority should also identify and address any training needs of its employees in relation those duties. The regulations also require engagement, by public bodies, with people affected by the decisions taken by public authorities.

1.6. Public Service Ombudsman for Wales

The Public Service Ombudsman website has [guidance on how to make a complaint about a public body](#). This sets out that the Ombudsman:

- Will usually expect a person to have complained to the public body first and given it the chance to respond to the complaint. There are exceptions if the Ombudsman consider that the complaint is very urgent;
- Cannot look into the complaint if there is a legal right of appeal or the right to take the matter to court;
- Normally expects complaints to be made within 12 months of becoming aware of the problem. However, if time has already been spent complaining directly to the body concerned, they will take that into account.

The guidance suggests that potential complaints should be discussed with the Complaints Advice Team on 0300 790 0203 who can provide advice on whether the matter is something that the Ombudsman can consider and how best to proceed.

Complaints can be made [online](#), or using a form from the [Ombudsman's website](#). If the Ombudsman believe that the complaint is one that they can consider and they believe that there has been a failing on behalf of the public body, they will consider if it is possible to sort out the matter informally. If not, and if it appears that there may have been a serious failure on the part of the public body, they will begin a formal investigation.

1.7. Children's Commissioner for Wales

The office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales provides free case work and advocacy support to children and families. In certain circumstances they will take up the case of individual children and can liaise with relevant parties on their behalf. The [website](#) states:

Our Investigation and Advice service is free and confidential. It's there to advise and support children and young people or those who care for them if they feel that a child has been treated unfairly.

2. Welsh Government's response

In response to the Petition on 13 August 2019, the Minister for Health and Social Services has said:

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring equality for people with disabilities and their families. We have a wealth of legislation and guidance in place to ensure disabled people and their families are supported. Following consultation, we are finalising the Welsh Government's new Framework - 'Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living', which will be published later this summer. One of the aims is to promote equality of opportunity and support

disabled people to more easily and readily access resources and mainstream services.

All public bodies have a complaints procedure to follow should individuals be unhappy with the services they have received or the way they have been treated. Should they submit a complaint and be unhappy with the outcome then they could ask the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales to investigate.

The Action on Disability: 'The Right to Independent Living' framework was published in September 2019.

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref Petition P-05-900
Ein cyf/Our ref VG/07245/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

13 August 2019

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July about the petition you have received from Reann Jenkins asking for the National Assembly for Wales to review the way parents and families, particularly those with disabled children, are treated by public services including the NHS, schools and social services.

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring equality for people with disabilities and their families. We have a wealth of legislation and guidance in place to ensure disabled people and their families are supported. Following consultation, we are finalising the Welsh Government's new Framework - 'Action on Disability: The Right to Independent Living', which will be published later this summer. One of the aims is to promote equality of opportunity and support disabled people to more easily and readily access resources and mainstream services.

All public bodies have a complaints procedure to follow should individuals be unhappy with the services they have received or the way they have been treated. Should they submit a complaint and be unhappy with the outcome then they could ask the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales to investigate.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Gohebiaeth.Vaughan.Gething@llyw.cymru
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.

**P-05-900 Look into the way parents are being treated by public services,
Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 18.09.19**

Really wasn't expecting much more from the health minister been fobbed off for years also they are using the complaints **procedure to make it harder for families. he's not actually answered why families are being bullied and failed in Wales.**

Agenda Item 2.4

P-05-901 Ban the Sale of Real Fur in Wales

This petition was submitted by Cardiff Animal Rights having collected 827 signatures online and 2,271 on paper, a total of 3,098 signatures.

Text of Petition

Farming animals for fur has been banned in the UK for over 16 years due to the cruelty involved. However, fur products are still legally imported from countries with little or no animal welfare laws.

Many animals are trapped in the wild using steel jaw leghold traps and have been known to chew off their own limbs in a frantic attempt to escape. Animals are also bred on fur farms usually in horrendous cramped conditions leading to severe mental trauma, skin sores and diseases.

Animals endure extreme pain and suffering, whether they are bred on fur farms or trapped in the wild. The fur industry is totally unethical, unnecessary and inhumane.

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ban the sale and import of real animal fur.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff North
- South Wales Central

P-05-901 Ban the Sale of Real Fur in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Hydref 2019
Petitions Committee | 1 October 2019

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-901

Petition title: Ban the Sale of Real Fur in Wales

Text of petition: Farming animals for fur has been banned in the UK for over 16 years due to the cruelty involved. However, fur products are still legally imported from countries with little or no animal welfare laws.

Many animals are trapped in the wild using steel jaw leghold traps and have been known to chew off their own limbs in a frantic attempt to escape. Animals are also bred on fur farms usually in horrendous cramped conditions leading to severe mental trauma, skin sores and diseases.

Animals endure extreme pain and suffering, whether they are bred on fur farms or trapped in the wild. The fur industry is totally unethical, unnecessary and inhumane.

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ban the sale and import of real animal fur.

Background

There are no official statistics showing the number of animals killed for the fur trade. The [Humane Society International \(HSI\)](#) (which gave oral evidence to the EFRA Committee's 2018 [inquiry into the Fur Trade in the UK](#)) provides some [statistics on its website](#). It estimates that each year around one hundred million animals are bred and killed on intensive fur farms worldwide, specifically to supply the fashion industry:

- China (2014 stats): 60 million mink; 13 million foxes; and 14 million raccoon dogs were bred and killed on fur farms;
- European Union (*no date available*): 42.6 million mink; 2.7 million foxes; 155,000 raccoon dogs; and 206,000 chinchilla were killed for fur in the EU;

- Rabbits are also killed for fur in large but unknown numbers (likely hundreds of millions) in Europe and China; and
- In 2015, more than 4 million animals were killed for their fur in North America.

HSI say that, in addition to fur farming, large numbers of animals are trapped and killed for their fur in the wild. Most fur from wild-trapped animals comes from the USA, Canada and Russia. A number of countries have [banned fur farming](#).

Regulations and Guidance

In the EU, it is legal to import and sell fur from a range of species such as fox, rabbit, mink, coyote, racoon dog and chinchilla. EU regulations ban trade in fur from [domestic cats, dogs](#) or [commercial seal hunts](#).

EU Regulations

There are a number of EU Regulations related to fur importation, animal welfare of animals bred for fur, and animal slaughter.

[EU Council Regulation \(EEC\) No 3254/91](#) prohibits the importation of furs and fur products from some wild animal species originating in countries where they are caught by leg-hold traps or trapping methods that do not meet international standards of humane trapping. The control covers 13 species of fur-bearing animals and applies to their raw fur and products made from it. It does not apply to animals born and bred in captivity. Species include: badger, beaver, lynx, raccoon, otter and wolf.

[Directive 98/58/EC](#) is in place in the EU to ensure that animals bred for their fur are treated humanely. The rules include housing, freedom of movement, feeding and watering requirements, and staff qualifications. Special recommendations cover requirements for mink, ferret, fox and chinchilla, amongst others.

[Directive 93/119/EC](#) seeks to minimise the pain and suffering of animals during slaughter through the use of proper, approved stunning and killing methods.

UK Government Guidance

The UK Government has published [guidance on importing animal furs and skins into the UK](#).

According to the UK Government guidance, there are a number of animal fur goods that are exempt from UK import controls. These include:

- finished goods for personal and private use only;

- finished goods covered by a procedure for temporary admission and not for sale in the EU but intended for re-export; and
- pelts and goods manufactured in the EU and being reintroduced into the EU following a processing procedure – proof must be given that they were processed from pelts or goods previously exported from the EU.

The guidance contains a list of permitted animal fur imports by country.

Several UK government departments have responsibility for ensuring that work to ensure that animal fur and animal skins are imported legally. The UK Border Agency (UKBA) aims to ensure all imports of furs and fur and skin products are imported legally, and the Department for the Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs (Defra) has policy responsibility for controls on furs and fur and skin products and for policy implementation.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

The [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora](#) (CITES) is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. CITES is an international agreement to which States and regional economic integration organisations adhere voluntarily. States that have agreed to be bound by the Convention are known as Parties. Although CITES is legally binding on the Parties – in other words they have to implement the Convention – it does not take the place of national laws. Rather it provides a framework to be respected by each Party, which has to adopt its own domestic legislation to ensure that CITES is implemented at the national level. The UK has been a Party to CITES since 1976.

House of Commons

On 4 June 2019 the House of Commons [debated banning fur trade in the UK](#). The debate was [based on a petition](#) that had received over 109,000 signatures. Although fur farming was banned across the UK by 2002, fur can still be legally imported under current EU Regulations. Members of Parliament widely supported the proposal for a UK ban, and asked the UK Government to use Brexit as an opportunity to introduce stricter Regulations on fur imports. The then Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, George Eustice responded that the UK market share was too small to justify a trade ban as an efficient means to improve animal welfare.

In 2018, the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee undertook an inquiry into the [Fur Trade in the UK](#). The inquiry looked into:

- The size of the UK fur trade;
- The effectiveness of the current law with regards to animal fur;
- Whether the legislation is sufficiently enforced;
- What improvements could be made to the current labelling of fur products and fake fur products;
- What improvements should be made to the regulation of the fur industry; and
- The opportunities offered by Brexit to change current legislation.

The Committee's key recommendations and conclusions focused on the mis-selling and accidental selling of real fur as fake fur, and the need for retailers to take responsibility for ensuring they are selling items as described. It also said that the current EU labelling regime for fur lacks clarity, and does not specifically identify when a product contains real animal fur. It recommended that the UK Government should hold a public consultation to consider whether to ban the sale and import of fur post-Brexit. It suggested that the Government will have to balance the needs of animal welfare against consumer choice. On the issue of a consultation, the [UK Government said](#):

The Government shares the British public's high regard for animal welfare and, after we leave the EU, the Government plans to retain our current regulations banning the import of fur from domestic cats, dogs or commercial seal hunts.

Fur farming was banned in the UK in 2000. Fur farming is legal in other EU countries, and whilst rules are in place to ensure that animals kept for fur production in the EU are kept, trapped and killed humanely the Government has supported higher animal welfare standards worldwide to phase out fur farming and trapping practices in other parts of the world that are banned here. After EU exit once the UK assumes an independent seat on international bodies such as CITES and OIE we will have an opportunity to promote further our high standards in these international fora.

While the UK is a member of the EU it is not possible to introduce restrictions relating to the fur trade which are inconsistent with the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU and which impair the free movement of goods within the EU single market. There will be an opportunity for government in the future, once we have left the EU and the nature of our future trading relationship has been established, to consider further steps such as a ban on fur imports or a ban on sales. In the interim the government considers that the transparency of information provided to consumers is key.

FURMARK

The Committee has received a letter from the [British Fur Trade Association](#), which sets out the role of the fur trade in driving up animal welfare standards in the UK and internationally, and highlights that implementing a ban would damage animal welfare standards. It sets out that "the fur industry is committed to the highest possible standards around animal welfare,

environmental protection, and sustainability”. It says the industry will shortly launch and roll out FURMARK, an international mark intended to guarantee standards in these areas across the supply chain, including at the point of sale:

The FURMARK certification programmes are based on independent scientific and veterinary advice and best practice: importantly, the verification of each scheme will be conducted by independent third parties [...] With the introduction of FURMARK the five major global auction houses are committed to selling certified farm-raised and wild fur from 2020. Ultimately FURMARK enables retailers, brands and consumers to have complete assurance and confidence when buying natural fur.

Welsh Government action

In her letter to the Committee, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM, says that banning the sale and import of real animal fur in Wales is a complex matter which includes devolved and non-devolved powers, and is dependent on EU law. She says that any legislation in this area is heavily dependent on the UK’s future relationship with the EU.

She sets out the Welsh Government’s position on the issue:

We currently support the UK Government’s position which states while some fur products may never be legally imported into the UK, national bans are less effective than working at an international level on animal welfare standards.

The Minister outlines international efforts to bring about higher standards, supported by EU rules and regulations around fur imports:

- Regulations including a blanket ban on importing furs from a number of animals, including cats and dogs, as well as most seal skins and products;
- Regulations which ensure any fur imported into the UK comes from animals which have been treated, trapped and killed humanely; and
- The [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species \(CITES\)](#) which control the fur from endangered species.

She concludes by saying that the UK Government has previously stated it will ensure these controls are not removed once the UK leaves the EU.

National Assembly for Wales action

In February 2017, Paul Davies AM asked the then Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM, to [make a statement on the Welsh Government’s position in relation to the selling of animal furs in Wales](#). In response the Cabinet Secretary said:

Fur Farming was banned by the UK Government in England and Wales on ethical grounds in 2000. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) regulates the

import, re-export, sale or movement of endangered wild animals or their parts and aims to ensure international trade in wild animals species does not threaten their survival.

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.



British Fur Trade Association
Sky Gardens
153 Wandsworth Road
London
SW8 2GB

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

1st August 2019

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders,

I am aware that there is currently an on-line petition calling for the Welsh Government to implement a ban on the sale and import of natural fur in Wales.

I believe that your Committee will consider the next stage of the petition when it closes and, therefore, I thought it would be helpful to write to you setting out a number of facts and putting the 'other side' of the debate. I also wanted to outline the role that the fur industry is playing in driving up animal welfare standards both in the UK and internationally and to highlight that simply implementing such a ban would actually damage such animal welfare standards.

I would also like to place on record that I of course disagree with the wording and phrasing of the petition and believe that this is purposely misleading and emotive. However, I am aware, of course, that this open to the organisers of the petition to decide and represents no formal position of the Welsh Assembly or of you Committee.

Let me state that the fur industry is committed to the highest possible standards around animal welfare, environmental protection, and sustainability. The industry will shortly launch and roll out FURMARK, an international mark that will guarantee standards in these areas across the entire supply chain (including at the point of sale).

FURMARK will ensure and guarantee that each stage of the production process meets strict requirements that reflect globally recognised animal welfare and sustainability standards.

The FURMARK certification programmes are based on independent scientific and veterinary advice and best practice: importantly, the verification of each scheme will be conducted by independent

third parties. All stages of the supply chain are subject to comprehensive, transparent, and independently verified traceability systems and will be subject to an external audit.

Fur is also of course a natural product compared to synthetic, fossil fuels-derived, faux alternatives with a production process that accords to local, regional, and international standards around environmental protection.

With the introduction of FURMARK, the five major global auction houses are committed to selling certified farm-raised and wild fur from 2020. Ultimately, FURMARK enables retailers, brands, and consumers to have complete assurance and confidence when buying natural fur.

This will also allow for a clear labelling scheme that was the subject of an inquiry by the DEFRA Select Committee last year.

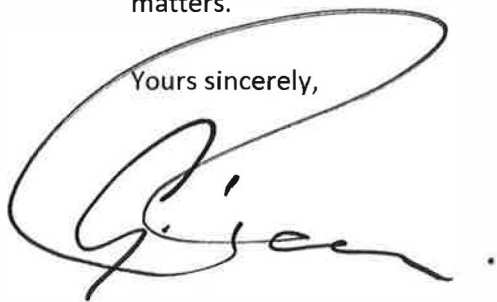
I appreciate and recognise that fur is a subject that can divide opinion. It may be helpful therefore to highlight the results of recent polling conducted by Populus in June 2019 into attitudes towards fur in the UK. The results show that the overwhelming majority of people in the UK are content to both consume and wear products that originate from animals.

They also show, crucially, that it is a minority (31%) that disagree with the statement "I think it is acceptable for people to wear products that come from animals". People are supportive of the sale of fur products that accord to high animal welfare standards, environmental sustainability and are subject to independent inspection: again, only a minority favouring of a ban on the sale of fur in the UK. The results also show that those aged between 18 to 24 are more likely to buy fur that accords to these principles. This is borne out by the continued popularity of fur on the high-street and in every day clothing garments.

Finally, we welcome the UK's desire to drive up standards in animal welfare internationally as it exits the European Union and takes its place on the various international bodies and institutions. We believe that the fur industry in the UK and globally can help support these ambitions and we would welcome a discussion with your officials in this respect.

Finally, if I can provide any further information regarding the fur industry in the UK please do not hesitate to contact me. We would welcome an early opportunity to meet you to discuss these matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Giles Roca', written over a large, loopy oval scribble.

Giles Roca
Chief Executive
British Fur Trade Association

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-901
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/06542/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair Petitions Committee

Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

3 September 2019

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 17 July, regarding banning the sale and import of real animal fur in Wales.

Banning the sale and import of real animal fur in Wales is a complex matter which includes both devolved and non-devolved powers and is dependent upon EU law. Therefore, any legislation in this area is heavily dependent on the UK's future relationship with the EU.

We currently support the UK Government's position which states while some fur products may never be legally imported into the UK, national bans are less effective than working at an international level on animal welfare standards.

International efforts to bring about higher standards are supported by strict EU rules and regulations around fur imports, which apply to both the UK and wider EU.

Firstly, these regulations include a blanket ban of the importing of furs from a number of animals, including cats and dogs as well as most seal skins and products. Secondly, there are regulations which ensure any fur imported into the UK comes from animals which have been treated, trapped and killed humanely.

In addition to these EU regulations, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) controls the fur from an endangered species. For example, there are export permits and commercial use certificates which strictly control the imports of furs from endangered species. These controls are implemented in the UK by the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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CF99 1NA

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0300 0604400

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

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

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

The UK Government has previously stated it will ensure these controls are not removed once the UK leaves the EU.

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

P-05-901 - Ban the Sale of Real Fur in Wales, Correspondence – Interested party to Committee, 07.09.19

The farming of animals for real fur has been banned in England and Wales since the year 2000 and I understand it, the first countries in Europe to do so, with Scotland and Northern Ireland following in 2002. The law has therefore recognised for sometime the unnecessary suffering, miserable lives and painful and bloodied deaths endured by victims of the fur trade and this is to be greatly applauded. I therefore submit that the continuing sale of real fur is at odds with the sentiments behind the original legislation prohibiting the farming of animals for real fur.

Many cities in the United States of America have also banned or are in the process of banning the sale of real fur, New York and Los Angeles are just two examples and fur farms are being shut down globally. Please can we not be as forward thinking and compassionate and follow suit? There are so many incredible faux fur options available that major fashion houses are becoming fur free as are many Fashion Weeks.

In conclusion real fur is outdated, unnecessary, environmentally damaging and the suffering of the animals involved is off the scale. Every effort possible should be made by responsible and progressive law makers everywhere to stop the fur trade where ever and whenever possible. This is why the sale of real fur must be banned and I urge you to vote in favour of this ban at your first given opportunity.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submissions and comments.

Kind Regards

Laura Jenkins

Agenda Item 2.5

P-05-902 Paternal Mental Health (New Fathers Mental Health)

This petition was submitted by Mark Williams having collected a total of 116 signatures.

Text of Petition

In a "landmark move" NHS England will screen and support fathers for their mental health if the partner has a perinatal mental health illness.

The biggest killer in men under 50 is suicide and with a new debate in Parliament we feel the Welsh Government should be following and funding new father's mental health as without the support it can impact on mums and the development of the child.

The National Childbirth Trust "Dads in Distress report in 2015 found 38% of dads worry about their own mental health and 73% worry about their partners mental health.

1 in 10 dads suffer postnatal depression which looks different more anger, drinking, substance abuse and of course dads struggle to bond with their children too.

Fatherhood pressure is different than years ago with same gender couples and stay at home dads support needs to be in place.

Due to lack of support and screening dads often go into other services at crisis point after the relationship sadly has ended.

The Still Face experiment with dads explains the importance of supporting dad for his mental health due to importance of the first 1001 days antenatal and postnatal period.

When supporting all parents it has far better outcomes for the whole family.

We would like Wales to follow NHS England's new long term plan and include fathers.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Ogmore
- South Wales West

Paternal Mental Health

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 1 Hydref 2019
Petitions Committee | 1 October 2019

Reference: RS19/10344

Petition number: P-05-902

Petition title: Paternal Mental Health (New Fathers Mental Health)



Text of petition:

In a "landmark move" NHS England will screen and support fathers for their mental health if the partner has a perinatal mental health illness.

The biggest killer in men under 50 is suicide and with a new debate in Parliament we feel the Welsh Government should be following and funding new father's mental health as without the support it can impact on mums and the development of the child.

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When supporting all parents it has far better outcomes for the whole family.

We would like Wales to follow NHS England's new long term plan and include fathers.

1. Background

The perinatal period begins at the start of pregnancy and runs until the end of the first year after a baby is born. Perinatal mental health is about the psychological and emotional health and wellbeing of pregnant women and their children, their partners and their families.

During pregnancy (also referred to as the "prenatal" or "antenatal" period) and after the birth of a child (often called the "postnatal" or "postpartum" period), women are at a higher risk of experiencing mental health problems.

The Mind [website](#) states that studies suggest that partners can also experience perinatal mental health problems. Information also on the Mind [website](#) (from 2016) highlights that studies into postnatal depression in fathers suggest that around one in five men experience depression after becoming fathers.

In a news item on the NHS England [website](#) in December 2018, the Chief Executive of NHS England is quoted as saying there is growing evidence of the mental health risk new and expectant fathers face. In the first six months after the birth of a baby, estimates put the prevalence rates of anxiety and depression symptoms in men at up to one in 10, while one in five women will experience a mental health problem during pregnancy and the first year after birth.

According to the charity [NCT](#), the peak time for postnatal depression in men is three to six months after the birth and as with postnatal depression in mothers, it often goes undiagnosed.

The Mind [website](#) lists support that may be available to fathers who have developed mental health problems, which includes visiting a GP and contacting specialist organisations.

Developments in England

It was [announced](#) by NHS England in December 2018 that the partners of pregnant women and new mothers who are themselves suffering from anxiety, depression or more severe disorders such as psychosis will be automatically offered a comprehensive mental health assessment and sign-posted to professional support if needed.

Partners of expectant and new mothers who are seriously unwell will be offered a range of help such as peer-support, behavioural couples therapy sessions and other family and parenting interventions in specialist community perinatal mental health settings or referral to a leading psychological talking therapy programme. Information on action being taken by NHS England in relation to perinatal mental health is set out in the [announcement](#).

2. Welsh Government action

In correspondence from the Minister for Health and Social Services to the Committee on 13 August 2019, reference is made to the Welsh Government's new vision for maternity services in Wales, [Maternity care in Wales; a five-year vision for the future 2019-2024](#), with a central component of its five core themes being family centred care. This policy is said to ensure midwives and maternity staff incorporate a holistic approach to parenthood, including the recognition and detection of emotional and mental health issues and early referral to appropriate support.

The Minister notes that recent improvements in health visiting services has included the development of a 'team around the family' approach and monitoring of any emotional or mental health issues through the universal provision of the '[Healthy Child Wales Programme](#)'.

All health boards are expected to work towards meeting agreed standards for integrated perinatal health services in Wales which were developed by the All Wales Perinatal Mental Health Steering Group (AWPMHSG) by March 2020. These standards include considering the mental health and well-being of fathers/partners.

Other actions reported by the Minister that are being taken by the Welsh Government in relation to perinatal mental health include:

- implementation of the [Mental Health \(Wales\) Measure](#) which provides services at an early stage through the Local Primary Mental Health Support Service with specialist services also provided;
- further developing specialist community services, with perinatal mental health services included as a priority area for the service improvement funding which commenced in 2019, and
- currently consulting on the [Together for Mental Health delivery plan for 2019 to 2022](#), which includes improving access and quality of perinatal mental health services as a priority area.

3. National Assembly for Wales action

In October 2017, the Assembly's Children, Young People and Education Committee published its report on [Perinatal mental health in Wales](#). The Committee's inquiry looked at the overall provision of perinatal mental health services in Wales. One of the inquiry's terms of reference was to explore the current clinical pathway for patients and whether current primary care services respond in a timely manner to meet the emotional well-being and mental health needs of mothers, fathers and the wider family during pregnancy and the first year of a baby's life.

Following consideration of the evidence received, one of the recommendations made by the Committee relates to the specialist support available to mothers, fathers and their children:

Recommendation 22. That the Welsh Government give consideration to developing a specialist health visitor in perinatal and infant health role in Wales

to liaise with - and work in - a multidisciplinary way with CAMHS and infant mental health services, provide specialist support to mothers, fathers and their children, and provide specialist training and consultation to the wider health visiting and early years' workforce, particularly with regard to issues relating to attachment and bonding.

The Welsh Government rejected this recommendation stating that it is for health boards to determine their staffing needs from their existing allocation towards providing community services. In its response to the Committee's report, the Welsh Government also noted that the Healthy Child Wales Programme includes a consistent range of evidence-based preventative and early intervention measures, as well as advice and guidance to support parenting. The programme is said to offer a routine assessment by health visitors of attachment and bonding to support positive parent-child relationships and promote positive maternal and family emotional health and resilience.

The Committee also recommended (recommendation 10) that the Welsh Government ensures work underway to improve access to psychological therapies for perinatal women (and men where necessary) is prioritised given the established link between perinatal ill health and a child's health and development.

The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation. In January 2019, the Minister for Health and Social Services provided follow-up information to the Committee in relation to its progress on perinatal mental health services, which included details of work being taken to improve access to psychological therapies.

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.



Ein cyf/Our ref VG/07257/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair – Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
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Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

13 August 2019

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 18 July regarding Petition P-05-902 Paternal Mental Health (New Fathers Mental Health) from Mark Williams.

The birth of a child is a significant life event which can be a stressful time for many parents. Families are provided with support following a birth from midwives and health visitors. Should any concerns be identified they would contact their GP who would assess and refer as appropriate. Recently, I launched the new vision for maternity services in Wales, 'Maternity care in Wales; a five-year vision for the future 2019-2024', this incorporates five core themes with a central component being family centred care.

I recognise the transition into fatherhood can be traumatic and this policy ensures midwives and maternity staff incorporate a holistic approach to parenthood. Recognition and detection of emotional and mental health struggles will enable early referral to services through primary care pathways, with the appropriate support and treatment plans.

Recent work to further develop health visiting services has included the development of a 'Team around the family' approach with an improved skill mix to provide continuity of care to families and develop 'trusting' relationships to strengthen support for both parents. Monitoring of any emotional or mental health issues through the universal provision of the 'Healthy Child Wales Programme' provides the visiting regime to enable early detection and referral if required.

All health boards are expected to work towards meeting agreed standards for integrated perinatal health services in Wales which were developed by the All Wales Perinatal Mental Health Steering Group (AWPMHSG) by March 2020. These standards includes considering the mental health and well-being of fathers/partners.

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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.

In Wales, we have also implemented the Mental Health (Wales) Measure which provides services at an early stage through the Local Primary Mental Health Support Service, as well as ensuring those in need of specialist services receive the highest quality of care and treatment.

We continue to work with stakeholders to further develop the specialist community services following our investment in 2015. Perinatal mental health services have also been included as a priority area for the service improvement funding which commenced this year.

Lastly, we are currently consulting on the Together for Mental Health delivery plan for 2019-2022, which includes improving access and quality of perinatal mental health services as a priority area. The links to this consultation are below:

English:

<https://gov.wales/together-mental-health-delivery-plan-2019-2022>

Welsh:

<https://llyw.cymru/law-yn-llaw-iechyd-meddwl-cynllun-cyflawni-2019-i-2022>

The consultation closes on 30 August.

I hope you find this information helpful.

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'.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM

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

**P-05-902 Paternal Mental Health (New Fathers Mental Health),
Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 23.09.19**

Thank you for your detailed response.

In to response to your question where the family approach is laudable, the 'consideration' of the father does not appear to implicitly acknowledge that the father's good mental health is equally paramount to the health and wellbeing of the family.

We need a assessment on the new father's mental health and also funding for resources to help the father mental health needs.

The biggest killer in men under 50 is suicide in UK. There are new dad's who are suffering in silence and use alcohol, drugs while feeling anger during the antenatal and postnatal period which has an impact on the mother's and child's mental health.

There are a number of resources and studies collected under the #Howareyoudad where 1 in 10 father's suffer depression and between 25-50 % suffer depression looking after their partners with postnatal depression.

Father's do not get support or even asked about their mental health which I am sure we all want fight for equity in all areas but unfortunately maternity services are still in need to support all parents which must include same gender parents.

When all parents are supported for their mental health far less ACEs in children growing up will certainly happen. We are worried that with a rise in single dad's and stay at home dad's in Wales the impact on the child's development will be effected if dad is not supported for his anxiety depression and traumas during the antenatal and postnatal period.

Looking forward to your response.

Thank you

Mark Williams Keynote Speaker, Author and Consultant and Dr Jane Hanley Author, Trainer-Consultant and Past President of Marce Society.

Agenda Item 2.6

P-05-903 Filming and Recording of Council Meetings

This petition was submitted by Cllr Russell Spencer-Downe having collected a total of 58 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to follow the law in England that enshrines in law the right of residents, bloggers and journalists to report, blog, tweet and film council meetings to ensure openness and transparency. This has not happened in Wales and should be brought in, to allow the same in Wales.

This requirement should allow members of the public, as responsible observers, to record or film such meetings without the need for prior permission and to re-use the material freely to provide a direct and wider line of communication to the electorate.

England brought in this law that gave these rights in 2014 and Wales should be given the same rights.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan
- South Wales Central

P-05-903 Filming and Recording of Council Meetings

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | Hydref 2019
Petitions Committee | October 2019

Reference: PS19/10336

Petition Number: P-05-903

Petition title: Filming and Recording of Council Meetings

Text of petition: We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to place a statutory requirement on all local authorities in Wales to record, broadcast or livestream all Council meetings which are open to the public, via their existing websites to ensure openness and transparency. This requirement should allow members of the public, as responsible observers, to record or film such meetings without the need for prior permission and to re-use the material freely to provide a direct and wider line of communication to the electorate.

1. Background

There is currently no statutory requirement on local authorities in Wales to broadcast council meetings on their websites. However, a number of authorities in Wales do provide webcasting facilities for most if not all of their council meetings. Welsh Government Ministers have over the years encouraged councils to broadcast some or all of their meetings, to ensure proceedings are accessible to the public. In 2013, the Welsh Government provided some funding for local



authorities to assist with the associated costs for equipment and maintaining the service.

In 2014, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) published [guidance for council members on webcasting](#).

The Welsh Government published a revised [Code of Recommended Practice](#) on Local Authority Publicity in Wales in August 2014. A section on Filming and broadcasting of council meetings notes that ‘society’ expects greater access to the decision-making process of its elected bodies. It continues by noting that:

Local authorities are encouraged to make arrangements for their proceedings to be made more accessible to the public by allowing them to be broadcast. This might be achieved through the authority itself carrying a live stream or recordings on the councils website or through some other internet-based medium.

In 2017, the then Cabinet Secretary for Local Government, Mark Drakeford AM, published a [White Paper – Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed](#). The Cabinet Secretary proposed to make broadcasting of council meetings a ‘statutory requirement’ (Para.5.2.5). However, the proposals within the White Paper did not progress further.

Filming, photographing and audio recording by members of the public

There is currently no statutory obligation on local authorities in Wales to allow members of the public (or media organisations) to film, photograph or take audio recordings in council meetings.

The [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#) makes provision that allows the Secretary of State to make regulations to oblige councils **in England** to allow the filming, photographing or recording by individuals in council meetings. However, Regulations have yet to be passed in England. Allowing filming at council meetings in England by the public is therefore at the discretion of the council itself.

Similarly, there is currently no statutory obligation on local authorities in Scotland or Northern Ireland to allow members of the public to record within council sessions.

Title:

The Welsh Government in its Recommended Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity for Wales encourages local authorities to permit filming or recording of council meetings by the public. The Recommended Code notes:

- 54. There have been well-publicised cases of members of the public recording and broadcasting the proceedings of council meetings and the Welsh Government would **urge local authorities to look favourably on this**, provided those attending the meeting are aware this is taking place and other members of the public are not distracted or disturbed unduly by the process.
- 55. Clearly, these facilities should not be available at such time as an authority or one of its committees is discussing confidential or exempt business as defined by Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

Some authorities in Wales have followed these recommendations, with policies in place regarding members of the public filming at a council meeting. A section of Cardiff Council's constitution for example (Part 5 – Codes and Protocols), sets out the council's policy on filming and webcasting. The policy notes that the information relating to filming of meetings are included in the Agenda Packs for meetings, and if it is being broadcast, will include the following information:

WEBCASTING

This meeting will be filmed for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for 6 months. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.

[Members of the public may also film or record this meeting]

If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed. By entering the body of the Chamber you are also 22 March 2018 consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured you should sit in the public gallery area.

Similarly, Monmouthshire County Council states within its constitution that ‘filming and use of social media is permitted during meetings so long as there is no disturbance to the conduct of the meeting’.

2. Welsh Government action

The First Minister, in his legislative statement in [Plenary on 16 July 2019](#), stated that the Welsh Government will be introducing a Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill in the Autumn. The legislation, according to the First Minister, will “strengthen local authority democracy, accountability and performance”. It is not yet known what provisions will be included in the Bill. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to participate in the consultation on the Bill after its introduction.

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.



Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/06318/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
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19 August 2019

Dear Janet ,

Thank you for your letter of 30th July about a current petition focussing on the filming and recording of council meetings.

Local authorities are obliged to allow the public entry to council meetings, unless the issues being discussed are deemed to be exempt (in the main this will involve discussion of confidential or commercial matters). It is a matter for each local authority to determine the detailed arrangements for these meetings and what arrangements they put in place to facilitate requests to record proceedings, as they will need to consider the security of those present.

On the wider issue of access to council proceedings, the Welsh Government has encouraged principal councils to promote broadcasting of meetings in the interests of transparency in decision making. People's lives are increasingly complex, with many calls on their time. This can often result in them being unable to attend council meetings despite their interest in their local communities.

In recent years many principal councils have taken steps to broadcast some of their meetings enabling individuals who would not ordinarily be to attend to see for themselves the level of debate and discussion about specific issues. This also enables those individuals to better understand the basis upon which decisions, which impact on them personally and as a member of a community, have been taken.

Progress has been made, but I want to ensure that all principal councils maximise the opportunities technology offers for greater accessibility to the work it undertakes on behalf of citizens.

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Gohebiaeth.Julie.James@llyw.cymru
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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 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill which will be introduced later this year will place a duty on principal councils to put arrangements in place to broadcast meetings so that members of the public who are not in attendance are able to view and also hear the proceedings as they occur. Councils will also be expected to make the broadcast available electronically after the meeting.

The more detailed arrangements will be considered as we work with our local government partners in the coming months to inform guidance in this area.

I look forward to seeing the level of support this petition attracts between now and the 5 September when it is due to close.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government

**P-05-903 Filming and Recording of Council Meetings, Correspondence –
Petitioner to Committee, 25.09.19**

Dear Petitions Committee

The letter does not address the point of the petition it address council doing public broadcasting through online Web cameras. But this would not be the case for town and community councils who do not have a budget to be able to put this service in place

The petition asks for the same law that has been given to England. Which allows members of the public and the press to report on council meetings live and take their own recordings.

Kind Regards

CLlr Russell Spencer-Downe

Agenda Item 3.1

P-05-797 Ensure access to the cystic fibrosis medicine, Orkambi, as a matter of urgency

This petition was submitted by Rhian Barrance and was considered by the Committee for the first time in January 2018, having collected 5,717 signatures online.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to call for a resolution to ongoing negotiations between NHS Wales, the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group, the Welsh Health and Specialised Services Committee and Vertex Pharmaceuticals regarding access to the cystic fibrosis medicine, Orkambi, as a matter of the utmost urgency.

Additional Information

418 people in Wales have cystic fibrosis (CF). CF is a life-shortening, inherited disorder. The median age at death for a person with CF in 2016 was just 31 years of age. CF is caused by mutations in the CFTR gene which result in the build-up of thick, sticky mucus in the lungs and other organs. Gradually, this build up causes chronic lung infections and progressive lung damage. The treatment burden for a person with CF is high and daily life can be a struggle.

Orkambi is a precision medicine that 40% of people in the UK with CF could benefit from. While conventional CF treatments target the symptoms, precision medicines tackle the underlying genetic mutations that cause the condition. Though Orkambi is not a cure, it has been found to slow decline in lung function – the most common cause of death for people with CF – by 42%.

In July 2016, the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) recognised Orkambi as an ‘important treatment.’ They were, however, unable to recommend the drug for use within the NHS on grounds of cost effectiveness and a lack of long-term data.

In June 2017, the Cystic Fibrosis Trust organised a day of national protest at the Senedd, Stormont, Holyrood, Downing Street and online to demand an

end to the deadlock. Since the protests, the Welsh Health and Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) have presented the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) with the portfolio approach developed by the drug's manufacturer, Vertex Pharmaceuticals.

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to call for a resolution to these ongoing negotiations between NHS Wales, the AWMSG, WHSSC and Vertex Pharmaceuticals as a matter of the utmost urgency. It is essential that a fair and sustainable method of reimbursement is found for Orkambi and for the exciting pipeline of future treatments.

People in Wales have been waiting too long for this transformative drug. They deserve better.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

Ref/ CJP/rml/P-05-797

7th August 2019

Ms Janet Finch-Saunders AC/AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders

Thank you for your letter dated 29th July 2019.

lumacaftor/ivacaftor (Orkambi®)

The role of the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) is to advise Welsh Government on the availability of new medicines/formulations and make interim recommendations on medicines for NHS Wales, ahead of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) considerations. It is clearly stated within its Constitution that AWMSG should complement and support the work of NICE and should not in any way duplicate or conflict with its work. AWMSG will not normally appraise a medicine if NICE intends to publish final technology appraisal advice within 12 months of the date of marketing authorisation. For this reason, the appraisal of lumacaftor/ivacaftor (Orkambi®) for the treatment of cystic fibrosis in patients aged 12 years and older, who are homozygous for the F508del mutation in the CFTR gene, met AWMSG's exclusion criteria.

NICE appraised lumacaftor/ivacaftor (Orkambi®) for the above indication in July 2016 and did not recommend use. I'm aware that this advice is due to be reviewed; however, AWTTTC (the organization that provides administrative and scientific support to AWMSG) is not aware that Vertex intend to engage with NICE for review of the advice, despite the fact that additional evidence has become available since this advice was published. AWTTTC has encouraged Vertex to submit evidence for appraisal of lumacaftor/ivacaftor (Orkambi®) for the 2-11 year group which has not currently been appraised by NICE and is in communication with the company to determine whether there is a mechanism for appraisal within NHS Wales for the adult population. There is the requirement for further details of the additional significant evidence and how this impacts on the clinical and cost-effectiveness of the medicine, and clarification of any existing commissioning routes that are available in NHS England.

I should highlight that appraisal by AWMSG in the current circumstances would set a precedent and would not be in accordance with the Constitution; therefore, reappraisal by NICE would be the most appropriate and preferred approach.

In summary, from an AWMSG perspective, there are three possible scenarios for Vertex to consider:

...2

1. Vertex submits for reappraisal by NICE, with the advice applying in England and Wales. Any commercial arrangements would need to be applied in NHS Wales.
2. Vertex does not submit for reappraisal by NICE and the negative recommendation remains extant in Wales.
3. Vertex provides AWTTTC with the additional/significant information (which was not included as part of the NICE appraisal) and clarifies the formal access or commissioning routes in England. AWMSG Steering Committee would then consider whether there was sufficient information available to conduct a further appraisal

Tezacaftor/ivacaftor (Symkevi®)

AWTTTC has been in contact with Vertex to encourage their engagement in relation to tezacaftor/ivacaftor (Symkevi®) for the treatment of cystic fibrosis in patients 12 years or older since 31st March 2018, twelve months before tezacaftor/ivacaftor was expected to receive its licence. AWTTTC sought early engagement when they became aware that clinicians in Wales wanted early access to this medicine for their patients. In order to be in a position to advise Welsh Government at the earliest opportunity, AWMSG is reliant upon Vertex submitting the best available evidence of clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness as soon as it becomes available. In circumstances where there is an urgent unmet clinical need, and in agreement of the marketing authorisation holder, an appraisal by AWMSG may be accelerated. Vertex requested a meeting with AWTTTC to discuss the Wales Patient Access Scheme: I understand that this was arranged by AWTTTC, but was cancelled at short notice by Vertex. To date, no Wales Patient Access Scheme has been received and therefore, in the absence of a submission by Vertex, the appraisal of this medicine cannot be progressed. It is always disappointing when manufacturers don't take advantage of the opportunity for early appraisal by AWMSG. Our aim is for AWMSG to issue advice as near to the licence date as possible, but this can only be done if the manufacturers submit at the appropriate time.

Ivacaftor (Kalydeco®)

AWTTTC is awaiting a revised Wales Patient Access Scheme in relation to Ivacaftor (Kalydeco®) as agreed by Vertex in March 2017 (a commitment to review the WPAS was noted in the minutes of the AWMSG meeting). I'm aware that during the appraisal, concerns were expressed by AWMSG that the patient population had significantly increased, but the patient access scheme had not been reviewed to take this into account. It is disappointing that we are now more than two years down the line since the medicine was supported for use for the licence extension and we continue to accept the same financial discount that was offered when the medicine was first appraised in 2013 (and was not recommended). AWTTTC has encouraged Vertex to submit for appraisal of the 1-2 year group (which could provide an opportunity to update the WPAS): Neither the submission or a Wales patient access scheme has been received.

....3

In summary, I would urge the Petitions Committee to encourage Vertex to submit additional significant evidence to support the use of lumacaftor/ivacaftor (Orkambi®) and provide evidence of the clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of tezacaftor/ivacaftor (Symkevi) for the treatment of cystic fibrosis in patients 12 years or older. AWMSG will take into consideration the views of the clinical experts and patients/patient organisations in their deliberations and will also take into account wider societal, budget impact and equity issues.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C.J. Phillips".

Ceri Phillips
Professor of Health Economics &
AWMSG Chairman



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Access to the cystic fibrosis medicines Orkambi® and Symkevi®**

DATE **12 August 2019**

BY **Vaughan Gething, Minister for Health and Social Services**

Access to medicines for patients with cystic fibrosis (CF) is a matter about which I and Assembly Members have regularly expressed deep concern. In February, I issued a written statement about access to the CF medicines manufactured by Vertex Pharmaceuticals. Today, in light of the announcement by the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) that they cannot recommend the use of either Orkambi® or Symkevi®, I now wish to provide an update on the situation in Wales.

Cystic fibrosis is a serious inherited disease affecting around 400 people in Wales, mainly affecting the lungs and digestive system. It requires daily treatment including physiotherapy, antibiotics, and taking enzyme tablets with food, and it significantly reduces the quality and duration of people's lives. At present, there is no cure and current treatments aim to manage the individual symptoms.

CF has a devastating effect on patients and their families and obviously I share in their wish for access to effective new treatments for this chronic disease.

Let me be clear, my starting position is that I want to see new and innovative medicines made available promptly and consistently for patients in Wales. The £80m investment this Government is making in our New Treatment Fund is ensuring that is the case for all medicines appraised and recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG), two internationally recognised health technology assessment bodies.

Ivacaftor (Kalydeco®), the first disease-modifying treatment for patients with CF, has been available to patients in Wales since 2012. Since that time, its manufacturer Vertex Pharmaceuticals has brought two further CF medicines, lumacaftor/ivacaftor (Orkambi®) and tezacaftor/ivacaftor (Symkevi®) to market.

The availability of Orkambi® was considered by NICE and the SMC in 2016. Neither body was able to recommend its use then, and in 2017 NICE re-issued its recommendation as “Do Not Do” guidance, emphasising this treatment should not be routinely available.

Today’s announcement by the SMC is clear that, despite new evidence and the agreement of a new discounted price, they remain unable to recommend the use of Orkambi®. Neither is SMC able to recommend the use of Symkevi®. In the case of both of these medicines, the SMC’s decisions confirm the clinical and economic cases presented were insufficiently robust to allow either medicine to be considered cost-effective, even at the discounted price offered by Vertex.

Since 2016, we have repeatedly invited Vertex to engage in the AWMSG appraisal process. Eventually in June, Vertex wrote to me confirming their intention to make a submission to AWMSG in respect of both Orkambi® and Symkevi®. However, to date Vertex has still not sent AWMSG a submission for either medicine.

Our NHS relies on evidence-based appraisals to ensure that its limited resources are used to best effect. This latest decision by an expert appraisal body adds to the evidence that Vertex’s pricing does not reflect the clinical effectiveness of their medicines, and that the NHS is right not to consider them as a routine treatment for CF. I urge Vertex to reflect on their pricing mechanism and the robustness of their clinical data, before making an urgent submission to AWMSG.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Assembly returns I would be happy to do so.

Cystic

Fibrosis a fight we must win

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

25 September 2019

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders

The Scottish Government has announced a deal that will see access to Orkambi and Symkevi for everyone with cystic fibrosis (CF) in Scotland who stands to benefit, after reaching an agreement with manufacturer Vertex Pharmaceuticals with support from the UK CF Registry.

The five-year agreement means hundreds who have been waiting, in many cases up to four years, for access to the precision medicines will now have access to these important drugs.

The deal requires Vertex to resubmit the two drugs to the Scottish Medicines Consortium during the agreement period, using new data collected through NHS prescribing. The UK CF Registry, which is maintained by the Trust, will play a vital role in supporting this evidence collection. However, while people with cystic fibrosis in Scotland can celebrate, it a desperate situation that the wait continues for the CF community in Wales.

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust supports the Welsh Government's call for Vertex to submit data for their medicines to the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group. This is the only reasonable next step to take the process forward without further delay and ensure the voices of people with CF and their clinical teams are central to the decision-making process.

We remain hopeful that the Welsh Government and health authorities can help to achieve rapid access by exploring options that allow people with CF to be treated while such a process is undertaken. People with CF and their families must not continue to bear the full burden of the damage caused by this crisis.

Yours sincerely,



David Ramsden
Chief Executive

Agenda Item 3.2

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

This petition was submitted by Matthew Misiak having collected 4,985 signatures online and 1,190 on paper – a total of 6,148 signatures.

Text of Petition

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

1. Declare a Climate Emergency.
2. Ensure all current and future policies are consistent with averting further climate change and ecological collapse.
3. Enact legally-binding policy measures to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2025 and to reduce consumption levels.
4. Implement a Citizen's Assembly of Wales to oversee the changes.

We call upon the Welsh Government to declare a Climate Emergency immediately, and commit to executing the remaining actions by June 2019.

WAG targets for a zero-carbon public sector must be used as a catalyst to engineer rapid decarbonisation in the private sector through procurement, taxation and subsidy. Across the UK, twenty city, town and county councils have already declared a Climate Emergency, including Powys and Machynlleth. Citizens must be involved to ensure the necessary change is made across society, as demonstrated in a Sortition model of participatory democracy. Initiatives to partner with include: The Climate Mobilization; Beyond Zero Emissions; Rapid Transition Alliance; Green New Deal Group; One Million Climate Jobs; The Breakthrough Institute; and Zero Carbon Britain.

Additional Information

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that we have 12 years to make the necessary changes to limit a rise in global temperatures by 1.5°C. Failure to act will see a significant and accelerating increase in sea levels and flooding, extreme and abrupt changes to weather patterns, crop failures, and extinctions of plant, insect and animal species. This will inevitably lead to global economic disruption and humanitarian crisis. It will also detrimentally impact the well-being of the people of Wales

and billions of others. Last year, Sir David Attenborough said:

"Right now, we are facing a man-made disaster of global scale. Our greatest threat in thousands of years. Climate change. If we don't take action, the collapse of our civilisations and the extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon. The world's people have spoken. Their message is clear. Time is running out."

The One Planet Development policy and Wellbeing of Future Generations Act show that Wales can lead the way in progressive policy. But they do not motivate government to act in accordance with the urgency of the situation. The scientific consensus shows the unprecedented scale of collective action needed to avert the worst outcomes in the near future. We must demand no less.

People worldwide are being inspired by the Extinction Rebellion movement to urge governments at all levels to meet the challenge posed by accelerating climate change and ecological collapse. Future generations will judge us on our courage to make the urgent change we know is needed. Please act now.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Aberconwy
- North Wales

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-869
Ein cyf/Our ref LG/06610/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

12

August 2019

Dear Janet

Thank you for your letter of 29 July regarding *Petition P-05-869: Declare a climate emergency*. You asked for the Welsh Government's response to the petitioners' call to establish citizens' assemblies.

We believe increasing our efforts to tackle climate change means fostering greater collaboration across our society and we want people in Wales to play a key role in that challenge by bringing forward new ideas and initiatives. The Welsh Government provides practical and financial support to people across Wales to take direct action to tackle climate change and strengthen the resilience of our ecosystems through policy initiatives such as our Energy Service and the Enabling Natural Resources and Wellbeing Grants. Where groups of citizens come together to drive action on climate change, this government is listening and working with them to make it happen. The National Assembly for Wales and our other democratic institutions also play a vital role in listening to and advocating for Welsh citizens.

We believe there can be a role for citizens' assemblies to make a valuable contribution to this agenda. For the public to engage in a citizens' assembly, they must be confident the process is both genuinely independent and their voice will be heard. For these reasons we believe citizens' assemblies are most effective when established on a cross-party, parliamentary basis. This is the case, for example, in the citizens' assembly convened in Ireland in recent years and the citizens' assembly on climate change being held this year as a joint exercise by six House of Commons select committees.

The petitioners' demands align closely with those of Extinction Rebellion (XR). The First Minister met members of XR on 5 August. He has invited XR to the Welsh Government's climate change conference in October to share and discuss ideas about how we could accelerate specific decarbonisation targets. The First Minister also committed political support to XR's idea of a citizens' assembly to explore what action is needed in response to the climate emergency declaration.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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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 95

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 Committee has also asked for “further information, including a timescale, about the review of actions in *Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales*”. The policies and proposals in the plan make provision for continuous review, as well as informing the development of the second carbon budget and plan. We will publish the second plan before the end of 2021.

Since publishing the first plan and declaring a climate emergency we have established a permanent Cabinet Sub-Committee to provide impetus from the ministerial level. We have reached a number of policy milestones which represent major reviews of government policy, as reflected in *Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales*. They also represent opportunities for Assembly Members and all Welsh citizens to help to shape future policy in these areas. The following milestones have all been reached since the declaration of a climate emergency on 29 April:

- Publishing proposals for future financial support for agriculture after Brexit.
- Publishing proposals for future marine management after Brexit, including the implementation of sustainable management practices, focusing on improving the resilience of marine ecosystems.
- Completing a consultation on environmental principles and governance after Brexit and creating a group of key stakeholders to take forward this work over the summer.
- Committing to bringing forward new restrictions on the sale of single use plastics, and to implementing the provisions of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to require businesses to separate their waste to ensure all recyclable materials are not wasted.
- Publishing the recommendations from the Decarbonisation of Homes Wales Advisory Group, with a full government response due this autumn.
- Committing to driving further decarbonisation and energy efficiency through the rollout of the empty homes grant scheme across the Valleys taskforce area.
- Committing to prioritising the zero carbon economy in regional investment after Brexit, along with inequality, business competitiveness, and healthier and more sustainable communities.
- Publishing proposals on the new curriculum for Wales, which includes helping learners to become ethical and informed citizens of Wales and the world as one of the curriculum’s four central purposes.

Additionally, since the climate emergency declaration we have announced more than £60m to support a wide range of initiatives that deliver on the objectives of *Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales*, with almost £20m additional funding secured from the European Union. These include support for active travel, tackling biodiversity loss and wider ecosystem resilience, low carbon innovation in industry, the development of a world-leading marine energy sector and supporting community action on reducing waste and protecting local species and habitats.

Regards
Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs

P-05-869 Declare a Climate Emergency and fit all policies with zero-carbon targets, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 25.09.19

- What are your thoughts on the attached document?
- **A seemingly comprehensive response, which must be continually progressed and held to account by our AMs..**
- Does it adequately address the issues that you raised?
- **The agricultural financial support will have its focus on supporting farmers through Brexit transition, but will it go further to enable the landscapes' use as a vital carbon sequestration mechanism? Welsh agricultural heritage must be defended, but not hobble progressive land use and management. With equal consideration, it should be integrated into bold restoration of pre-iron-age landscapes with modern food-production solutions, all supported by promotion of agricultural, labour-intensive/low-carbon education and training.**
- **We note the first lines of the bullet-pointed responses: "Publishing proposals...publishing proposals...Completing a consultation...Committing to...Publishing the recommendations...Committing to...Committing to...Publishing proposals". Emergency demands swift action, and so far action has only been talked about. The entire apparatus of the Senedd and government should be brought to bear on involving citizens then making these profound changes with utmost priority. Without mitigation efforts led by Wales and the UK, and especially without resilience/adaptation responses within Wales, all other policy areas will be severely impacted as the effects of the climate crises bites. Climate changes everything, and demands unprecedented scale of action.**
- Do you have further questions in response?
- **None**
- Is there anything additional that you would like the Committee to know at this stage, either in response to this document or as an update to the Committee?
- **Please continue to involve XR Cymru/XR Cardiff with further development of citizen's assembly processes, by the contacts already established.**

P-05-869 Declare a Climate Emergency and fit all policies with zero-carbon targets, Correspondence – Extinction Rebellion Cymru to Chair, 25.09.19

Extinction Rebellion Cymru : e-petition to declare a climate emergency – final response to Lesley Griffiths Letter 12th August 2019

Extinction Rebellion's 3rd demand is to establish a national Citizens Assembly to tackle the Climate and Biodiversity Crisis. Here in Wales, Extinction Rebellion Cymru are calling for a Welsh Citizens Assembly. Lesley Griffiths in her letter, mentions Citizens Assemblies noting they :

- 'make a valuable contribution'
- 'are most effective when established cross-party'
- and the First Minister has recently 'committed political support to XR's idea of a Citizens Assembly'

We would suggest there is already cross-party support for the idea of a national Citizens Assembly in Wales and would like to see a debate in full Chamber that commits time-scale and funding.

The Welsh Assembly Commission already has in place the necessary mechanisms - they ran a Citizens Assembly in Newtown July 2019 answering the question: How can people in Wales shape their future through the work of the National Assembly.

Lesley Griffiths notes that the First Minister has invited Extinction Rebellion Cymru to attend the Climate Decarbonisation Conference on 16th October – we will be delighted to be there.

Extinction Rebellion's first demand is for the government to tell the truth about the Climate and Ecological Crisis. XR Cymru met with Lesley Griffiths last week and the Welsh Government has agreed to a mass communication to the public about the climate crisis. We are delighted to participate in the process of designing an ambitious Communication Strategy to Tell the Truth! We will submit our recommendations no later than the end of October 2019.

Lesley Griffiths' letter states that a Cabinet Sub-committee has been established in response to declaring a Climate Emergency. We are pleased to see cabinet-level co-ordination of the government's response to the Crisis is being established but would want to know more regarding this committee's membership, mandate and schedule. How can we access the committee's minutes online? We have asked for this information from Lesley's office but at the time of submitting this document, we had not received a reply.

Lesley Griffiths talks of the Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales Report and the government's achievements since declaring a Climate Emergency April 2019. Extinction Rebellion Cymru are pleased to note the government's commitment to taking action towards decarbonising Wales but many of us are concerned that the measures do not go far or fast enough. Other organisations in Wales are better placed to express exactly where and how the government should scale up their ambition to decarbonize. Extinction Rebellion Cymru will continue to demand a Citizens' Assembly to guide the specifics around decarbonisation and will be hosting a Citizens' Assembly workshop at the Climate Decarbonisation Conference in October.

Since February when our e-petition was launched, the Climate and Ecological Crisis has risen up the political and public agenda. Extinction Rebellion Cymru feel that the e-petition has played a part in this and would like to thank all members of the Petitions Committee for their contribution in making this happen.

Louise Gray

Extinction Rebellion Cymru and Cardiff

Agenda Item 3.3

P-05-891 National Reading and Numeracy Tests for children from as young as age 6 need to be discontinued with immediate effect

This petition was submitted by Tanya Beer having collected a total of 256 signatures.

Text of Petition

National Numeracy and Reading Tests for children as young as 6 are not fit for purpose and should be discontinued as soon as possible. Young children who have been encouraged to learn through play are not best assessed through sitting for up to 40 minutes to complete a test.

Although Welsh Government recommends that no preparation is required, schools inevitably take time out of normal learning to familiarise children with the format of the tests and frequently children struggle to understand what is expected of them. This results in loss of confidence and enjoyment of learning at such a young age which could be detrimental to their ongoing learning.

The Donaldson Review (Successful Futures, 2015) recommended that any assessments should be 'as light-touch as possible', 'avoid unnecessary bureaucracy', include 'holistic assessments of achievement' and use 'both self-assessment and peer assessment' to 'encourage children and young people to take greater responsibility for their own learning'. Four years have passed since this review and still these tests are ongoing, as a result the current format of structured assessment needs to be discontinued with immediate effect.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Torfaen
- South Wales East

P-05-891 National Reading and Numeracy Tests for children from as young as age 6 need to be discontinued with immediate effect, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 29.07.19

I would like to thank the minister for taking the time to comment and offer her assurances. I would welcome the move away from formal written exams towards more flexible assessments as this is likely to reduce the pressure on pupils and teachers.

The minister stressed that schools should not be setting national test-related homework or working on multiple past papers but unfortunately this is an inevitable consequence of formal testing. The tests differ from the way in which the pupils have been taught, particularly in the lower key stages, so it is necessary to familiarise the pupils with the exam question styles. This inevitably results in the pupils being taken away from their ordinary learning in line with the curriculum.

Formal exam based testing as a snapshot of a very young child's ability adds very little to the parents' or teachers' perception of an individual child's ability. As a result, despite the changes to the national tests, the benefits of the tests are unlikely to outweigh the risks of harm from the stress and time spent deviating from the curriculum.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Tanya Beer

Agenda Item 4

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

This petition was submitted by Linda Scott having collected a total of 1,275 signatures online and 134 on paper, a total of 1,409 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Government to withdraw its support for the "Red Route" (A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor Improvement) on the grounds that:

- 1) The construction of the new road through ancient woodland, and across agricultural land, contradicts Planning Policy Wales and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- 2) The recently published plans for a new A494 Dee Bridge, widening of the A494 and other improvements will deliver the Deeside traffic improvements without the need for the 'Red Route'.
- 3) The costs used to justify the choice of the "Red Route" failed to account for necessary upgrade of the Flintshire Bridge. It also does not include the addition of crawler lane at a major congestion point on the A55, the hill out of Northop towards Holywell. Congestion at these points will be made worse by the construction of the Red Route. The underestimate of the costs used imply that the proposed road cannot be considered value for money. Furthermore, the costs do not include the proposed A494 improvements (outlined in 2).
- 4) The choice of the Red Route was based on unrepresentative traffic surveys.
- 5) In considering the Red Route the Welsh Government failed to adequately consult residents of the Flint and Northop areas despite the major potential impact on their communities. Despite costing over a quarter of a billion pounds, the new road would be likely to lead to more traffic congestion in these communities.

6) The International Panel on Climate Change has called for urgent action to reduce CO2 emissions, saying we have only 12 years left to save the world's climate. We need to be investing our limited resources in sustainable transport like rail.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Delyn
- North Wales

Document is Restricted

P-05-886 Stop the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor), Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 25.09.19

Despite being a small family farm we have, over the last 40 years, implemented a plan to conserve and create wild life habitats. We converted to an organic system 20 years ago and are now very close to being carbon neutral - all of this supported by the WAG.

How ironic that the Welsh Government should be pursuing a plan formulated almost 10 years ago to destroy this environment despite recognising, at last, that we have in the words of Lesley Griffiths a "Climate Crisis", not to mention the now proven and accepted fact that new roads do not solve the problem.

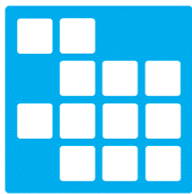
Shelving this project now whilst the much hailed improvement in public transport and work on the existing A494/A55 are completed, would provide the WAG with the opportunity to demonstrate they really are concerned for the wellbeing of our future generations.

Ken Skates refused to visit the site prior to choosing his preferred route. Perhaps one or more members might redress the balance by seeing for themselves why we are so concerned and what we are so concerned about.

Yours faithfully,

R.J.S. Hodgkinson

P-05-886 Stop the Red Route (A55/A494 corridor), Correspondence – North Wales Economic Ambition Board to Committee, 09.09.19



north wales economic ambition board
bwrdd uchelgais economaidd gogledd cymru

North Wales Economic Ambition Board Response to National Assembly for Wales Petitions Committee Inquiry – Deeside Corridor Improvement

Introduction

The North Wales Economic Ambition Board is a cross sector partnership comprising representatives from the North Wales Local Authorities, Business, Higher and Further education and the Third Sector. Our collective aim is to support sustained economic growth in the region through better joint working.

The importance of transport connectivity in North Wales has long been recognised as a significant priority for the region. One of the key early projects delivered by the NWEAB was a Regional Infrastructure Plan, intended to support achieving a high-level economic growth strategy for the region. The importance of identifying solutions to the current levels of congestion and lack of resilience on the A494 / A55 corridor was high in the list of identified strategic priorities.

The North Wales Economic Ambition Board has recognised there is an urgent need for the existing A55 / A494 and the Deeside road network to be improved in order to sustain current and future levels of economic growth in North Wales.

The Strategic Infrastructure Plan highlights the following.

North Wales has a dispersed population, which apart from Wrexham and Deeside, make it harder for the region overall to develop hubs of economic activity with any scale. The region is also peripheral to the large economic centres on the English side of the border so excellent infrastructure and connectivity can contribute to economic growth by attracting inward investment and enabling residents to access higher quality jobs over a wider radius.

Transport improvements can promote economic performance by overcoming constraints caused by congestion, long travel times, and disproportionate commuting costs. Long travel times imply economic costs to a business as time could be used more productively elsewhere and it discourages commuting to higher value jobs. Transport is a unique type of infrastructure that enables enabling people to access jobs and bringing businesses closer together.

The existing road infrastructure on the A55 / A494 is one of the main arterial access points into North Wales and when congested acts as a throttle to the North Wales economy. In addition it is also the main means of access to the Deeside Industrial Zone, a major development area with over 9000 jobs and the potential for many more. The conflict between local access to employment and other services and also long distance traffic crossing from North Wales to North West England is a significant cause of congestion on this route. This is especially the case at peak times when high levels of tourist traffic are also entering or leaving North Wales. Without improvement, high levels of congestion on this route will impact on the potential for economic growth in the region.

The importance of the A494 / A55 as an arterial access route serving the whole of North Wales, is summarised in the description below.

The A55 is the main expressway through North Wales running from the end of the M53 in the east all the way to Holyhead Port on Anglesey. Its entire length running from Chester to Holyhead is a dual carriageway route and forms part of the TEN-T Road Network.

Junction 34/33b is point at which the A494 converges and then diverges with the A55. The A494 is a primary trunk route running from Dolgellau through part of the Snowdonia National Park to west Cheshire crossing Flintshire.

The A494/A55 between the River Dee and Northop Interchange is a dual 2-lane road. It frequently experiences severe congestion. The road carries significantly more traffic than it was designed for, and falls below modern standards. It is poorly aligned and there is nowhere for broken down vehicles to pull off the road. Some of the junctions have slip roads that are too short or too close to the road, some of which have poor visibility. It is at these junctions that the majority of accidents occur. Resilience along the route is a significant issue for the region.

Between the A55 at Ewloe Interchange and the M56 motorway, the current route through Queensferry is formed by the A494(T), A550(T) and A5117(T). These sections of the highway network suffer congestion and delay at peak weekday and tourism periods due to high traffic volumes, sub-standard junction geometry (e.g. Ewloe Interchange) and limited peak capacity.

Throughout Deeside there are significant pinch points in the road network leading to congestion, particularly through the Deeside Corridor. The proposed Red Route Road Improvement will address the chronic congestion the area suffers. Significant planned development in the Deeside area prior to the implementation of the road improvement is likely to have a detrimental effect on road capacity and resilience on this main gateway into Wales.

Importantly, the need for improvement along the current A494 corridor and the replacement of the current River Dee bridge will be required irrespective of the red route development.

The NWEAB response to the original consultation contained the following statements, all of which remain valid at the current time.

The lack of resilience in the current road network is a significant issue for the North Wales economy.

There are very high levels of cross-border connectivity between North Wales and North West England. There are very significant daily cross-border commuter flows and the cross-border economy functions in an integrated way. Fundamentally business does not recognise the border between England and Wales in this location. The current situation where direct access from the UK motorway network to Wales stops at a series of concrete blocks just after you enter Wales is unacceptable. Work undertaken by the NWEAB in partnership with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership and the Liverpool City Region has highlighted the economic potential of the cross-border region and the prospect of significant employment growth that could accrue from better communication links. The delivery of an improvement scheme for the A55 / A494 better linking North Wales to the UK motorway network and the wider Northern Powerhouse is essential.

Response to Current Inquiry

The NWEAB remains strongly supportive of the proposal to deliver improvements to the A494 and A55 corridor, on the basis that improvements to the current congested network is essential.

The NWEAB supports the Red Route proposals because they: -

- Offer an increase in capacity to the current congested network.
- Offer opportunities for better resilience than other alternative proposals, will cause less disruption during the construction period and impact on fewer existing residents.
- Will significantly improve connectivity from deprived communities across north Wales to the employment opportunities at Deeside Industrial Park.
- Will enable existing businesses on the Deeside Industrial park to have improved access for staff, customers and to markets.
- Having traffic split over two routes will deliver significantly better resilience during periods of disruption than current arrangements and alternative proposals

The NWEAB has also strongly support the development of alternative transport proposals to road-based interventions. It was clear from the consultation proposals that road improvements alone would not resolve the current demand for transport in the area. In particular, one of the significant causes of congestion is when long distance traffic, including port related movements from Ireland, clash with peak holiday travel and local commuter traffic using only short lengths of the strategic road network. We have worked with Welsh Government and Flintshire County Council to support and prioritise local interventions that would provide a viable alternative to car- based commuting.

Multi-mode transport proposals include: -

Planned improvements to rail service frequencies and improved reliability on the Wrexham – Bidston route that links the Deeside area with Wrexham and Liverpool. The introduction of new rolling stock from December 2019 and a doubling of current service frequencies from 2021, supported by improved branding and marketing, will transform current services along this route.

Successfully campaigning for better and more frequent rail services along the north Wales main line, resulting in franchise commitments for better services, in the new Transport for Wales franchise.

Proposals for a new rail station, with associated park and ride and transport hub at Deeside Parkway.

Improvements to Shotton rail station including improved opportunities for interchange between the Bidston route and the North Wales main line.

Delivering improvements to the Deeside Shuttle bus services, including the emerging proposals for low carbon vehicles on the route.

Making significant improvements to active travel networks linking Deeside Industrial Park to communities in Shotton, Queenferry, Connah's Quay and surrounding areas.

Establishing Quality Bus Partnerships on the main bus routes along the coast and between Rhyl and Chester.

Detailed cross border work with partners in Cheshire and Warrington and the Liverpool City Region to better understand and manage cross border transport movements. These solutions will require investment in cross-border integrated ticketing and coordination of passenger transport timetables.

The NWEAB considers that the proposed delivery of the red route improvement scheme, delivered in conjunction with the area wide package of passenger transport and active travel interventions set out above, is the preferred solution.

Summary.

The heavy congestion currently being suffered on the existing A494 / A55 corridor is acting as a throttle on the North Wales economy. The lack of resilience when incidents occur has a significant impact on business throughout the region, but especially in the Deeside area.

The proposal to deliver improvements through the construction of the proposed red route will help resolve congestion in the immediate area. The proposed route will improve access to employment opportunities in Deeside for the whole of North Wales. The comprehensive package of wider transport improvements will provide opportunities to increase the use of alternatives to private car access in the local area.

The red route scheme will be a catalyst for improvements to passenger transport routes and services and active travel solutions will improve opportunities for local access to major employment sites.

The requirement for on-line improvements along the A404 / A55 will remain. The poor condition of much of the strategic infrastructure will be a significant issue in the future unless resolved. The nature of the work required will be highly problematic unless alternative road capacity is available.

Both proposed improvement packages are necessary to respond effectively to the current congestion in the Deeside corridor.

The NWEAB supports the package of improvements, including the proposals to construct the red route. It is however essential that wider improvements to passenger and active travel are also delivered as part of a comprehensive package of connectivity improvements.

September 2019