

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – The Senedd

Meeting date: 19 June 2018

Meeting time: 09.00

For further information contact:

Graeme Francis – Committee Clerk

Kath Thomas – Deputy Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

- 1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest**
(Pages 1 – 26)

- 2 New petitions**
 - 2.1 P-05-817 Specialist prosthetics for child amputees
(Pages 27 – 35)
 - 2.2 P-05-819 Welsh Place Names – Protection & Promotion Bill
(Pages 36 – 41)
 - 2.3 P-05-820 Don't take Neath off the main railway-line
(Pages 42 – 55)

- 3 Updates to previous petitions**

Leader of the House

- 3.1 P-05-793 Hi speed broadband to Llangenny village
(Pages 56 – 59)

Housing

- 3.2 P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission
(Pages 60 – 63)

Education



The following two items are grouped together for consideration

- 3.3 P-05-757 Remove the Obligation on Schools to Hold Acts of Religious Worship
(Pages 64 – 66)
- 3.4 P-05-765 Keeping Current Guidelines for Religious Assemblies
(Page 67)
- 3.5 P-05-802 Protecting Class Sizes in Design and Technology Classrooms and Workshops
(Pages 68 – 69)

Environment

- 3.6 P-05-753 Strengthening the Legislative and Regulatory Framework Surrounding Waste Wood Processing Facilities
(Pages 70 – 76)
- 3.7 P-05-777 Application of the Automatic Fire Suppression Systems Legislation within the current Building Regulations for Wales.
(Pages 77 – 80)

Local Government

- 3.8 P-05-800 Urgent Appeal for a Welsh Veterans Commissioner for the Health & Wellbeing of Wounded, Injured, Sick and Homeless veterans
(Pages 81 – 82)

Economy and Transport

- 3.9 P-05-782 Build a Chepstow Bypass to Remove the Bottle Neck from the M48 onto the A48
(Page 83)

4 Paper to note

4.1 P-05-785 Suspend Marine Licence 12/45/ML to dump radioactive marine sediments from the Hinkley Point nuclear site into Wales coastal waters off Cardiff

(Pages 84 – 85)

5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public for items 6 and 8 of today's business:

6 Draft report – P-04-682 Routine Screening for Type 1 Diabetes in Children and Young People

(Pages 86 – 115)

Meeting returns to public session

7 Evidence session – P-05-771 Reconsider the closure of the Welsh Independent Living Grant and support disabled people to live independently

(10.15 – 10.45)

(Pages 116 – 124)

Huw Irranca-Davies, Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care

Gareth Griffiths, Head of Paying for Care, Welsh Government

Meeting returns to private session

8 Discussion of Previous Evidence Session – P-05-771 Reconsider the closure of the Welsh Independent Living Grant and support disabled people to live independently

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 2.1

P-05-817 Specialist prosthetics for child amputees

This petition was submitted by Rebecca Roberts having collected 116 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that funding is in place to enable each child amputee in Wales to have access to a specialist sports prosthetic.

We welcome the news that Westminster have made a further £1.5 million available to develop specialist prosthetics for young amputees in England. We ask that the same level of support be made available to children and young people living in Wales, so that any child or young person who would benefit from having a specialist sports prosthetic is able to have one made by the NHS.

Additional information

Petitioner's story

My daughter was born with a rare condition called Fibular Hemimelia, meaning a total absence of fibular bones. She has the rarer version of it, which affects both legs. A few days after her first birthday she underwent a double amputation at Alder Hey hospital. A few months later she attended the Limb Centre at Wrexham Maelor to fit her first pair of prosthetic legs.

We have never had anything other than excellent and skilled service from the staff at the Centre; but her prosthetic legs are by necessity, heavy and rigid. She can walk, but slowly. She can climb, but with difficulty. She has never known what it is to run as fast as she can, to be able to ride a bike, or to keep up with her cousins as they race around the park. She has overcome so many challenges in her short life, but she faces many more.

As a parent my wish is that she can be the best version of herself; that she can play without struggling to keep pace with her peers and that she can participate fully in all aspects of life.

Soon she will be old enough for specialist prosthetics. If they were available

to her on the NHS it would make a world of difference to her as she goes about her daily life.

I know other child amputees in Wales are facing similar struggles, and I believe that our children are as deserving of the specialist support as English children. Westminster has just released an additional £1.5 million funding to help English amputees. The number of child amputees in Wales is much smaller than in England, but their needs are the same. We're not asking for millions, just for equality.

My daughter will spend her entire life wearing prosthetic legs. Specialist support could make a huge difference to her as she grows up. Please don't deny her and other Welsh amputees the support offered to English children.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Vale of Clwyd
- North Wales

Briefing for the Petitions Committee

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 19 June 2018
Petitions Committee | 13 Mehefin 2018

Petition number: P-05-817

Petition title: Specialist prosthetics for child amputees

Text of petition: We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that funding is in place to enable each child amputee in Wales to have access to a specialist sports prosthetic.

We welcome the news that Westminster have made a further £1.5 million available to develop specialist prosthetics for young amputees in England.

We ask that the same level of support be made available to children and young people living in Wales, so that any child or young person who would benefit from having a specialist sports prosthetic is able to have one made by the NHS.

Background

In the March 2016 Budget, the UK Government made a commitment for a £1.5 million investment into child prosthetics. The funding from the [Department of Health](#) was to be rolled out over 2016/17 and 2017/18, and has since been [extended](#) for another two years.

The fund for children across England who have either been born without a limb or who have lost a limb, is being used to pay for specialised sports prostheses from the NHS to help children run, swim or play sport.

This fund, known as the children's activity prosthetic fund is split between funding for NHS limb centres across England to fund requests for prosthetics and investment in a Child Prosthetics Research Collaboration (funded through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)), bringing the latest technology into the NHS.

The fund has been [widely welcomed](#) as a positive step in supporting children to participate in sport, and to participate fully in school PE and community activities. The eligibility criteria and funding application for children's sports prostheses in England can be found [here](#).

Funding for specialist prosthetics for child amputees in Wales

There is no dedicated funding for children's sports and activity prostheses on the Welsh NHS. In Wales, NHS Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation Services are delivered in-house by three specialist Artificial Limb and Appliance Centres (ALAC) located in Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham. The service is centrally commissioned by the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) on behalf of the seven Local Health Boards in Wales.

WHSSC's Specialist Service Policy, '[Specialised Services Service Specification: CP89 Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation Services](#)' states:

Provision of a Recreational Upper Limb for a Child Definition

A prosthetic solution that is provided to meet a specific need of the developing child. Examples could be a prosthesis specially manufactured to enable a child to ride a cycle safely etc

Criteria for provision

- To facilitate the child's participation in school activities
- To support the child's clinical & psychological development

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau
Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref VG/01322/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

8 May 2018

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 18 April regarding Petition P05 – 817 seeking specialist prosthetics for child amputees.

In Wales, NHS Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation services are delivered in-house by three specialist Artificial Limb and Appliance Centres (ALAC) located in Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham. The service is centrally commissioned by the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) on behalf of the seven Local Health Boards in Wales.

The three Welsh services are able to provide the full range of advice and prosthetic rehabilitation for all levels of upper and lower limb loss across all age groups. Patients are treated on an individual basis and assessed according to their clinical need and provided with lifelong clinical care. The provision of specialist sports prostheses for children is a matter for the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee. The specialist service policy can be found at:

<http://www.whssc.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1119/cp89%20prosthetic%20and%20amputee%20rehab%20services%20service%20spec.pdf>

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

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.

Dear Mr Rowlands,

I thank you for the copy of Mr Gething's letter dated May 8th. I read the WHSSC documents with interest, hoping that when the Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation Service Specification CP89 stated that '...The Service should have... Separate paediatric facilities and be responsive to the special needs of children with limb deficiency, limb loss, and limb deformity' this would include automatic provision of specialist limbs for children and young people.

Yet the document goes on to list exceptions to standard prosthetic limb provision. Currently, specialist limbs/digits are provided under the following categories:

- War veterans
- Provision of a Water Activity Limb for an Adult
- Provision of a Recreational Upper Limb for a Child
- Provision of a Custom Made Silicon
- Provision of a Myo-electric Upper Limb Prosthesis

It is notable that no mention is made of specialist lower limb or sports or recreational prosthetics for either adults or children. No reason is given for this omission. The same document states that anyone wishing for an additional prosthetic limb must make an IPFR request:

It should be noted that Centres do not normally supply additional recreational limbs, and any requests for recreational limbs excluded from CP89 Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation Services Version: 1.0 Page 15 of 17 the list above should be treated on an individual patient basis, and a request for funding would need to be made based on exceptional circumstances

(CP89, Page 14/17)

If the client's needs cannot be managed within the agreed range of equipment, and the prosthetic and amputee clinical team believe that there are exceptional grounds for providing equipment outside of range, then an Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR) can be made to WHSSC...

(CP89, Page 15/17)

Mr Gething's letter does not mention whether any IPFRs are made on behalf of young amputees were successful or not. One would hope that they are, however this extract taken from the IPFR patient leaflet does not fill me with hope:

When considering applications the panel will only consider the clinical evidence provided. They will not consider any non-clinical circumstances. For example, factors such as a patient's ability to work or study, care for dependents, or meet financial commitments can't be considered as part of the IPFR process.

Child amputees can 'manage' on ordinary prosthetics, and arguably any 'recreational limbs' would not be essential to their day to day living; nor would a child's ability to work, study and play necessarily be considered under the IPFR assessment criteria.

However my petition is not about 'managing needs', but rather about enhancing lives; about helping children suffering from limb loss to live the most active and fulfilling lives they possibly can. Being able to keep pace with their peers and participate fully in physical activities will have a lasting and positive effect on young amputees, mentally, physically and socially. My daughter already deals with a myriad of problems other children her age do not have to face – fitting problems, gait re-learning, heat rashes, pressure sores and pain management. Although the care we receive at Wrexham is

excellent, these problems are part and parcel of being an amputee. Even before you consider the psychological effects of being disabled and 'different', these problems are a burden she will continue to shoulder for the rest of her life. Childhood is a time when life should be at its most exciting and care free. Putting aside clinical aspects; if specialist prosthetics can greatly improve a child's quality of life and mental wellbeing, then they should be offered without the need for an IPFR.

It is my firm belief that if children can be provided with a recreational upper limb as an exception to the usual provision, then the same must also apply to recreational lower limbs. I hope the WHSSC will concur and make both upper and lower specialist prosthetic limbs available to all young amputees, without the need to submit an IPFR. If this petition is successful then the next time the Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation Service Specification is reviewed, point 4.4.2 will read: Provision of a Recreational ~~Upper~~ Limb for a Child.

Yours Sincerely,

Rebecca Roberts

Agenda Item 2.2

P-05-819 Welsh Place Names – Protection & Promotion Bill

This petition was submitted by Dr Dafydd Williams having collected 431 signatures.

Text of Petition

The Welsh language is one of the main distinguishing features of Wales, and our history and culture is intimately linked with one of the oldest languages in Europe.

Increasingly historic Welsh place names and house names are being replaced by English names. This kills the local culture and one of the elements which makes Wales unique. These old Welsh names are often very descriptive, and connect with the history of a place.

Maintaining our cultural identity and heritage is important to non-Welsh speakers and Welsh speakers alike.

Additional information

Old Welsh place names/building names should be protected by law; and new developments should have a mandatory Welsh name in order to preserve our unique culture and language. This would be appreciated by Welsh speakers and those who are learning or don't speak the language alike. It would also aid with the fostering of our unique trademark to the world – something which tourists love to see.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Arfon
- North Wales

P-05-819 Historic Welsh Place Names

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 19 Mehefin 2018

Petitions Committee | 19 June 2018

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-819

Petition title: Historic Welsh Place Names

Text of petition: The Welsh language is one of the main distinguishing features of Wales, and our history and culture is intimately linked with one of the oldest languages in Europe.

Increasingly historic Welsh place names and house names are being replaced by English names. This kills the local culture and one of the elements which makes Wales unique. These old Welsh names are often very descriptive, and connect with the history of a place.

Maintaining our cultural identity and heritage is important to non-Welsh speakers and Welsh speakers alike.

Additional information: Old Welsh place names/building names should be protected by law; and new developments should have a mandatory Welsh name in order to preserve our unique culture and language. This would be appreciated by Welsh speakers and those who are learning or don't speak the language alike. It would also aid with the fostering of our unique trademark to the world – something which tourists love to see.

Background

In the Fourth Assembly, the idea of using the heritage protection system (which includes consent schemes for changes to listed buildings and scheduled monuments) to protect historic place names was discussed during the scrutiny of the *Historic Environment (Wales) Bill* (which became an act in 2016).

During Stage One scrutiny of the Bill, the Community, Equality and Local Government Committee raised this issue with the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Ken Skates AM (who is now Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport) who stated that he was “not convinced that there are any legislative controls that could be regulated to enhance the protection of place names.”

The Deputy Minister believed that the proposal to place Historic Environment Records ('HERs': these are records which store and provide access to systematically organised information about the historic environment and specific historic assets in a given area) on a statutory footing (section 33) would "help to promote the connection and the preservation of information on place names" and "ensure that there is a better gathering of information concerning Welsh place names". He emphasised the need to work with owners to ensure that they "fully appreciated" the historical significance of their assets, and that this was "the best course of action, and the best way of preventing unnecessary changes to place names".

In its subsequent report, the Committee recommended:

We recommend that section 33(2) of the Bill is amended to include a specific reference to historic place-names and that the Deputy Minister brings forward an amendment at Stage 2 to give effect to this.

The Bill was subsequently amended in this manner. The *Historic Environment (Wales) Act* now states that "The Welsh Ministers must compile and maintain a list of historic place names in Wales".

In terms of what this list is meant to contain, the Explanatory Memorandum to the Bill stated:

Historic place names provide invaluable evidence about social, cultural and linguistic history. The names of settlements, houses and farms, fields and natural features provide information about past and present agricultural practices, local industries, changed landscapes and current and former communities. They provide evidence for the development of a rich linguistic heritage — Welsh, English and other languages.

Further information is contained on p.31–33:

<http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/pri-ld10184-em-r/pri-ld10184-em-r-e.pdf>

Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has provided a response detailing its action in this area. It notes that, following the *Historic Environment Wales Act*, the Welsh Government has introduced a statutory list of historic place names. It states:

Statutory guidance requires local and National Park authorities and Natural Resources Wales to take account of the list when their functions involve naming or renaming places. This includes the naming or renaming of streets, properties and other places, either directly or by another party. The intention is that the operation of the list and the statutory guidance together will lead to a reduction in the number of formal changes to historic property names. It will also encourage the use of historic names for new developments.

The Welsh Government is planning to publish good practice guidance on the use of historic place names in 2018.

However, the Welsh Government notes:

...these measures stop short of providing formal protection for historic place names. Detailed consideration was given to providing statutory protection for historic place names during the development of the 2016 Act, when a number of representations similar to the current petition were made. However a number of significant issues, including enforcement, potential additional burdens on local authorities and human rights, militated against it.

National Assembly for Wales action

In January 2017 Dai Lloyd AM won the ballot to propose a Member's bill: [Development of the Protection of Welsh Historical Place Names Bill](#). Dai Lloyd AM provided the following [Explanatory Memorandum](#) prior to the Plenary debate, which was held on the 15 March. The Explanatory Memorandum stated that a range of approaches that could be taken to protect place names, including:

- Ensuring that landowners are aware of the historical significance of place names;
- Introducing a requirement on landowners or public bodies to consult with an identified public body (or identified public bodies) when changing a historical place name;
- Introducing a consent regime when seeking to change a historical place name;
- Introducing a general prohibition on changing a historical place name;
- Requiring landowners or public bodies to use historical place names, when producing publicly accessible information; and
- A combination of the different options above, potentially dependent on the type of name or situation in which a name change may occur.

The Welsh Government did not support the bill, and it did not receive leave to proceed. A transcript of the Plenary debate can be read [here](#).

As part of its recent inquiry into the [Historic Environment](#), the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee considered the List of Historic Place Names of Wales. It stated that the Welsh Government should keep the matter under "active review and should be willing to introduce further protection for historic place names if the current list does not prove effective".

The Welsh Government's briefing for this petition states:

We have already made a commitment to review the effectiveness of the List of Historic Place Names of Wales and the associated non-statutory measures in encouraging the retention of historic place names. My officials at Cadw are liaising with local authority street naming and numbering officers to establish mechanisms for the regular collection of data on the use of the list in the naming and renaming of properties in accordance with the statutory guidance. It is expected that it will take a least four or five years to collect sufficient evidence to evaluate the impact of these measures.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref: P-05-819
Ein cyf/Our ref: DET/00323/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair — Petitions Committee.
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA
SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

22 May 2018

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 24 April seeking my views on the issues raised by the petition of Dr Dafydd Williams on historic Welsh place names.

Wales' historic place names are integral elements of our communities and countryside and provide precious evidence about linguistic, social and cultural changes that have shaped our nation. The widespread recognition of the importance of this rich legacy was reflected in the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which gave Wales the first statutory list of historic place names in the United Kingdom.

The Welsh Ministers entrusted the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales with the responsibility for creating and maintaining the List of Historic Place Names of Wales (<https://historicplacenames.rcahmw.gov.uk/>). It was launched in May 2017 and is freely available online, through the Welsh historic environment records and as a dataset for local authorities and other public bodies.

The list already contains 350,000 entries and includes the names of topographical features, communities, roads, structures, fields and any other elements of the Welsh landscape that can be identified and mapped in sources that predate the First World War. The list offers map and text searches and records variant forms of names, illustrating the fascinating interplay between linguistic and social changes in Wales over time. It will continue to grow as new sources are added and research identifies further names.

The Royal Commission employs a full-time curator to enhance the list, deal with enquiries and raise awareness of the importance of our historic place names. By educating private

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@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.

individuals and public decision makers about the value of these crucial elements of the historic environment, the list will help to safeguard historic place names for the future by encouraging their continued use in daily life.

Statutory guidance requires local and National Park authorities and Natural Resources Wales to take account of the list when their functions involve naming or renaming places. This includes the naming or renaming of streets, properties and other places, either directly or by another party. The intention is that the operation of the list and the statutory guidance together will lead to a reduction in the number of formal changes to historic property names. It will also encourage the use of historic names for new developments. The curator of the list has already assisted a local authority in finding suitable historic Welsh names for a new housing development and is in the process of contacting major developers to make them aware that he can help them to use the list and other sources to identify appropriate historic names.


During 2018, further best-practice guidance on historic place names in Wales will be developed. This will highlight the importance of place names in the cultural, social and linguistic history of our nation and provide further guidance for owners, developers and local authorities on what the list of historic place names has to offer and how it can be used effectively.

However, these measures stop short of providing formal protection for historic place names. Detailed consideration was given to providing statutory protection for historic place names during the development of the 2016 Act, when a number of representations similar to the current petition were made. However a number of significant issues, including enforcement, potential additional burdens on local authorities and human rights, militated against it.

In closing, I should note that as part of its recent inquiry into the historic environment, the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee considered the List of Historic Place Names of Wales. It stated that the Welsh Government should keep the matter under 'active review and should be willing to introduce further protection for historic place names if the current list does not prove effective'.

We have already made a commitment to review the effectiveness of the List of Historic Place Names of Wales and the associated non-statutory measures in encouraging the retention of historic place names. My officials at Cadw are liaising with local authority street naming and numbering officers to establish mechanisms for the regular collection of data on the use of the list in the naming and renaming of properties in accordance with the statutory guidance. It is expected that it will take a least four or five years to collect sufficient evidence to evaluate the impact of these measures.

Yours sincerely



Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Diwylliant, Twristiaeth a Chwaraeon
Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport

Agenda Item 2.3

P-05-820 Don't take Neath off the main railway-line

This petition was submitted by Bethan Phillips having collected 10,472 signatures.

Text of Petition

Dear Government Minister(s),

I draw your attention to the recent news that suggests that Neath will be taken off the main railway line from Swansea to London Paddington.

I am not in favour of this decision because I believe that taking Neath off the main line would have a detrimental effect to the economy and re-generation of our town. The station is already run-down and a hub for anti-social behaviour. Taking Neath off the main line would only worsen these problems.

It would also have a negative impact on those who commute on the main-line to work, meaning they would have to take an extra connection to Swansea, Baglan or Port Talbot first.

Recent figures via research conducted by Plaid Cymru Councillor for Neath South Jamie Evans has found that:

Around 830,000 passengers used Neath train station a year, making it the second busiest station, behind Swansea in the historic county of West Glamorgan and busiest of the five stations in Neath Port Talbot.

The plans to remove Neath from the main line would mean commuters travelling to Cardiff from Neath would have to first catch a train to Swansea, Baglan or Port Talbot, meaning an increase in both cost and time taken to get to and from work.

People from Neath, Pontardawe, Skewen, Glynneath and the Dulais Valley would see no benefit at all from the "10 minutes" saved on a journey between Swansea and Cardiff.

I would gratefully ask you to re-consider this decision.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Neath
- South Wales West

Petition: Don't take Neath off the main railway line.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 19 Mehefin 2018

Petitions Committee | 19 June 2018

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-820

Petition title: Don't take Neath off the main railway line.

Text of petition:

Dear Government Minister(s), I draw your attention to the recent news that suggests that Neath will be taken off the main railway line from Swansea to London Paddington. I am not in favour of this decision because I believe that taking Neath off the main line would have a detrimental effect to the economy and re-generation of our town. The station is already run-down and a hub for anti-social behaviour. Taking Neath off the main line would only worsen these problems. It would also have a negative impact on those who commute on the main-line to work, meaning they would have to take an extra connection to Swansea, Baglan or Port Talbot first. Recent figures via research conducted by Plaid Cymru Councillor for Neath South Jamie Evans has found that: Around 830,000 passengers used Neath train station a year, making it the second busiest station, behind Swansea in the historic county of West Glamorgan and busiest of the five stations in Neath Port Talbot. The plans to remove Neath from the main line would mean commuters travelling to Cardiff from Neath would have to first catch a train to Swansea, Baglan or Port Talbot, meaning an increase in both cost and time taken to get to and from work. People from Neath, Pontardawe, Skewen, Glynneath and the Dulais Valley would see no benefit at all from the "10 minutes" saved on a journey between Swansea and Cardiff. I would gratefully ask you to re-consider this decision.

Background

The funding and operation of rail services and infrastructure in Wales is a complex picture. While control over the franchising of rail services in Wales has recently been devolved by the *Welsh Ministers (Transfer of Functions) (Railways) Order 2018*, control over rail infrastructure currently still sits with the UK Government.

Rail services

Passenger rail services in the UK are operated through franchise agreements, with the current agreement for the Wales and Borders Franchise coming to an end in October 2018. The [order devolving franchising powers](#) was made in May 2018 and the Welsh Government [awarded the next rail franchise to KeolisAmey on 23 May 2018](#), with further details of the contract provided to [Plenary on 4 June 2018](#).

Rail infrastructure

In contrast to rail services, responsibility for rail infrastructure still sits with the UK Government. Unlike Scotland, rail infrastructure funding in Wales is a reserved matter and while the Welsh Ministers have powers to invest in infrastructure, Wales receives no Block Grant allocation for this.

Rail industry planning in Britain takes place in five year control periods. Before each period starts the Secretary of State for Transport publishes two statutory statements for England and Wales: a High Level Output Specification (HLOS) which sets out what the UK Government expects the rail industry to deliver within the 5 year control period; and a Statement of Funds Available (SOFA).

On 20 July 2017 the Secretary of State published the [HLOS](#) for the next control period (2019–2024). Unlike the HLOS's for previous control periods, the statement focused on the operation, maintenance and renewal of existing railways but did not commit to any major new projects. This is because the way rail enhancement projects are planned by the UK Government is changing to a new '[pipeline approach](#)'.

At the same time as the HLOS was published, it emerged through media reports that the Secretary of State had decided to [cancel Great Western Mainline electrification between Cardiff and Swansea](#).

The Secretary of State also issued a [press release](#) outlining areas where he had asked Network Rail to develop enhancement options for Welsh rail. This included “improving journey times and connections between Swansea and Cardiff, and South Wales, Bristol and London”, as well as “station improvements in and around Swansea including looking at the case for additional provision.”

Rail infrastructure options for Swansea Bay region

In response to the cancellation of electrification between Cardiff and Swansea, and to the Secretary of State's announcement, the Welsh Government is developing its own rail infrastructure proposals for North and South Wales to put forward to the UK Government.

When making [a statement in Plenary on 8 May 2018](#) on the Welsh Government's "Ambitions for the Great Western and North Wales Main Lines" the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport, Ken Skates, stated:

We rely on the UK Government to provide funding for enhancements to rail networks in Wales, but we cannot stand in the margins complaining; we need to set out our expectations for the network and be clear about the anticipated social and economic benefits.

The Cabinet Secretary stated that he has asked Professor Mark Barry to work with Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to develop two proposals, one case for North Wales and another for South Wales. The Cabinet Secretary went on to say:

This work will inform the individual scheme strategic outline business cases currently being developed by Transport Wales and the Department for Transport, and the purpose of these programme business cases is to establish the need for investment and to articulate high-level outcomes.

Professor Barry was previously responsible for developing the [South Wales Metro Impact Study](#) (PDF,9.2MB) and joined the Welsh Government to work on the project's development before moving to Cardiff University.

Professor Barry's proposals for South Wales involve creating a similar metro scheme in the Swansea Bay region. [Media coverage](#) has indicated that one of the options being considered by Professor Barry includes routing the main line from Port Talbot straight to Swansea and therefore removing Neath from the main line. Professor Barry suggests this would achieve the aim of reducing journey times between Swansea and Cardiff without the need for electrification.

Reports in the media show that there has been a mostly negative [response to the proposal from the public in Neath](#) and the Leader of Neath Port Talbot Council has publically stated that [the local authority would not support any proposal to remove the station from the main line](#).

Welsh Government Action and National Assembly for Wales Action

The Welsh Government's position on this was raised in [Plenary on 8 May 2018](#). The Cabinet Secretary was asked about the issue when making a statement on "Ambitions for the Great Western and North Wales Main Lines". Adam Price AM asked the Cabinet Secretary to:

say clearly whether or not you are ruling out any proposal that would remove Neath from the Great Western main line? Your Counsel General said that he would not support any proposal that included this. He is ruling this idea out. Can you say whether you are ruling this out at this stage, given that it was actually Professor Barry's idea?

The Cabinet Secretary responded:

I can confirm that our position is still that we are not looking at any reductions in services into Wales, or any reductions in station accessibility, and we'll be working with the UK Government and with Network Rail to that end. That includes Neath station.

Now, if we look at how you can improve journey times whilst maintaining stations such as Neath on the main line, you can first of all look at station improvements...so, before you even look at the major components of rail infrastructure, you should first look at signalling, points and crossings, in order to improve the speed at which trains can travel. That would reduce journey times ... before any consideration would need to be given to the actual track or stations. So, I can say we're not looking at any reductions. We don't just wish to protect stations and services and the provision of services to stations in Wales; we wish to see them enhanced, and that includes to Neath station."

The Cabinet Secretary's letter to the Chair of the Petitions Committee states that:

There is a long list of options for improving journey times by rail for commuters and long-distance travellers in South Wales and we will be working with stakeholders to identify what these are so we can make the best possible case to the UK Government for funding these much-needed improvements.

The Cabinet Secretary's letter makes clear that the proposal to remove Neath station from the main line is just one of Professor Barry's suggestions and that this particular proposal is "not supported by the Welsh Government." The letter goes on to highlight that the Welsh Government:

appreciate the importance of well-serviced rail stations to their communities and have been very clear in our position on Neath station, and indeed, many other stations in the area. We believe these stations shouldn't just be protected but enhanced.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref Petition P-05-820
Ein cyf/Our ref KS/01381/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.

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

01 June 2018

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 9 May regarding Petition P-05-820 Don't take Neath off the main railway-line.

Rail infrastructure is reserved to the UK Government.

I believe the concerns raised in the petition are as a direct result of an earlier non-government proposal by Professor Mark Barry that could have taken Neath station off the main line to London. This proposal is not supported by the Welsh Government. We appreciate the importance of well-serviced rail stations to their communities and have been very clear in our position on Neath station, and indeed, many other stations in the area. We believe these stations shouldn't just be protected but enhanced.

When the Secretary of State announced in July last year that he was cancelling the scheme to electrify the railway between Cardiff and Swansea, he said that he had asked Network Rail to develop options for improving journeys for passengers in Wales. Possible schemes to improve journey times between Bristol and Swansea and to improve station facilities in Swansea were specifically mentioned.

Transport for Wales has commissioned Professor Mark Barry to develop the case for investment in the rail network in South Wales and North Wales through 'Programme Strategic Outline Cases' including individual business cases for station improvements in and around Swansea, and improving journey times and connections between Swansea and Cardiff, and between South Wales, Bristol, and London. It will be important that this work is joined up with the development of the Swansea Bay Metro and we will be looking at any proposals within the metro vision that will deliver improved infrastructure across the entire network.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Ken.Skates@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Ken.Skates@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.

There is a long list of options for improving journey times by rail for commuters and long-distance travellers in south Wales and we will be working with stakeholders to identify what these are so we can make the best possible case to the UK Government for funding these much-needed improvements.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke above the letters.

Ken Skates AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport

P-05-820 Don't take Neath off the main railway-line – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 13.06.18

The people of Neath wish to thank the Committee for considering our Petition. In line with procedure, we would like to express our specific concerns surrounding the proposal.

Our concerns are centred on the following aspects:

1. The proposal to remove Neath from the main railway line was included in a piece of work commissioned by the Welsh Government. The people of Neath would like to thank the impartial Research Services and Petitions Committee for uncovering this information
2. The statements by Minister Ken Skates are welcomed, but we feel that they have been stronger since the petition gained thousands of signatures. Therefore, we are of the belief that the petition deserves to be considered fully in recognition of those who signed
3. Our concerns are based on the fact that this proposal fits into a wider regional plan; that being the Swansea Bay Metro scheme
4. This scheme has been supported by the Labour Leader of Swansea Council, Rob Stewart
5. It is clearly evidenced that Swansea West Labour MP, Geraint Davies is supportive of the plans. These plans “including a rerouting of the Great Western Mainline, which could see train journeys between Cardiff and Swansea of just 30 minutes.”
6. Independent research conducted by Aberafan Cllr Nigel Hunt has further reinforced the position of Geraint Davies MP
7. Geraint Davies MP, as seen in the minutes of the Welsh Affairs Committee in Westminster, asked about the straightening of the line five times. I attach photos of these in the evidence. For your reference, please see question(s) 111, 112, 116, 117 and 119
8. These discussions range from December 2017 to 14th March 2018, signalling that the matter is still very much in contention
9. The straightening of the line was very specifically mentioned in the Welsh Affairs Report of May 15 2018.
10. Neath station is a gateway to the western valleys. This is an area of stunning beauty in need of economic renewal not increasing marginalisation.
11. Since the petition was launched and in spite of the Welsh Minister's statements, the Secretary of State for Wales has agreed to discuss the

- proposal with Professor Barry and the UK Parliament's Welsh Affairs select Committee have asked for the line-straightening to be considered further
12. Professor Barry is a serious transport academic and we certainly do not disrespect him, but have fundamental concerns over the re-routing of the track
 13. Our greatest concern, is that, had residents not raised concerns via the Committee, these discussions may well have continued unchallenged
 14. We the people of Neath and the 10,000 people who signed the Petition, would request that consultation is taken with a matter that is important to the community
 15. Neath is the second busiest station in South West Wales. It is fundamental to our economic development. The station serves the people of Neath in many different ways; from commuters, to concert goers and sports fans. It not only allows people to travel to and from Swansea and Cardiff, but it also allows commuters from outside of Neath to travel to Neath and contribute to our local economy
 16. Residents from Skewen and Cardiff have also noted their concerns about these proposals. The proposal to remove Neath from the mainline will not solely affect the people of Neath, but will also affect people in and around the area who use the line
 17. Commuters travel along the Swansea to Cardiff and Swansea to London Paddington line for work and taking Neath off the mainline would be disruptive to their travels and add time onto their journeys
 18. You can understand, that as long as these discussions are circulating, there is potential for the proposals to come into fruition. As a result, we the people of Neath would request that proper research and consultation is conducted before plans go any further

Yours sincerely,

Bethan Phillips,

On behalf of the activists of the campaign to Keep Neath on Track.

Evidence:

Welsh Affairs Committee, 5th December 2017.

Mark Hopwood: I am happy to pick that up. There has been some work done within Wales and locally, particularly in south Wales, about a Swansea Bay Metro. I know Mr Flynn does not like me talking about history, but it might be useful just to know the railway from Cardiff to Swansea was built to go via Neath because the people in Neath were very keen to have it there, but that does add quite considerable distance and time to the journey. If you were to go as the crow flies from Port Talbot straight into Swansea, with line speed improvements you might be able to reduce the journey time to as close as 30 minutes. That work has been done by a number of interested parties within Wales but, of course, building new railway lines is very, very expensive and brings all sorts of challenges. You asked the question so that is the answer.

Q111 **Geraint Davies:** To pick up on this, would you support the idea of an electrified Swansea Metro that had that realignment along the original Brunel straightened line? Have you any idea what it would cost? I know you said it would cost a lot. Some people are saying this system would cost £1 billion, but I would not know. Do you have any idea?

Mark Hopwood: I do not have an idea of costs. I have been made aware of the project and I have spoken to some of the people in Wales who have done some of the work, but I have not seen detailed costs.

One of the realities with railways is there are always far more ideas to develop than there is money to fund it, but in principle clearly I would welcome anything that improves the journeys for our customers. I know that many of our customers find the journey time to Swansea to take longer than they would like and that slight diversion at the end of the journey clearly does not help. Simply, yes, I would welcome it but equally I recognise that politicians and Government have many priorities for limited funds, so at the end of the day I guess this will have to take its place.

Q112 **Geraint Davies:** You will know that the case against electrification was built upon the idea that there was no marginal journey time saving between Swansea and Cardiff. As part of the package there was straightening of the railway to save half the time, 30 minutes, because we are only saving 15 minutes between London and Cardiff after all. Do you think that would be a powerful argument alongside the City Deal and the extra demand to make the business case for the straightening and electrification to Swansea?

Welsh Affairs Committee, 5th December 2017. Swansea West Labour MP discusses possibility of straightening the line with for the Swansea Metro

23:52
data.parliament.uk 80%

Q168 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** In light of cancellation of electrification, you said about being open about revisiting or looking at different options and working with the Welsh Assembly. I was wondering if you were aware of some work by Professor Mark Barry from Cardiff University about the proposal for a Swansea metro system. Obviously, you have only had a week in post.

Joseph Johnson: I am familiar in very high-level terms with the ideas that the Welsh Government are developing around how they can use the new devolved system. I understand that the Swansea metro system is one idea that is being looked at alongside others.

Q169 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** My colleague Geraint Davies is not here today. He has written to you to ask you to consider that as well. If you could, that would be great.

If you were going to look at a different route, can you talk us through any work that would be involved in changing a route specifically from Cardiff to Swansea? Do we need to change the route from Cardiff to Swansea?

Brian Etheridge: As I understand it, the proposal is that you would reroute the existing Great Western route to come into Swansea docks instead of taking that huge turn north to Neath, then back around south-west into Swansea. On the face of it, that is feasible and could be attractive. From our perspective, we would worry about suddenly having a very fragmented service to Swansea. The downside is if that were the new station in Swansea going back out to stations like Llanelli, it would take even longer, or if you had two stations you would suddenly be disconnected. Potentially, it is something we would look at but, on the face of it, it is difficult to understand the benefits that that would bring.

Q170 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** It is also to look at using the best service as well, and maybe a tram service that would integrate into that to service Neath and then Llanelli and further out.

Brian Etheridge: Indeed. We have been conscious of a number of proposals that would effectively cut out Neath. At the moment, Neath and Swansea are two of the busiest stations there, so obviously it would be something in terms of the overall transport provision that we would be worried about.

Q171 **Tonia Antoniazzi:** Would you be able to support the Welsh Assembly Government in looking at a feasibility study for this to enable it to move forward as soon as possible?

Brian Etheridge: I think it is a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government, but as we have stated before, we are more than ready to assist people to look at the options.

Q172 **Glyn Davies:** Minister, it is a bit unkind to ask you to indulge in any blue-sky thinking. Mind you, it might be the best time to do it when you are starting in the new role. I think the position of the Government is that we see new battery technology and alternative fuels—that probably means hydrogen—being used to power trains in the future. Can you give us any idea of what your thinking is on these technologies? Are there any alternative technologies in mind that you

Welsh Affairs Committee, 16th January 2018.

Geraint Davies MP supporting rail franchise

<https://www.geraintdavies.org.uk/stories/2018/01/14/transport-secretary-chris-grayling-urged-to-back-1bn-swanea-bay-metro>

Leader of Swansea Council supports this:

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/business/swansea-chief-executive-admits-council-13718291>

Welsh Affairs Committee report May 15 2018;

54. In light of recent developments, including the cancellation of electrification and the devolution of some responsibilities to the Welsh Government, we recommend that the UK Government, Network Rail and the Welsh Government commit to developing a revised route study for Wales over the next 12 months. This revised study should examine all options for improving the South Wales railway. Before committing to any proposals, it will be important to ensure that they are cost effective, offer good value for the public purse and draw on lessons learned from the Great Western Programme.

55. If the track between Cardiff and Swansea were to be straightened to enable trains to run at increased speeds, the case for electrification of this route could be strengthened. We encourage the UK and Welsh Governments to work with Network Rail to explore the viability of this option. The outcome of this work can then inform the route study process.

56. We were interested in the proposal by Professor Mark Barry for a Swansea Bay Metro, particularly in light of the increased demand that may result from the Swansea Bay City Deal. This idea is still at an early stage, but merits further exploration. We recommend that the Department for Transport and Network Rail engage with the Welsh Government and establish a working group to explore the options in more detail. This group should report back by the end of 2018. If the group considers the proposal viable, it should then seek to develop a business case for taking the work forward.

Welsh Affairs Committee, 14th March 2018.

[Share this debate](#)

14 March 2018
Volume 637

[Geraint Davies \(Swansea West\) \(Lab/Co-op\)](#)

9. What recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on future investment in the railway network in Wales. [904282]

[The Secretary of State for Wales \(Alun Cairns\)](#)

I hold regular meetings and discussions with the Transport Secretary and his ministerial team to make the case for investment in Wales' railway infrastructure. I am determined to drive forward improvements to Wales' rail connectivity for the benefit of our passengers, commuters and businesses.

[Geraint Davies](#)

I am losing my voice, Mr Speaker. HS2 will cost £56 billion and 20,000 Welsh jobs. For £1 billion, we could build two and a half miles of HS2 or halve the time between Cardiff and Swansea and have an electrified Swansea metro. Why is the Welsh Secretary not objecting to the £1 billion cut from Network Rail to our rail infrastructure and investing in Wales instead?

[Mr Speaker](#)

The hon. Gentleman has done very well, considering he has lost his voice.

14th March 2018, Swansea West Labour MP re-suggests cutting journey down to benefit Swansea Metro

[Alun Cairns](#)

I point out to the hon. Gentleman that HS2 is a UK scheme and provides an opportunity for significant connectivity benefits with north Wales. He refers to the Swansea metro project, which offers interesting opportunities, and I am happy to say that I am meeting Mark Barry, the project's architect, in the coming weeks.

Swansea Councillors supporting proposal:

<https://www.swansealabourcouncillors.org/swansea-labour/swansea-labour-backs-plans-for-swanea-metro/>

Agenda Item 3.1

P-05-793 Hi speed broadband to Llangenny village

This petition was submitted by Llangenny Village residents and was first considered by the Committee in January 2018, having collected 72 signatures.

Text of Petition

We, the residents of Llangenny village in Powys call upon the National Assembly for Wales to ensure that Welsh Government manage their contract for hi speed broadband in Wales with BT in such a way that Llangenny village is connected to hi speed by 31st December 2017.

Additional information

At present residents in our village experience regular loss of service or speeds as low as 0.01Mb/s. Several residents run businesses or voluntary organisations from home and need hi speed broadband. The current service is completely unacceptable.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Brecon and Radnorshire
- Mid and West Wales

P-05-793 Hi speed broadband to Llangenny village - Correspondence from Open Reach to the Chair, 31.05.18

Dear Mr Rowlands,

Thank you for writing.

I refer you to our response of 22/2/18 which stated that the programme is now closed. I'm afraid there are currently no plans to deploy high speed broadband in Llangenny but we suggest our Community Fibre Partnerships programme is considered as a means of the community moving matters forward:
<https://communityfibre.openreach.co.uk/wales>. 500 communities across the UK have taken this route.

Yours Sincerely

Ed

Julie James AC/AM
Arweinydd y Tŷ a'r Prif Chwip
Leader of the House and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-793
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/00588/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.

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

7 June 2018

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 17 May following further consideration of P-05-793 regarding the provision of high speed broadband services to Llangenny village.

The agreement with BT for the delivery of the Superfast Cymru project was to deliver fast-fibre connectivity to 690,000 premises across Wales. BT was not contracted to reach all premises. Similarly, no one area was guaranteed to receive full access to superfast broadband or promised access to connectivity with information regarding roll-out dates scheduled and never definitive. Information regarding connectivity was provided to officials by BT in good faith and correct at the time of issue; information was never intentionally misleading.

There are numerous factors that influence why BT reached some premises but not others, and why forecast delivery dates fluctuated significantly for individual premises. These factors are beyond the control of the Welsh Government and include a range of technical, civil engineering, geographical issues which in turn impact delivery cost or timescale and, ultimately, lead to alternative premises being taken forward to completion.

Preparations for the successor scheme are well advanced with the tender exercise ongoing and expected to conclude in June. I aim to announce the successful bidders before the summer recess with deployment work commencing as swiftly as possible after that.

The successor scheme will be underpinned by £80 million of public funding and will extend the availability of superfast broadband to those premises not covered under either Superfast Cymru or the commercially driven roll-outs of telecommunications companies in the next three years. It will also encourage solutions for those areas suffering the lowest download speeds and in areas with lower 4G mobile data coverage. Further information, including which premises will be included, will be available once a contract is awarded.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

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.

In addition, I am planning to introduce a novel scheme supporting communities not reached by the latest procurement but also where voucher support may not be the answer. This approach will not be firmed up until the current procurement has concluded and I have clarity on where the successful suppliers will reach.

Financial assistance continues to remain available to homes and businesses to secure a superfast broadband connection via the Access Broadband Cymru (ABC) and Ultrafast Connectivity Voucher (UCV) schemes.

The ABC Scheme provides grants to fund (or part-fund) the installation costs of new broadband connections for homes and businesses in Wales (it does not include monthly rental costs). New connections through this scheme must deliver a step change in speed - with at least double current download speeds. The amount of funding received is dependent on the speed of the new connection.

The business focused UCV Scheme is also available for businesses wishing to upgrade an existing connection to an ultrafast service (100+Mbps downstream, 30+Mbps upstream). The scheme provides up to £10,000 to fund (or part-fund) the installation costs of new ultrafast connections but does not include monthly rental costs.

Further information on both schemes can be obtained by calling 0300 025 8887 or emailing broadband@gov.wales.

I understand and appreciate the concerns and frustrations of residents. Please be assured I am continuing to do everything possible to ensure those wishing to secure a superfast broadband connection can do so.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AC/AM

Arweinydd y Tŷ a'r Prif Chwip
Leader of the House and Chief Whip

Agenda Item 3.2

P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission

This petition was submitted by Caerwnon Park Residents Association and was first considered in December 2013.

Petition Text

We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to remove from Legislation the right of Park Owners to demand commission on the private sale of park homes now that they are no longer involved in the selling process.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Brecon and Radnorshire
- Mid and West Wales

STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Changes to the Park Homes Commission Rate

DATE 5 June 2018

BY Rebecca Evans AM, Minister for Housing & Regeneration

Shortly before recess, I published the summary of responses to our consultation on the park homes commission rate and outlined my intention to reduce the maximum rate.

I am pleased to be able to provide Members with further details about the pace and rate of change and of the wider actions I propose to take to support the park homes sector.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the consultation and the financial analysis work – there were almost 400 responses.

I would also like to thank the site owners who shared financial information with our independent financial analysts.

Members will be familiar with many of the arguments on both sides of this debate. I am sure that we all want to ensure viable, well-managed sites continue to offer an attractive lifestyle to people who choose to live in a park home.

The issue of commission rates on the sale of park homes is one where views remain polarised. It has been debated for as long as people have used park homes as a permanent residence. In the 1960s rates were typically around 20%, reducing to their current rate of 10% in the 1980s. Over the last 40 years, the sector has been transformed – park home living today bears little resemblance to park home living in the 1960s.

Establishing a consensus about the way forward has not been possible because views are so polarised. And gathering sufficient evidence on which to base a balanced decision has not been easy.

I have deliberated long and hard and I have challenged my officials and the sector to provide more and better evidence and analysis to ensure we find a balanced and proportionate way forward which best supports park home living.

The evidence we now have supports the view that the value of a park home is a combination of the value of the home plus the pitch on which it is sited. A park home

on its own costs less than one already sited, particularly if located on a well-run, attractive site with good facilities in a sought-after location. The costs to site a home can be significant. This has been a fundamental part of the argument in favour of the commission rate over the years.

It is clear that the current commission rate impacts significantly on people who own a park home. For some, the loss of significant equity from the sale of their homes is becoming a barrier to being able to sell and move on to alternative accommodation or accommodation which is more suitable for them. Commission may also be deterring potential buyers from purchasing a park home as they worry about the implications of losing 10% of its value if they need to sell in the future.

This poses a risk that park home living may become less attractive and cease to offer an alternative lifestyle choice.

The independent financial analysis, carried out for the Welsh Government, shows that commission is an important element of income for site owners, especially for smaller sites.

Any decision about changes to the commission rate must therefore balance the potential benefits and risks to both parties – park homeowners and the site owners.

If a site was to become no longer viable, the owners would need to consider how to change their business model in order to make it sustainable, usually by seeking an increase in pitch fees. The ultimate risk is that unviable sites close, leaving park homeowners without a pitch and having to re-locate their homes. This can be a complex and costly arrangement and homes without a pitch can have a reduced value.

I am committed to ensuring everyone can access suitable, good-quality, secure and affordable homes. Reducing the maximum commission rate will help to remove the financial barriers for residents who either want or need to sell. It will also help to ensure that potential buyers are not put off buying a park home because they are worried about how it will affect them, should they need to sell in the future.

However, I am mindful of the need to avoid placing sites at risk of closure whilst also seeking to protect residents from steep and sudden increases in pitch fees.

It is my intention to reduce the commission rate to a new maximum level of 5%. This will be done by reducing the commission rate by one percentage point each year over a period of five years. The regulations to achieve this will be subject to the scrutiny of this Assembly by the affirmative procedure. I will bring forward regulations at the earliest opportunity in the New Year.

I believe this approach strikes a reasonable balance in protecting the interests of all parties.

Reducing the commission rate gradually will help reduce the risks to the viability of some sites by providing site owners with time to adjust their business models to

reflect this change. I accept that this adjustment may include increases in pitch fees for some.

I have considered carefully the calls from some to use powers in the 2013 Act to restrict any potential increase in pitch fees but have decided against this course of action.

This process has highlighted a range of much wider issues relating to alleged poor practices by some site owners and variations in the implementation of the Mobile Homes (Wales) Act 2013.

I intend to issue refreshed information about park home living, focused on delivering accessible and clear guidance to all parties. Working with the sector, I will develop best practice materials and will look at how we can strengthen the role of LEASE in providing advice.

I will work with local authorities to ensure they adopt consistent approaches to site licensing and enforcement. We have a fantastic example of collaborative working in the private rental sector with Rent Smart Wales as the lead authority. I will explore what we can learn from this model that might benefit the residential park home sector.

Llywydd, we all want to see viable, well-managed sites, which offer an attractive lifestyle choice for those who choose park home living.

I believe a phased reduction in the commission rate, supported by improvements in information, advice and support and consistent standards and adherence to the current legislation can help deliver just that.

Check against delivery

Embargoed until after *MINISTER FOR HOUSING & REGENERATION* has delivered the statement.

Agenda Item 3.3

P-05-757 Remove the Obligation on Schools to Hold Acts of Religious Worship

This petition was submitted by Rhiannon Shipton & Lily McAllister-Sutton and was first considered in June 2017, having collected 1,333 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to pass a law that removes the obligation on Schools to hold acts of religious worship.

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- Cardiff South and Penarth
- South Wales Central

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-757 - P-05-765
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/01317/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

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

25 May 2018

Dear David

Thank you for your email of 17 May in relation to Acts of Religious Worship.

The Welsh Government has considered a range of issues around the rights protected by the Human Rights Act 1998, equalities legislation and the UNCRC. Those issues are complex and for that reason we have taken some time to consider those issues in great detail. We recognise that this process is taking some time. However, it is important that great care is taken to ensure we achieve the correct balance between the competing interests in this area. That process is ongoing but is nearing completion. I regret that until that process is fully complete it would not be appropriate to comment further at this stage.

I cannot give a definitive answer as to when I will be in a position to provide a substantive response to the Committee. However I recognise the importance of this work and it is for that reason my officials are taking the time necessary to get it right.

I hope this letter clarifies the current position and reassures you I am fully considering the issues you have raised.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@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-05-757 Remove the obligation on Schools to hold acts of religious worship –
Correspondence from Petitioners to Chair, 13.06.18**

Dear Mr Rowlands,

We would like to thank you and your fellow committee members for your continued support in seeking clarification from the Cabinet Secretary for Education about her response to our petition.

We are disappointed that it is taking such a long time to find out about Ms Williams' intentions. It is now more than a year since we organised our petition and we find it difficult to understand why things are moving so slowly.

From our point of view, this is a simple matter of human rights, and there should be no room for ambiguity.

In her latest email, Ms Williams refers to the need to "achieve the correct balance between the competing interests in this area". In our view, there should be no compromise over human rights, and the Welsh Government should honour its commitments in this important area.

We would ask you once more to request that Ms Williams reaches an early conclusion in this matter and reveals what she intends to do. It would be unfortunate if this issue remains unresolved until after the summer recess.

Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely,

Rhiannon Shipton and Lily Mcallister-Sutton

Agenda Item 3.4

P-05-765 Keeping Current Guidelines for Religious Assemblies

This petition was submitted by Iraj Irfan and was first considered by the Committee in June 2017, having collected a total of 2,231 signatures – 2,209 signatures online and 22 paper signatures in an alternative petition.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to keep religious assemblies in state schools in Wales as ‘opt-out’ and ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’, while considering ways to ensure that they continue to be relevant to people of different faiths and no faith.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Cardiff West
- South Wales Central

Agenda Item 3.5

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

This petition was submitted by Aled Dafis and was first considered by the Committee in March 2018, having collected 338 signatures.

Text of Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that all schools in Wales fully adopt BS4163:2014 as a requirement as opposed to a recommendation, in order to protect the health and safety of both students, teachers and technicians.

Following networking meetings for Design and Technology teachers within the ERW region, it has become apparent that the financial pressures on schools give rise to a situation where Design and Technology teachers are increasingly being asked to teach classes larger than 20 pupils as recommended in BS4163:2014 "Health and safety for design and technology in educational establishments – Code of Practice". Increased class sizes invariably lead to higher risk of pupils getting injured in workshop environments.

Additional Information

The BS4163:2014 Code of Practice clearly states as follows:

"9 Management of the teaching environment

9.1

General

The number of learners in any one work area should be carefully considered to ensure safe working and effective supervision.

In England and Wales, there should be a maximum of 20 learners with one competent, qualified teacher in any one work area.

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, there should be a maximum of 20 pupils for all classes in practical subjects"

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Ceredigion
- Mid and West Wales

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-802
Ein cyf/Our ref KW/01333/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

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

1 June 2018

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 18 May in response to my previous letter regarding the protection of class sizes in Design & Technology Classrooms and Workshops.

With regards to the advice note, the way in which my department issues advice to schools is through the Dysg newsletters which is sent to all schools and is read by headteachers, teachers, governing bodies, local authorities, consortia and anyone else who chooses to subscribe. We have found it more effective than ad hoc mailshots to schools.

My officials will publish a note in the Dysg newsletter to remind headteachers of their duties to carry out risk assessments in schools, and in particular, of Design & Technology classes to ensure their classes are conducted safely. I will ensure a copy is sent to the Petitions Committee. This is likely to be early in the next half term.

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@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.

Agenda Item 3.6

P-05-753 Strengthening the Legislative and Regulatory Framework Surrounding Waste Wood Processing Facilities

This petition was submitted by Alexander Williams having collected 232 signatures.

Text of the Petition

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

Direct Natural Resources Wales, local authorities and other relevant public bodies to work together to use their existing powers and duties to take effective and efficient enforcement action within the recycling industry.

Strengthen the legislative and regulatory framework where required to enable relevant public bodies to undertake more efficient and effective enforcement action (including monitoring), and enable them to prosecute and impose stronger financial penalties on companies and individual company directors who breach their operational controls such as planning conditions or terms of their operational licences and environmental permits;

Review existing legislation to allow the public, Fire and Rescue Services and other public bodies to recoup the costs of dealing with incidents, such as the recent fire at South Wales Wood Recycling Ltd, if the cause of the fire is found to be as a result of the company's negligence, criminal action or breaches of other regulations, conditions or permissions.

Review environmental protection rules and provide guidance to local authorities to ensure that all waste wood processing facilities are not located in close proximity to residential premises, sites of special scientific interest or sites of importance for nature conservation.

Undertake a comprehensive assessment on the long-term health implications of the inhalation of wood dust caused by the processing of waste wood and undertake an ongoing assessment of the dust deposits at wood processing facilities.

Assembly Constituency and Region.

- Ogmore
- South Wales West

Hannah Blythyn AC/AM
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd
Minister for Environment



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-753
Ein cyf/Our ref HB/00241/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

16 March 2018

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter and enclosure of 28 February, regarding Petition P-05-753 on strengthening the legislative and regulatory framework surrounding waste wood processing facilities.

The proposed changes to the Environmental Permitting Regulations referred to in the interim Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales's (NRW) letter, are currently subject to a joint Welsh Government and DEFRA public consultation which was launched on 15 January. I would encourage interested parties to respond by 26 March when the consultation closes. Details of the consultation can be found at:

<https://beta.gov.wales/reducing-crime-sites-handling-waste-and-introducing-fixed-penalties-waste-duty-care>

I note the response NRW has made to the Committee's request for details of the processes they undertake when operators breach their licence conditions.

Yours Sincerely,

Hannah Blythyn AC/AM
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd
Minister for Environment

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

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

Gohebiaeth.Hannah.Blythyn@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Hannah.Blythyn@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.

Ebost/Email:

prif.weithredwr@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk
chief.executive@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

Ffôn/Phone:

0300 065 4453

David Rowlands Chair of Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

2 May 2018

Dear Mr Rowlands,

**P-05-753 Strengthening the Legislative and Regulatory Framework Surrounding
Waste Wood Processing Facilities**

Following your letter on the 23rd February 2018 to Kevin Ingram. I welcome the opportunity to respond in my capacity as the new Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales.

As set out in our previous response, Natural Resources Wales is responsible for providing a risk-based approach to regulation of the waste industry to ensure the sustainable management of our natural resources for human and environmental well-being. We seek to achieve this directly through delivery of our regulatory duties, using powers and tools available as set out in legislation; and indirectly through wider interventions that support the delivery of relevant outcomes, such as raising awareness with waste producers to ensure they are taking steps to segregate, classify and manage their waste responsibly.

As previously highlighted the responsibility of complying with permit conditions and relevant legislation lies with the waste operator and they are ultimately in control and responsible for what happens on site. By applying for a permit, they have made a commitment to operate lawfully and in line with the conditions within it.

Permit conditions cover a range of requirements from conditions that define what a site is allowed to do through to the need to submit information on operator monitoring. The majority of permit conditions set within modern permits are objective based. Objective based conditions do not prescribe what a site operator must do, they set the output/outcome that is required (in most cases underpinned by a legislative requirement). It is the responsibility

of the site operator to meet that permit condition objective. To ensure a level of consistency and standards, the regulator has various guidance documents that support compliance with permit conditions e.g. "[How to Comply](#)". The measures chosen by a site operator to assist them in compliance with their permit are embodied in the operators Environmental Management System (EMS). This is owned by the operator but is intrinsically linked to the permit.

Our initial regulatory approach is to work with legitimate operators to bring them into compliance. This approach reflects our wider duty to follow the Regulators' Code and is reflected in our organisation's Regulatory Principles. Our response to permit breaches is site specific and follows an assessment of the risk posed by the breach of the specific permit condition. When we undertake a compliance assessment of a sites permit we also assess the adequacy of that sites EMS to achieve compliance with the permit conditions.

Compliance assessment of a permit breach depends on many factors e.g. site location or site infrastructure. When a permit breach is identified, it is assessed on its potential severity (unless they are amenity breaches that are based on "actual" severity assessment). This is called the Compliance Classification Score.

The Compliance Classification Scheme (CCS) is used to classify, in a consistent way, any non-compliance with a permit condition according to its potential severity.

- Category 1 – a non-compliance at a regulated site that could foreseeably result in major pollution of the environment. A category 1 breach attracts 60 CCS points;
- Category 2 - a non-compliance at a regulated site that could foreseeably result in significant pollution of the environment. A category 2 breach attracts 31 CCS points;
- Category 3 - a non-compliance at a regulated site that could foreseeably result in minor pollution of the environment. A category 3 breach attracts 4 CCS points;
- Category 4 - a non-compliance at a regulated site that could foreseeably result in no environmental impact. A category 4 breach attracts 0.1 CCS points

A facility's compliance performance band is determined by the total CCS scores identified through compliance assessment activities recorded on Compliance Assessment Report forms throughout a calendar year. A facility's total CCS score (and associated band) will increase in accordance with relative risk posed and the number of the non-compliance identified.

All breaches are recorded on a Compliance Assessment Report with associated actions to mitigate that breach. Actions have an associated timescale where relevant. The mitigation

and timescale is related to the severity of the breach. A copy of the Compliance Assessment Report is sent to the operator for their records and is also available through our public register requirements. In addition to the compliance response there is a requirement to assess the enforcement response required. This is linked to the compliance score and factors laid out in our Enforcement and Prosecution Policy. There are additional powers that can be applied depending on the magnitude of breach, for example, powers to suspend a permit.

All compliance scores for a site are logged onto a database to contribute to a site's overall annual compliance score. A facility's total CCS score (and associated band) will increase in accordance with relative risk posed and the number of cases of non-compliance identified. It is this compliance score that is then used to translate into the site's Operator Performance Banding, ranging from A-F, with Bands D, E and F being considered poor performers. This approach is in line with the "polluter pays" principle in that those that have poor Operator Performance Bandings pay a higher annual subsistence charge which enables us to cost recover for the greater regulator intervention. Our compliance assessment resource allocation is determined by the compliance monitoring deemed necessary and is proportionate to the risk posed of the facility.

All poor performing sites have a site-specific compliance plan in place that details time limited actions agreed with the regulator to ensure that sites work towards improving their performance and compliance with their permit. The response to the issued compliance assessment report / Compliance Plan is then monitored by us to ensure that the site is brought back into compliance. Where compliance continues to be an issue, then measures are available to escalate e.g. notices or suspension.

I trust that this response specifically addresses our process of compliance assessment and how we respond to breaches of permit conditions.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clare Pillman', with a horizontal line underneath.

Clare Pillman
Prif Weithredwr, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Chief Executive, Natural Resources Wales

P-05-753 Strengthening the Legislative and Regulatory Framework Surrounding Waste Wood Processing Facilities – Correspondence from the petitioner to the clerking team, 06.06.18

Dear Kayleigh,

Many thanks for sending me the latest correspondence which is to be considered by the Petitions Committee.

The regulatory regime which the Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales outlines is one which is adequate in theory but simply fails to work in practice. Unfortunately, the current regulatory regime fails to ensure the compliance of operators with their terms of operation and as a result, is not fit for purpose.

Regrettably, my constituents continue to be subjected to breaches of South Wales Wood Recycling's operating hours on a daily basis without any visible enforcement of their permit and no penalty levied upon the operator for these continual breaches of their terms of operation.

It is for this reason that the petition calls for the regulatory regime to be strengthened in order to mandate compliance with the terms of operators' permits.

Best wishes

Alex

Cllr. Alex Williams (Penprysg)

Bridgend County Borough Council

Agenda Item 3.7

P-05-777 Application of the Automatic Fire Suppression Systems Legislation within the current Building Regulations for Wales.

This petition was submitted by Nick Harding, having collected 62 signatures online.

Petition text:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to review and amend the current implementation of the Fire Sprinkler Regulations, within the current Building Regulations, that came into force in January 1st 2016 (Wales).

The review to amend should specifically take into consideration how the regulation has been integrated into the current Building Regulations with regards to projects that fall within the "Material Change of Use" category (Regulation 5) and the requirement to retrofit Automatic Fire Suppression Systems. The review should primarily take into consideration what is actually achieved when 2 properties are amalgamated into 1 given that:-

- 1) Where 2 dwellings become 1 the actual building process should be deemed no different from what would be considered as an Extension to a dwelling. Under the current Building regulations Extensions do not require an automated fire suppression system to be installed regardless of size.
- 2) The requirement is to install an automatic fire suppression system into the building as a whole and not just the developed part.
- 3) The Regulation does not take into account any substantial fire reduction measures already taking place as a result of the building project, such as reducing the number of kitchens within a property (70 – 80% of all domestic fires start within kitchens – Firesafe.org.uk).
- 4) The current costs for "Retrofitted" automatic fire suppression systems make the requirement not cost effective, a fact backed up by every commissioned and independent study undertaken thus far. (Collected costs and quotations range from £5000 to over £10000 depending on flow availability, number of heads actuating and tank plus infrastructure requirements).
- 5) The Legislation has been implemented without sufficient infrastructure being in place. Within the whole of Wales there are only are only 7 registered BAFSA companies. This is highly likely to lead to non-competitive pricing.

Additional information:

The review should also look at the wider implications of how this Legislation has been implemented now that it has been in place for some time.

Considerations should include:

1) Maintenance of the Systems – The Legislation does not include anything for any ongoing maintenance requirements once the system has been installed. The Welsh Assembly’s approach to this is to provide the public with a “Leaflet” which is supposed to provide information to the home owner regarding the maintenance requirements of the system; however this falls short of what would be achieved if it was part of the legislation to ensure ongoing maintenance of the system. However the knock on effect of this is to further burden homeowners with higher home owning and running costs, with ongoing maintenance costs estimated at over £2000 per year.

2) Legionella Risk (due to lack of maintenance) – It is widely thought that in general sprinkler systems are not a source of Legionella (FPA RC63), however as Wales is the 1st country in the world to legislate Domestic Sprinkler Systems as a requirement for all new build and converted homes we believe that more investigation is required especially as the regulation negated to include the maintenance of the system. We believe that as systems age and are not maintained due to costs, Legionella risk will become more prevalent putting the public at a higher risk of infection.

3) Costs – Due to the tight margins for House Builders and Developers, some have now stopped or will be stopping House building in certain areas of Wales (Persimmon & Redrow) as a direct result of this Legislation.

4) Cost Benefit Analysis – During the initial investigation it was estimated that the system would cost £1500 – £2500 per household. In reality the cost are between £5000 and £10000 per installation. Additional equipment is often required because Dwr Cymru cannot guarantee minimum water flow and pressure.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Bridgend
- South Wales West

David Rowlands AM
Chair, Petitions Committee

30 May 2018

Dear David

**P-05-777 Application of the Automatic Fire Suppression Systems Legislation
within the current Building Regulations for Wales**

Thank you for your letter drawing my attention to petition P-05-777. I note that the petition is concerned about the implementation of the *Building Regulations &c. (Amendment No 3)* and *Domestic Fire Safety (Wales) Regulations 2013*.

As you may be aware, we have been looking at issues around fire safety in high rise blocks since the horrific fire at Grenfell Tower. While we will continue to consider issues around fire safety, which may touch upon sprinklers, we do not currently have any plans to undertake post-legislative scrutiny of the regulations. If this changes, I will update you.

Yours sincerely



John Griffiths AM
Chair



Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



Agenda Item 3.8

P-05-800 Urgent Appeal for a Welsh Veterans Commissioner for the Health & Wellbeing of Wounded, Injured, Sick and Homeless veterans

This petition was submitted by Nicola Hester and was first considered by the Committee in February 2018, having collected 50 signatures online.

Text of Petition

Here in Wales, I was proud that we were first for a Commissioner for both Children & Young People, and Older Persons. Unfortunately Scotland has beaten us to have a Commissioner for Veterans.

We veterans need someone to be our voice and true representation to the Welsh Government. Not what the "chiefs" want you to know.

We need someone who can meet with us, know our views and what we need. To support those unfortunate who end up in prison instead of having mental health treatment for PTSD.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Torfaen
- South Wales East

**P-05-800 Urgent Appeal for a Welsh Veterans Commissioner –
Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 04.06.18**

My response to Mr Davies letter.

I will put in points

1. I'm not happy with the way either Mr Davies or one of his team assumes that I'm not compus mentus enough to know about the Armed Forces champion "expert" at my local authority. Firstly I used to be employed by my local authority and secondly I have many times been in contact and only been sign posted to Help for Heroes and a local charity Hire for Heroes, which really only supports veterans who are new leavers.

2. Who are these experts in the Armed Forces expert group and Cross part group for Armed Forces and cadets? How much contact with us veterans, families and dependents? I have contact from different veterans and their spouses, confirming an earlier survey completed by a fellow veteran of the lack of support on the ground for them. Most stating some help from H4H and Veterans NHS Wales, but this is limited. Are these groups aware of the amount of suicides by veterans? How many spouses have been and are subjected to abuse (mine included) and the affects on the children? How much do these experts cost?

3. How and where did the figure of costing for the Commissioner come from.

4. What has Mr Davies got against us veterans? As he puts down anything to do with veterans.

5. Will the petitions committee meet with myself and fellow veteran Miss Hughes with evidence for them to see?

6. Will Mr Davies and or both the Armed Forces expert group and the Cross party group for the Armed forces and cadets meet with myself and Miss Hughes?

Agenda Item 3.9

P-05-782 Build a Chepstow Bypass to Remove the Bottle Neck from the M48 onto the A48

This petition was submitted by Jez Becker, having collected 201 signatures online.

Petition text:

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to finally take in hand the problem of traffic congestion on the A48 through Chepstow.

The lowering of the Severn Bridge Toll represents a huge opportunity for growth in Monmouthshire, Forest of Dean and South East Wales. However the road infrastructure is inadequate. The A48 is already suffering from congestion and poor air quality through the town of Chepstow. With the addition of new housing estates in both Monmouthshire and Forest of Dean the current proposals fall unacceptably short in facilitating growth.

This scheme has been an aspiration since the 1960s and unless both the Welsh and UK governments finally co-operate and commit then the economic prosperity so within reach will be choked off, instead leaving the quality of the residents' lives to deteriorate and stifle sustainable economic development.

Additional information:

In a good example of how this issue has been neglected by all branches of government, a sister petition has been lodged with the UK Government as they rejected the original as being a Wales only issue.

We ask the National Assembly of Wales to ensure that this vital transport route not fall prey to cross border buck passing.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Monmouth
- South Wales East

Ein cyf/Our ref: CH18-004

Ty Cambria / Cambria House
29 Heol Casnewydd / 29 Newport Road
Caerdydd / Cardiff

Ebost/Email:

Diane.McCrea@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk
Diane.McCrea@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

Ffôn/Phone: 0300 0653962

David J Rowlands AM
Chair, Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

6 June 2018

Dear David,

'Petition P-05-785 Suspend Marine License 12/45/ML to dump radioactive marine sediments from the Hinkley Point nuclear site into Wales' coastal waters off Cardiff'

Further to the Plenary debate on the above petition which took place on the 23th May 2018, I wanted to provide a brief update on the status of the above licence.

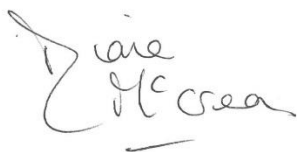
At the time of the debate, there was one outstanding condition to be discharged, namely Condition 9.1 which requires monitoring of the disposal site. We have now received the monitoring plan from the licence holder and it details how the disposal site will be surveyed, both before and after the disposal of the dredge arisings takes place.

We have assessed this report and are content with the proposal. We have therefore discharged Condition 9.1. There are no outstanding conditions left to discharge for this licence, and the licence holder can now dispose of the dredged arisings once the initial survey of the disposal site has been completed.

Our dedicated [webpage](#) has been updated to confirm the discharge of this condition and includes a copy of the monitoring plan as downloadable content.

I hope you find this information helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane McCrea". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Diane McCrea MBE

**Cadeirydd, Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
Chair, Natural Resources Wales**

Agenda Item 6

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

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 7

P-05-771 Reconsider the closure of the Welsh Independent Living Grant and support disabled people to live independently

This petition was submitted by Nathan Lee Davies and was first considered by the Committee in October 2017, having collected 631 signatures.

Text of Petition

I am a recipient of the Welsh Independent Living Grant (WILG) and a disability activist who intends on asking Welsh Government to reconsider their decision to close WILG as of April 2019.

The WILG was introduced to help people who previously claimed from the UK government's Independent Living Fund (ILF), which closed in 2015. More than 1,500 people are helped by the scheme across Wales. Recipients all have high degree of care and support needs.

It was due to run until the end of March 2017, but Social Services Minister Rebecca Evans said in November that funding would continue for another year.

The annual £27m fund will then transfer directly to local authorities during 2018-19 so they can meet the support needs of all former ILF recipients by 31 March 2019.

Additional information

Why we oppose this decision:

The Welsh Government said the decision was taken on stakeholder advice. The majority of representatives on the stakeholder group were third sector or citizens. But they didn't want WILG scrapped and the key point is that our advice was not accepted.

It should also be remembered that closure of WILG is not inevitable as is proved through the formation and success of the Scottish Independent Living Fund; which also works to support the Northern Ireland ILF.

Furthermore, the hugely popular Labour Party Manifesto outlined plans to set up a national care system to exist independently of local authorities.

This is exactly the time that the Labour Party should be united on such issues against the Tories. We must question why Welsh Labour are not playing their part in the changing political landscape?

Indeed, eventually it should be our aim to set up an Independent Living Fund for Wales so that no disabled person should have to suffer the same uncertainty and isolation as WILG recipients are now experiencing. We can only begin to believe that true social justice and equality for all is possible if Welsh Labour revisit their WILG decision.

Welsh Labour will no doubt argue that we should give the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act a chance to succeed. However, this idealistic act needs hefty investment and resources to ensure it is a success – with no sign of any of the necessary improvements to our infrastructure that the success of the Act depends on. This may indeed be the time for a revolutionary change in the way social care is delivered, but such a transformation could take a decade or more and WILG recipients do not deserve to be treated like guinea pigs when their high care and support needs require long-term stability and structure.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Wrexham
- North Wales

Document is Restricted