



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru
The National Assembly for Wales**

**Y Pwyllgor Cyfle Cyfartal
The Committee on Equality of Opportunity**

**Dydd Mawrth, 9 Chwefror 2010
Tuesday, 9 February 2010**

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Cofnodir y trafodion hyn yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal,
cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Mohammad Asghar	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Eleanor Burnham	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Ann Jones	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Janet Ryder	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Carwyn Jones	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Prif Weinidog) Assembly Member, Labour (the First Minister)
Ieuan Wyn Jones	Aelod Cynulliad, Plaid Cymru (y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog a'r Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth) Assembly Member, Plaid Cymru (the Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport)
Gill Lambert	Pennaeth yr Is-adran Cydraddoldeb, Amrywiaeth a Chynhwysiant, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division, Welsh Assembly Government

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Catherine Hunt	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Claire Morris	Clerc Clerk
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol i'r Pwyllgor Legal Adviser to the Committee
Denise Rogers	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members Research Service

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.31 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.31 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Ann Jones:** Good morning everybody and welcome to the Committee on Equality of Opportunity. I remind all Members to switch off your mobile phones, pagers and BlackBerrys so that they do not interfere with the translation equipment. The floor language is available on channel 0, while channel 1 is for the translation. Members are invited to speak in Welsh and English. Does anybody wish to declare an interest before we go any further? I see that you do not. There are no apologies or substitutions today—we have a full committee. Joyce may be a

little late, but she will join us later.

9.32 a.m.

**Craffu ar Waith y Prif Weinidog a'r Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ar Brif-ffrydio
Cydraddoldeb o fewn Agenda 'Cymru'n Un'
Scrutiny of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister on Mainstreaming
of Equality within the 'One Wales' Agenda**

[2] **Ann Jones:** I do not think that 'scrutiny' is the word for this item; it is more about inviting you in to ask you where we are on mainstreaming equality in the 'One Wales' agenda, First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

[3] It is my pleasure to welcome the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, and Ieuan Wyn Jones, his deputy. Gill Lambert is also with us, and she is the head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Division. When you can say it, you deserve such a title. [*Laughter.*]. We have had the paper, so if it is okay with you, we will go straight into questions, or do you wish to make an opening statement, First Minister?

[4] **The First Minister (Carwyn Jones):** Simply to thank the committee for the opportunity to speak this morning. The paper is fairly self-explanatory, so we would be more than happy to go straight to the questions.

[5] **Ann Jones:** I have the first question. What inequalities in Wales do you think we should be tackling as a priority over the next year?

[6] **The First Minister:** To my mind, there are five priorities that are particularly important. The first is to do with what effects the recession might have on widening inequality. The second is to carry on with the work that has been taken forward to deal with child poverty. The third is to continue to address the gender pay gap, which we know has been a problem historically in Wales. The fourth is the issue of dealing with disability, and disability hate crime in particular. I am sure that committee members will be aware that the commission launched a formal inquiry into this issue across Great Britain in December. The fifth is to look at the situation regarding looked-after children and the difficulties that they have with educational attainment in particular.

[7] **Ann Jones:** I think that every Assembly Member is aware of those five, so thank you very much for that. Janet, you have some questions.

[8] **Janet Ryder:** First Minister, you have just said that you anticipate that the recession will have an effect on different groups in society. You said that you anticipate the recession having an impact on the equality agenda. Will it in any way affect, or has it already affected, the priorities that you have set out in the 'One Wales' agreement?

[9] **The First Minister:** The recession has affected all in society. It has sometimes been described as a middle-class recession, but I do not think that that is at all right as far as we in Wales are concerned. I do not think that a particular group of people has been affected, but certainly there are parts of Wales that have been affected more than others. We know of the difficulties at Bosch, there have been other job losses in Anglesey, and more proposed losses in Newtown. However, the key for us as a Government is to ensure that, while we are coming out of the recession, no group of people is left behind, if I can put it that way. We must continue to ensure that opportunities to get qualifications and jobs are available to everyone, regardless of gender, race, belief or disability.

[10] **The Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport (Ieuan Wyn Jones):** Could I follow up on a couple of points? We carried out some research into whether the recession had had a disproportionate impact on certain parts of Wales, and the research backed up many of the statistics that we were getting through the labour force survey, which showed that some geographical areas were suffering disproportionately, as were some age groups. In geographical terms, it is fair to say that the areas that have suffered disproportionately are the upper Valley areas like Ebbw Vale and Merthyr, and, surprisingly, Newport, which is a highly urbanised area. The evidence base supports the statistics on that.

[11] Secondly, on the increase in youth unemployment and the equalities agenda, we particularly want to prevent youth unemployment leading to long periods of economic activity. Addressing some of the issues around youth unemployment will be fairly high on our agenda, and that will be underpinned by tackling the lack of basic skills.

[12] **Janet Ryder:** Given the evidence that you have just cited, have you any idea what the impact might be, and whether you will need to change any strategies or priorities?

[13] **The Deputy First Minister:** The recession has highlighted the underlying problems. The main problem that we faced around access to work was the lack of basic skills, and the recession has highlighted the fact that those who are most likely to become unemployed are those who lack basic skills. It has confirmed that, rather than needing a change of direction, we need to address the lack of basic skills that was already a problem.

[14] **Janet Ryder:** To take you back to your original analysis of the groups that you see as being at risk of suffering from inequality, are you saying that you are quite happy to confirm the priorities in the 'One Wales' agreement?

[15] **The First Minister:** Those priorities stand the test of time, but there are other initiatives that we have taken to deal with the recession, and the effect that it may have on certain vulnerable groups. I will give you one example: we know that, historically, recessions can lead to an increase in violence against women, so this year we have allocated more than £0.5 million in additional resources to promote the help and support that is available to victims of domestic abuse. We have also provided additional funding to Welsh Women's Aid to roll out a new IT system across all refuges in Wales that will enable them to co-ordinate their services more effectively. We have also provided funding for Citizen's Advice Cymru because we know that, in a recession, people often go to Citizen's Advice for help, particularly with financial problems. So, those are two examples of ways in which we have tried to be flexible and target help towards those who might be more vulnerable as a result of the recession.

[16] **Janet Ryder:** The Deputy First Minister said in his evidence that the research had supported a geographical priority. Will we see a swing in priorities in Government spending into those areas as a result of that evidence?

[17] **The Deputy First Minister:** It is likely that, as we begin to tackle the problem caused by the recession—that is, how do you prevent young people from becoming economically inactive in the long term—we need to look at where the resources that we need to target can be used most effectively. So, if the needs are in areas such as Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr, we need to consider that in relation to the budget that will be allocated for the skills agenda. That is clearly the case.

9.40 a.m.

[18] We will also move forward to see how we can develop the ProAct scheme differently post recession and how we can provide the skill levels that will allow people to become

employed. The best way of defending people against the impact of a recession is to give them the skills necessary to take up the jobs that are offered. There will be a hard look at the geographical impact of youth unemployment in particular.

[19] **Janet Ryder:** To move on slightly, your paper stresses that there is a focus in the strategies on addressing the inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers, refugees and victims of hate crime. You also mentioned women suffering from violence. Why have you focused on those particular groups in your paper?

[20] **The First Minister:** It is because they are among the most vulnerable of groups that are already vulnerable. Gypsy/Travellers and refugees are two of the most vulnerable groups in society and that is why there are specific commitments in the 'One Wales' agreement with regard to them. The previous committee's report in 2003 highlighted the inequality that was experienced by Gypsy and Traveller people in Wales, particularly the fact that they often suffer discrimination and that they are traditionally a group that has not had much of a voice. Providing them with the assistance that they need was seen as a priority. There is no doubt, in my mind, that there needs to be a substantial change in society's attitude towards Gypsy/Traveller people, particularly with regard to the facilities that are made available to them. So, they were a particularly vulnerable group that needed to be focused upon.

[21] With regard to refugees, I do not think that there could be a more vulnerable position to be in than being forced to leave your own country and move to a country with which you are not familiar at all. That is the most vulnerable position that an individual can be in. That is why we have the refugee inclusion strategy. We recognise the importance of supporting people who are in that extremely vulnerable position and, again, who do not have a voice that represents them. We want to support and enable refugees to build their lives in Wales and to make a full contribution to society in Wales. That is why those two groups in particular have been focused upon; it is because of their particular vulnerability and because they have not traditionally had strong advocates for them in the past.

[22] **Janet Ryder:** Will you let me have a little leeway here, Chair, with particular reference to refugees? To a great extent, their situation is in the hands of the Westminster Government as to whether they are allowed to stay here or not. I am aware of the plight of Iraqi Christians at the moment, who are being sent back to Iraq by the UK Government on the basis that Iraq is now more stable. The UK Government is not taking into account the discrimination that that particular group is suffering because of its religion. How can the Welsh Assembly Government give a voice to those Iraqi Christians who are living in Wales at the moment and now face deportation?

[23] **The First Minister:** While this is not a devolved matter, where appropriate, it would be possible to make representations to the UK Government on behalf of a group of people who we felt, as a Government, were particularly vulnerable. So, there is no question that we could make representations where that is appropriate.

[24] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr ydym i gyd yn gwybod am y mater y bu Elfyn Llwyd yn ei drafod am ddynes a ddaeth yma o Batagonia, nid i fyw ond dros dro. Beth yn union allwch chi ei wneud i argyhoeddi'r Swyddfa Gartref ei bod yn bwysig edrych ar faterion sensitif fel hyn a sicrhau na fydd rhywbeth tebyg yn digwydd o hyn ymlaen?

Eleanor Burnham: We are all aware of the issue that Elfyn Llwyd raised regarding a woman who came here from Patagonia, not to live but temporarily. What exactly can you do to convince the Home Office that it is important to look at sensitive issues such as this and to ensure that something similar does not happen from hereon in?

[25] **Y Prif Weinidog:** Mae'n anodd iawn edrych ar sefyllfa unigolyn heb wybod y

The First Minister: It is very difficult to look at one individual's situation without

manylion i gyd. Gwn am yr enghraifft yr ydych yn sôn amdani. Yr oedd yn anffodus, ond ni chredaf ei fod yn beth call gwneud sylw am rywbeth heb ystyried y manylion.

knowing all the details. I am aware of the example that you have mentioned. It was unfortunate, but I do not think that it would be wise for me to comment on something without considering the details.

[26] **Ann Jones:** That was totally—

[27] **Eleanor Burnham:** But it was kind of you to allow me to bring it to the committee's attention.

[28] **Ann Jones:** That is where Janet's questioning was going. Janet's question was about a group of people, and this committee does not look at individual cases. Let us just note that. Janet, would you like to move onto the next question?

[29] **Janet Ryder:** Sorry I went off on a tangent, but it is an important and pressing issue.

[30] First Minister, 'One Wales' indicates your Government's priorities for seeking new powers in relation to mental health, vulnerable children, domiciliary care, carers, affordable housing, school transport, additional learning needs, child poverty, and the Welsh language. Some of those powers have already been obtained. What are your legislative priorities regarding the promotion of equality and inclusion for all people for the foreseeable future?

[31] **The First Minister:** I will give some examples. The Equality Bill is proceeding through the UK Parliament. It deals with an area that is largely non-devolved, but the Bill will introduce powers to enable the Welsh Ministers to impose specific public sector equality duties on Welsh public authorities. It will also make provision for the Welsh Ministers to impose the socioeconomic duty and to publish guidance for public authorities in Wales in the exercise of their strategic functions. So, there are powers that will be devolved to the Welsh Ministers.

[32] As for legislation here, the Proposed National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Housing and Local Government) Order has made—or will make—a great difference as it includes, for example, a provision to seek competence in relation to the potential of placing a duty on local authorities in Wales to provide Gypsy and Traveller sites. That is part of the proposed LCO itself. A proposed Measure relating to children's rights has just been announced. The idea behind that is to embed the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in law on behalf of Welsh children. The Proposed National Assembly for Wales (Legislative Competence) (Local Government) Order is also relevant as it provides for the diversity monitoring of councillors and candidates. Members of the committee will be aware of Step Up Cymru and its work to provide mentoring for people who wish to become elected representatives in the future. There is also the Proposed Children and Families (Wales) Measure, which seeks to take forward our commitment as a Government to tackling child poverty.

[33] **Janet Ryder:** To clarify, you mentioned legislation that will give you the ability to look at the background of councillors and candidates, which is an interesting step forward. Could you elaborate on that?

[34] **The First Minister:** It will be a system of monitoring. The eventual proposed Measure will contain the detail on it, but it will be a system of monitoring—

[35] **Janet Ryder:** Will that be at the local government level?

[36] **The First Minister:** Yes.

[37] **Janet Ryder:** That is interesting.

[38] **Ann Jones:** Yes, we may return to it.

[39] **Janet Ryder:** First Minister, is there anything under the Equalities Bill that the Welsh Ministers can achieve now with their existing powers? If not, what will the new powers transferred under the Bill give them the ability to do to improve equality for everyone?

[40] **The First Minister:** Equality is not just a GB-wide, or UK-wide, issue; it is a worldwide issue. That is why the Equalities Bill is important, as it is being introduced across the whole of Britain. As I have already mentioned, as far as we are concerned, we always seek to take the powers that are appropriate to Wales. I have given you examples of the powers that will enable the Welsh Ministers to impose duties, particularly the socioeconomic duty. They will be significant powers that will enhance our ability to deal with inequality in the future.

[41] **Joyce Watson:** Good morning. Sorry that I was late. Life passes by so quickly that you can lose track of it. *[Laughter.]* Thank you for your paper. I will ask a question on the economy and the labour market. How could procurement policies be used to help people affected by the recession, such as the young people whom you have already talked about, who are not in education, employment or training?

9.50 a.m.

[42] **The Deputy First Minister:** It is fair to say that public procurement has been a valuable tool in particular sectors, with construction being the most obvious, in addressing some of the impacts of the recession. Of course, it is also a big budget at £5 billion. We have focused on using it as a tool for securing equality in the Equality Bill. The second thing that we have done is introduce the sustainable procurement training programme, which is a tool that Value Wales uses when devising a number of courses that will help people to deliver equality through procurement.

[43] The other part, which has been a major challenge for us all, is to make sure that procurement contracts are devised in such a way as to allow small and medium-sized enterprises in Wales to bid for work. By and large, our nation's businesses are small and medium-sized enterprises. The use of framework contracts in certain areas has made it more difficult for SMEs to qualify and be considered for those contracts. Through the economic summits, we have tried to ensure that smaller companies are allowed to bid for those contracts throughout the recession. I think that we have had a measure of success with the contracts that are let by the Welsh Assembly Government, as the proportion of Welsh companies winning contracts has gone up in recent times. However, we still think that there is a lot more work to do and a lot of that work will have to be done with our partners in the public sector. The Welsh Assembly Government and the bodies that we fund account for about half the procurement contracts, and local authorities account for the other half. So, we need to work with the 22 local authorities to see whether we can improve on that.

[44] To look at it from another angle, another important point is that we have tried to maintain apprenticeships, where possible, to protect particularly young people through the recession. One of the big dangers in a recession is that the first step that employers take is to get rid of the apprentices and the training schemes. We have tried to work with employers to maintain apprenticeships and to take on new apprentices who have had to leave employment elsewhere. ProAct is to maintain the skills base of the workforce. By and large, that has been successful. We have to admit that it has had only an ameliorative effect, as we could not

prevent Wales from feeling no impact from the recession, but I think that we have done remarkably well given the circumstances in which we have found ourselves.

[45] **Joyce Watson:** We have done very well during a very difficult time, but I feel that there may be additional things that we could do using procurement. Would you consider looking at those? I can cite an excellent example in the form of Carmarthenshire County Council. All councils have lists of preferred bidders, but that council has taken a very long-term view of who is put on that list and what requirements and social contracts it might ask for. One such social requirement is for preferred bidders to offer apprenticeships to a proportion of the people whom they employ. They call it the 'shared cadetship' because it helps SMEs. Deputy First Minister, will you have a look at that as an example of best practice? Carmarthenshire is leading the way in the UK on that.

[46] **The Deputy First Minister:** If there is good practice in relation to procurement, we want to look at it. There are some other good examples, apart from those that you have mentioned, of social clauses being included in procurement contracts. Where those have been successful, we want to spread that good practice, and so, if there are good ideas, we want to see them implemented elsewhere.

[47] **Joyce Watson:** We have talked about young people and procurement. Do you think that there is any scope to use those methods to help other groups affected by the recession, such as the 50-plus age group? The job losses for that age group have been significant.

[48] **The Deputy First Minister:** We have to be careful not to use procurement as a restrictive tool. Where we can include social clauses, they can be extremely valuable, provided that there is a commitment. The employment of local labour, for example, has been successful in a number of the road-building contracts that we let recently, and so that has been useful. However, we need to be careful. It is fine for us to encourage the employment of those aged over 50 or whatever, but I would not want to see procurement contracts being so prescriptive that the process becomes difficult for employers. So, we need to consider how we can help with specific problems and then encourage the employment of people in the 50-plus age group who have those skills.

[49] **Joyce Watson:** Moving on, what has the Welsh Government done to assist women back into work through the provision of childcare?

[50] **The First Minister:** Members will be aware of the original Genesis Cymru Wales project that got Objective 1 and Objective 3 funding. That package of funding included help for women—and men, for that matter—to get childcare. Furthermore, it provided advice, guidance and support for all individuals who wish to get back to work. We know that childcare is a particular barrier for women more often than men, although not exclusively for women.

[51] We now have the Genesis Cymru Wales 2 project, the funding for which was confirmed in September 2008, as the committee knows. That is also designed to help individuals who wish to get back into the labour market to do so. It also includes an element of ensuring that childcare provision is made available for those individuals who want to get back into the labour market.

[52] **Ann Jones:** On the provision of childcare, often, childcare is based in, say, the west of a town and the parent's work or training is based in the east, which causes problems when dropping the child off at the nursery or crèche. Should we not look at that, because women attending a college, for example, might find that they cannot manage a lengthy trip across town, perhaps taking half an hour, to pick their children up from a crèche or nursery? Should we not look at providing childcare within colleges, training establishments, and even

workplaces, so that the parent is on hand throughout the day? Knowing that their child was safe not too far away from where they were working or studying, it would be much easier for them to apply their mind to what they had to do. So, often, it is the location of a nursery that is a huge barrier to people taking up courses and work.

[53] **The First Minister:** In all cases, there is a need to identify accessible childcare rather than just childcare—if it is a long way away, it is not accessible. The principle underlying Genesis Cymru Wales 2 is that a comprehensive package should be put in place where childcare is identified as a barrier, to help those who are classed as being furthest away from the economic market. If your childcare is a long way away from the place where you work, you are still a long way away from the economic market, if I may put it that way. So, I agree that childcare needs to be provided as closely as possible to an individual in college or in work. I am also reminded that councils have a duty to secure sufficient childcare and, as part of that duty, its location is a consideration. For example, it would not be good enough to provide childcare in one location if it meant that individuals had to spend a substantial amount of time travelling there and back if they were in work for the day.

[54] **The Deputy First Minister:** You also mentioned accessibility in transport terms. When we launched the Genesis 2 scheme, the three big themes were the lack of childcare, the lack of transport, and the lack of skills as barriers. Your reference to the college is a key one. What we are trying to do under the Genesis package is to adopt a fairly holistic approach, not looking at a single barrier, but looking across the piece.

10.00 a.m.

[55] **Janet Ryder:** I am reminded of a visit that the Local Government and Housing Committee made during the first Assembly. We went to Dublin to see Ballyfermot and the way that they had regenerated the community there. One of the striking things was that the local partnership group, which held control of all the funding, refused to fund a training course unless childcare was provided. They linked provision of childcare with the training course. Is that something that you would consider?

[56] **The First Minister:** If a problem arises because childcare is not accessible, we will clearly have to think carefully about how we ensure that it is accessible, and that would be one option that we would have had to examine in that case.

[57] **Ann Jones:** We might return to this; Janet and I are on the same wavelength. We will move on to your favourite subject, Eleanor: transport.

[58] **Eleanor Burnham:** Trown yn awr at drafnidiaeth gyhoeddus. Gan gofio bod chwarter o gartrefi ledled Cymru yn dibynnu ar drafnidiaeth gyhoeddus, neu fod teuluoedd yn cerdded neu'n beicio, beth ydych chi'n ei wneud i sicrhau bod pobl o gefndiroedd difreintiedig, a'r rheini sydd o dan anfantais o ganlyniad i'r ffaith eu bod yn byw yng nghefn gwlad, lle nad oes gwasanaeth trafnidiaeth gyhoeddus da, yn gallu manteisio'n gyfrannol ar gyllideb drafnidiaeth eich Llywodraeth?

Eleanor Burnham: Let us move to public transport. Bearing in mind the fact that a quarter of homes across Wales depend on public transport or walking and cycling, what are you doing to ensure that people from disadvantaged backgrounds, or those who are at a disadvantage as a result of their living in rural areas, where people are not well served by public transport, can benefit proportionately from the Welsh Assembly Government's transport budget?

[59] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Mae mynediad i drafnidiaeth gyhoeddus yn hynod o bwysig i grwpiau difreintiedig, ac mae

The Deputy First Minister: Access to public transport is extremely important for disadvantaged groups, and we have a number

gennym sawl cynllun ar waith sydd bellach wedi'u cadarnhau yn y cynllun trafniadaeth cenedlaethol. Yn gyntaf, yr ydym am sicrhau bod safon trafniadaeth gyhoeddus yn gwella, a dyna pam mae gennym ddeddfwriaeth bellach i sicrhau bod bysiau'n cyrraedd safon benodol o safbwynt mynediad i bobl sydd ag anableddau neu i famau â phlant. Yr ydym hefyd am wneud bysiau'n ddiogel drwy sicrhau bod camerâu teledu cylch cyfyng arnynt, ac yn y blaen.

[60] Mae hi'n fwy anodd yng nghydestun trenau, fel y gwyddoch, Eleanor. Cafodd y rhan fwyaf o orsafoedd Cymru eu hadeiladu mewn cyfnod pan nad oedd deddfwriaeth cydraddoldeb yn bodoli. Mewn manau lle'r ydym yn codi gorsafoedd newydd, megis Glynebwy, gallwn sicrhau bod mynediad i bobl ag anableddau yn rhan o'r cynllun. Mae'n fwy anodd mewn manau eraill oherwydd cafodd y rhan fwyaf o orsafoedd eu codi dros ganrif yn ôl.

[61] Serch hynny, mae gennym raglen waith ac yr ydym wedi neilltuo arian ar sail flynyddol i sicrhau, er enghraifft, fod gorsafoedd yn gymwys ar gyfer pobl ag anableddau. Mae gennym gynllun i wella'r gorsafoedd yn Aberystwyth, ym Mhontypridd ac yng Nghaerdydd, a bydd cynlluniau eraill maes o law. Yr wyf yn cyfarfod grwpiau sy'n cynrychioli pobl ag anableddau yn eithaf cyson i weld a fyddai modd ehangu'r rhaglen dros gyfnod. Yn anffodus, mae'n rhaid i ni roi arian i gyfateb â'r hyn a ddaw oddi wrth Network Rail i wella'r cyfleusterau hyn. Mae gennym raglen eithaf adeiladol ar gyfer y blynyddoedd nesaf.

[62] **Eleanor Burnham:** Fe wnaethoch chi sôn am fysus. Hyd y gwn i, nid oes gan fysus y Traws Cambria doiledau, ac mae'r ffaith nad yw'r cyfleuster hwnnw ar gael yn golygu nad oes modd i rai pobl anabl, ac eraill, ddefnyddio'r gwasanaeth hwnnw i deithio o un ran o Gymru i ran arall. Beth fyddwch chi'n ei wneud ynghylch sefyllfa o'r fath?

[63] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Y broblem gyda gwasanaeth y Traws Cambria ar hyn o bryd yw'r ffaith ei fod yn defnyddio bysiau lleol, er ei fod yn wasanaeth

of schemes in place that have now been confirmed in the national transport plan. First, we want to ensure that the quality of public transport is improved, which is why we now have legislation to ensure that buses meet certain standards in terms of access for people with disabilities and people travelling with children. We also want to ensure that these buses are safe for travel by installing closed circuit television cameras and so on.

It is more difficult with trains, as you well know, Eleanor. Most of the stations in Wales were built at a time when there was no equalities legislation in place. Where we are able to provide new stations, such as Ebbw Vale, for example, we are able to ensure that access for people with disabilities is built into the plans. In other areas, it is more difficult because most of these stations were built more than a century ago.

However, we have a programme of work, and we have allocated money on an annual basis to ensure, for example, that stations are appropriate for people with disabilities. We have schemes for improvements to stations in Aberystwyth, Pontypridd and Cardiff, and there will be other schemes in due course. I also meet groups representing people with disabilities on a relatively regular basis to see whether this programme could be increased over time. Unfortunately, we have to match the funding provided by Network Rail to improve the facilities. We have a relatively constructive programme in place for the next few years.

Eleanor Burnham: You mentioned buses. As far as I know, the Traws Cambria service buses do not have toilets on board, and the lack of that basic facility means that there are disabled people and other travellers who are unable to use that bus service to travel from one part of Wales to another. What are you going to do about that sort of situation?

The Deputy First Minister: The problem that we have on the Traws Cambria service at the moment is that, although it is a regional service, it uses local buses. We have

rhanbarthol. Yr ydym wedi cydnabod y broblem honno, ac yr ydym yn ystyried cynllun i ddefnyddio coetsis i ddarparu'r gwasanaeth. Wrth gwrs, byddai gan y rheini y cyfleusterau yr ydych yn sôn amdanynt. Os ydym am gael trafnidiaeth gyhoeddus integredig go iawn, mae'n rhaid inni yn gyntaf gael gwasanaeth y mae pobl yn fodlon ei ddefnyddio.

recognised that issue, and we are looking at a scheme of using coaches to provide that service. Of course, they would have the facilities that you mention on board. If we are to have a truly integrated transport system, we must first provide a service that people are willing to use.

[64] Yn ail, mae'n rhaid i'r gwasanaeth fod yn rhan o rwydwaith. Er enghraifft, os gallwch ddefnyddio'r bws neu'r trê, byddwch yn integreiddio'r gwasanaeth. Yr ydym yn cydnabod bod angen gwella safon bysiau gwasanaeth y Traws Cambria, ac yr ydym wrthi'n gwneud hynny ar hyn o bryd.

Secondly, it has to be part of a network. For example, if you can use the bus or train, you will be able to integrate those services. We recognise that the quality of the Traws Cambria service buses needs to be improved, and we are currently working on that.

[65] **Eleanor Burnham:** Pryd fydd hyn yn digwydd?

Eleanor Burnham: When will this happen?

[66] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Ni fedraf roi dyddiad pendant ichi, ond, os oes gennych ddiddordeb—ac mae'n siŵr gennyf y bydd gan y pwyllgor ddiddordeb—efallai y gallwn ysgrifennu atoch i roi mwy o fanylion am yr amserlen.

The Deputy First Minister: I cannot give you a specific date, but, if you are interested—and I am sure that the committee would be interested—perhaps I could write to you with more details about the timetable.

[67] **Eleanor Burnham:** Diolch yn fawr iawn.

Eleanor Burnham: Thank you very much.

[68] **Ann Jones:** To press that point a little further, whose responsibility is it to make sure that every bus route has an accessible bus on it? Sometimes, local authorities will contract out to another company, which then becomes a subsidiary. Therefore, whose responsibility is it to have accessible buses for everyone?

[69] **The Deputy First Minister:** Do you mean accessible buses in terms of the timetable?

[70] **Ann Jones:** In terms of being able to get on and off, particularly in the case of elderly people. Many people now have a free bus pass but they cannot use the services because the floor level of the buses is too high.

[71] **The Deputy First Minister:** It is the bus companies that have the responsibility, because there is now legislation that makes it clear that those buses have to comply with new standards. The standards now have to be introduced. Perhaps I could give you a little more detail on that in a letter, but there are standards that have to be complied with by 2015 whereby buses need to have all of the facilities that are available. Eleanor and I were at an event in Bangor, where Arriva Bus introduced a fleet of around 20 buses with low floors. These are accessible for mothers with children, and for people with disabilities. People need to feel safe on buses, which is why we need things like CCTV cameras and as much information as possible. One of the things that struck me in looking at buses in Wales—and we looked at the surveys—was that most people access information about buses from the bus stop. We want people to have that information earlier, which means accessing it by telephone or through websites and having a one-stop shop for information about buses and trains.

[72] **The First Minister:** It is also important that bus companies realise that for a bus to be accessible, it does require a drop floor. I can think of an example that happened in my own constituency. The local authority introduced raised kerbs, built them all and then the bus company immediately withdrew the drop-floor buses that were meant to be used with the raised kerbs. The buses were returned, but the buses that replaced them were, effectively, coaches with a hoist for a wheelchair on the coach. There were numerous examples of the hoist not working or taking 20 minutes for someone with a wheelchair to get onto the bus, or the bus company saying that people had to telephone in advance to let it know whether they would be travelling in a wheelchair. Fortunately, the situation did not persist, but it is important to make the point that a properly accessible bus does have a drop floor, and, hopefully, there will be raised kerbs, and that is by far the easiest way of enabling all people to access a bus.

[73] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yr wyf yn falch o glywed y byddwch yn darparu gwybodaeth ger yr arhosfan bws. Bu un ferch ifanc yn cwyno wrthyf ddoe—gan ei bod yn ymwybodol o'r hyn yr wyf yn ei wneud—am y ffaith y bu hi'n disgwyl am fws yng Nghaerdydd am hanner awr ben bore ac nid oedd unrhyw wybodaeth ar gael. Ni ddaeth y bws, felly bu'n rhaid iddi heglu i geisio dal bws arall. Mae hyn yn anghyfleus iawn os ydych yn gweithio i gwmni bach, er enghraifft. Nid yw'r sefyllfa'n gweithio.

Eleanor Burnham: I am pleased to hear that you will provide information near the bus stop. One young woman complained to me yesterday—because she knows what my job is—that she had been waiting for a bus in Cardiff for half an hour early in the morning and there was no information available. The bus did not turn up and so she had to run to try to catch another bus. This is very inconvenient if you work for a small company, for example. It does not work.

[74] Rhag ofn i chi feddwl mai cwyno yn unig a wnaaf ar ran fy etholwyr, yr wyf am gymeradwyo gwasanaethau bws Arriva oherwydd yn Rossett, lle'r wyf yn byw, mae'r gwasanaeth yn wych. Mae integreiddio'n digwydd—yr wyf yn defnyddio'r gwasanaeth sy'n rhedeg o'r orsaf drenau yng Nghaer a thrwy Rossett ac yna Wrecsam. Mae'r bws i Bermo hefyd yn wych.

Lest anyone think that I only complain on behalf of my constituents, I would like to applaud Arriva bus services because, in Rossett, where I live, the service is excellent. There is integration—I use the service that runs from the railway station in Chester, through Rossett and then Wrexham. The bus to Barmouth is also excellent.

[75] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Da iawn.

The Deputy First Minister: Very good.

[76] **Ann Jones:** Shall we move on?

[77] **Eleanor Burnham:** Absolutely.

[78] Serch hynny, mae yna broblemau hefyd o ran mynediad, fel y crybwyllwyd gennyh, mewn gorsafoedd trên. Caf ar ddeall mai 34 y cant yn unig o orsafoedd rheilffyrdd yng Nghymru sydd â mynediad llawn i'r platfformau ar gyfer pobl anabl. Mae hyn yn andros o anghyfleus os nad oes staff ar gael i helpu. Os ydyw hi ychydig yn hwyr gyda'r nos, bydd y staff wedi mynd adref. Er enghraifft, byddaf yn defnyddio'r gwasanaeth yn Wrecsam yn wythnosol. Nid

However, there are also problems with access, as you have already mentioned, in railway stations. I understand that only 34 per cent of railway stations in Wales have full disabled access to all platforms. This is extremely inconvenient if there are no staff available. If it is a little late in the evening, the staff will have gone home. For example, I use the service in Wrexham on a weekly basis. There is no access to the lift or to the toilets once the staff have gone home.

oes mynediad i'r liff t nac i'r tai bach ar ôl i'r staff fynd adref.

10.10 a.m.

[79] Crybwyllaf y pwynt hwn oherwydd efallai y bydd pobl mewn cadeiriau olwyn, er enghraifft, eisiau mynd i'r tŷ bach cyn mynd ar y trê n oherwydd ni fyddant yn gallu gwneud hynny ar rai trenau oherwydd nad oes digon o le ynddynt. Yr ydym yn derbyn cwestiynau am hyn o hyd, felly beth allwch chi ei wneud i wella'r sefyllfa hon?

[81] **Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog:** Credaf mai eich plaid chi, Eleanor, a gyflwynodd ddadl am fynediad i orsafoedd gan bobl ag anableddau, a hynny o dan nawdd y Multiple Sclerosis Society. Yn dilyn hynny, cyfarfûm â'r gymdeithas yng Nghymru, oherwydd yr wyf yn ymwybodol bod hwn yn fater difrifol ac mae'n fater yr hoffwn weld cynnydd arno. Yr wyf felly wedi cytuno i gydweithio â'r gymdeithas er mwyn sicrhau ein bod yn gwella'r sefyllfa.

[82] Yr wyf wedi egluro eisoes bod problemau eithaf difrifol o ran cael mynediad i orsafoedd yng Nghymru oherwydd eu bod yn hen iawn ac mae angen llawer o waith arnynt. Eto i gyd, mae yna rai pethau eithaf arloesol y gallwn eu gwneud. Yr ydym, er enghraifft, wedi gosod 'hump' symudol yn ngorsaf Aberdyfi, y gellir ei symud yn ôl ac ymlaen pan fydd y trê n yn dod i mewn er mwyn cau'r bwlch rhwng y trê n a'r plattform. Mae'n gweithio'n dda, ac nid yw'n helpu pobl anabl yn unig, ond pobl abl hefyd. Felly, gallwn edrych ar ddefnydd pellach o'r rheini. Yr ydym hefyd wedi cytuno i roi arian o'r neilltu i gydweithio â Network Rail i wella gorsafoedd dros gyfnod o amser. Yr wyf wedi egluro ein bod ni eisoes wedi cytuno i wneud gwaith yn Aberystwyth, Caerdydd a Phontypridd, a byddwn yn ehangu hynny o flwyddyn i flwyddyn. Felly, yr ydym yn derbyn bod problemau. Yr ydym hefyd yn trafod y trenau gydag Arriva Trains i sicrhau eu bod yn fwy addas ar gyfer pobl ag anableddau. Wrth gwrs, pan fyddwn yn gofyn i'r cwmni ddarparu gwasanaethau newydd, gobeithiwn y bydd y trenau'n fwy pwrpasol o lawer.

[83] **Eleanor Burnham:** Nid yw'r gris

[80] I mention this point because people in wheelchairs, for instance, may wish to go to the toilet before getting on the train because they will not be able to do so on some trains because there is not enough room in them. We constantly receive questions on this subject, so what can you do to improve this situation?

The Deputy First Minister: I believe that it was your party, Eleanor, that tabled a debate on access to train stations for people with disabilities, under the sponsorship of the Multiple Sclerosis Society. As a result of that debate, I met with the society in Wales, because I am aware that this is a serious issue on which I would like to see progress made. I have therefore agreed to collaborate with the society to ensure that we improve the situation.

I have already explained that there are serious problems in terms of access to stations in Wales because they are very old and a great deal of work needs to be done on them. However, there are some innovative things that we can do. We have, for example, put in a mobile hump in Aberdyfi station, which can be moved back and forth when a train comes in to close the gap between the train and the platform. It works well, and it helps not only disabled people, but able people. So, we can look at the further use of those humps. We have also agreed to set money aside to collaborate with Network Rail to improve stations over a period of time. I have already explained that we have agreed to carry out work in Aberystwyth, Cardiff and Pontypridd, and we will roll that out further year on year. Therefore, we do accept that there are problems. We are also discussing the trains with Arriva Trains to ensure that they are more appropriate for people with disabilities. Of course, when we ask the company to provide new services, we hope that those trains will be far more fit for purpose.

Eleanor Burnham: The step coming down

wrth ddod i lawr o'r trê'n yn addas yn fy marn i, yn enwedig os ydych yn hÿn neu os oes gennych broblemau cefn neu anabledd. Nid wyf yn siŵr a yw'r Cadeirydd yn cyd-fynd â mi ar hynny. Mae'r trenau mwyaf newydd, sef y rhai Ffrengig, yn andros o isel, felly gallwch ddod allan o'r trê'n a chamu'n syth ar y platfform.

from the train is not suitable in my opinion, particularly if you are older or if you have back problems or a disability. I do not know whether the Chair would agree with me on that. The newest trains that we have, which are the French ones, are very low, therefore you can step directly off the train and onto the platform.

[84] **Ann Jones:** When planning new stations with Arriva Trains, if you get it right for those with the severest disability, then it will be right for everyone. Therefore, why do public bodies and people not take the approach of getting it right for those who have the severest disability, means getting it right for everyone else, including those who can skip on and off without handrails and so on?

[85] **The Deputy First Minister:** It is important to stress that we are talking in part about the difficulties of adapting very old stations. However, all new stations must comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, so every new station on the Ebbw Vale line, for example, have to comply with the new standards. So, all planned new stations must comply, and we understand that, but it is the older stations that are the most difficult to adapt.

[86] **Eleanor Burnham:** There are difficulties. I always enter Cardiff Central station via the back entrance because that is where my taxi takes me. However, if I am not careful—and I am able bodied—I can lose my ticket by the time I eventually reach the main part of the station to go to the shop, before going to the back to use the lift with my case. Very often, the ticket gets stuck. This is an important issue because it means that you can miss your train, because there is no-one there to help you at that spot and then you have to rush around to the front barriers. That can cause considerable difficulty if you are disabled, elderly or have a bad back, or are carrying luggage. As Ann said, why cannot people use their judgment and common sense when they design stations, because, in this instance, it is a matter of security that can make you miss your train?

[87] **Ann Jones:** That comes within the scope of our next inquiry, Eleanor.

[88] **The Deputy First Minister:** I will ensure that that exchange is passed on to those responsible for running Cardiff Central station, because work is being carried out under our funding arrangements.

[89] **Ann Jones:** Our next inquiry will look at the accessibility of railway stations, so I am sure that we will consider that issue.

[90] **Mohammad Asghar:** To turn to a different subject, Chair, last weekend, my wife was rushed into hospital with a suspected heart attack. The paramedics provided a first-class service and the doctors and nurses provided a world-class service, but she was kept on a trolley for 27 hours. The next day, she was released because it was angina. My question is on healthcare, social care and housing. Given the rising demand for health and social care services in the context of an ageing population—my wife will be 65 next month—how do you intend to ensure that older people are not disproportionately affected by any future reduction in the funding available for health and social services?

[91] **The Deputy First Minister:** An ageing society presents us with a number of opportunities as well as quite significant challenges. I hope that your wife is recovering, please send her our best wishes. We understand that older people often make a major contribution to society as citizens, carers and volunteers. Therefore, it is essential that any

barriers to their full participation are removed. We need to ensure that NHS services are accessible to people whatever their age. However, we understand that the greatest pressure is bound to be in relation to elderly people. Therefore, we need to ensure that those services are accessible to them. If there are individual cases where you think that these matters have not been dealt with, there are procedures by which you can take that up with your local health board. However, in order to ensure that older people are properly cared for, we are trying to ensure that, first of all, the social services system allows people to remain in their homes for as long as they can and, when there is a health intervention, that they have access to the primary and secondary care services in a way that is appropriate to their condition. I am sorry to hear of the example that you gave and I hope that your wife makes a full recovery.

[92] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Deputy First Minister. You mentioned to my colleague Joyce that procurement should not be a restrictive tool. Basically, there was a shortage of beds over those 27 hours and I do not know what happened to other people who came in with the same condition—were they sent home? I do not know what happened at the Royal Gwent, but the doctors and nurses there were world class. The service was out of this world, and I am so grateful to them for the care that they gave my wife; I could not believe it. They did not know who I was and did not know who she was. I am very grateful for the national health service, but I am concerned that people in a similar condition must have come in and there was no bed for them; the situation could have been worse for others. That is an issue of procurement. We have heard it said in a committee that £1 billion is being spent inappropriately in the NHS, so I would hope that some of that money would come to this sort of procurement.

[93] **Ann Jones:** The Minister for Health and Social Services has already said that she is looking into that, so I do not think that we can go into that here.

[94] **The Deputy First Minister:** We need to make a distinction here. The procurement route that we were talking about earlier is a different issue. We were talking about construction contracts, which are, basically, capital spend, whereas this issue is about revenue spend. One would hope that the local health board will have considered your representations carefully in that regard.

[95] **Ann Jones:** Do you want to go on to the next question, Oscar?

[96] **Mohammad Asghar:** Yes. When will the Welsh Assembly Government ensure that older and disabled people are able to live in accessible and safe houses or to have their home adapted to meet their needs?

10.20 a.m.

[97] **The Deputy First Minister:** That is an important agenda for us, because as the healthcare demands with regard to older people increase, as they always do when people are over the age of 65 and, in particular, over 75, if we can maintain people in their homes for longer, they will be more independent and perhaps less reliant on interventions through the secondary care system. So, through Care and Repair in Wales, we have provided personalised advice and direct assistance to older people to enable them to carry out improvements to their homes. Elderly people need to feel secure in their homes, so grants are available to secure their homes. Often, their homes are not properly insulated, so grants are available to insulate their homes. Heating is obviously a big issue, so grants are available to replace boilers and central heating systems to make them more efficient. Those are the sorts of adaptations that are necessary. If, in addition, elderly people suffer from disabilities, there are disabled facilities grants available to enable them to adapt their homes. We recognise that that budget is tight. However, we must remember that, if we can provide people with the facilities that allow them to stay in their homes longer, they will remain more active and independent, and

the pressure on the secondary care system will therefore be relieved.

[98] **Mohammad Asghar:** Thank you very much, Minister.

[99] **Ann Jones:** We have gone over time, and I realise that both Ministers have appointments at 10.30 a.m. Could you possibly answer one quick question from Eleanor? She will be quick. Joyce, perhaps we can write to the Ministers with your question.

[100] **Eleanor Burnham:** You are very kind; I am grateful to you, Chair. Recently, we carried out a review of adaptations. As you are our new First Minister, I wonder whether you will be looking into all of this. An important issue that emerged from that review was the lack of available occupational therapists. I have been to various presentations recently at which the same thing has been said, so it is not just the capital spend that is the issue but the lack of occupational therapists to make the quickest possible assessment throughout the local authority or health board area. Now we are in this exciting new phase of new local health boards, can you reassure us that you will be making your best efforts to properly address the issue that Oscar raised in his question? It is not just a matter of revenue, but that things need to dovetail and that there must be occupational therapists available to make quick assessments.

[101] **The First Minister:** The answer to that is 'yes'. I do not think that this is a problem across Wales. There are parts of Wales where the system works very well. However, more broadly, the other challenge for us is to ensure that there is sufficient diversity of provision for older people for the future. Not so long ago, the choice was between being in your own home, a sheltered home, a residential home or a nursing home; that was it. Many older people were, naturally, very reluctant to move from what they saw as the independence of being in their own homes to the dependence of being in a residential home. That is why things such as Extra Care facilities are so important; they provide that halfway house for people who can therefore retain their independence but still access easily the services they need to maintain that independence. There will be a need over the next few years, as we recognise as a Government, to roll out a number of options across Wales that can be more easily tailored to people's needs and preferences.

[102] **Ann Jones:** Joyce had two or three questions and I had one, so if we could write to you with those, First Minister, perhaps we could receive a written response.

[103] **The First Minister:** Yes.

[104] **Ann Jones:** Is that all right, Joyce?

[105] **Joyce Watson:** Yes.

[106] **Ann Jones:** Thank you both for coming. I am sorry that we ran over time, but we all have our little pet subjects that we want to talk about. This is an annual event—we like to look at the 'One Wales' agreement—so I hope that we will ask you to return. I am sorry to tell you, Ieuan, but we will be looking at the accessibility of railway stations, so we may have to have you back.

[107] **The Deputy First Minister:** You need not be sorry about that.

[108] **Ann Jones:** Thank you ever so much for answering our questions. We will send a note of the other questions.

10.24 a.m.

**Trafodaeth Ddilynol ar Adroddiad Cydraddoldeb Blynyddol y Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol 2009
Follow-up on National Assembly's Annual Equality Report 2009**

[109] **Ann Jones:** At the meeting at which we looked at the report we asked for further information on a number of issues. We also looked at how to address the need to raise awareness of the Assembly as an employer for the whole of Wales and we looked at the work being done outside Wales. We have the paper before us, and it is up to committee members now to decide what to do with it. Does anyone have any views on this?

[110] I wonder whether we should write to Lorraine Barrett, who is the Commissioner for the Sustainable Assembly, setting out some of concerns about the recruitment policies. Joyce, I think that you had a couple of concerns to do with recruiting older people recruiting older people and how we get that information out. Does anyone else have any views?

[111] **Eleanor Burnham:** There are issues that emanate from the Equality Bill regarding grey areas around pensionable ages and so on. I am quite confused about that, and ageism is an issue that is related to that. So, I would like to highlight that.

[112] **Ann Jones:** We will draft a letter and write to the commissioner about that. Is everyone else satisfied with the paper?

[113] **Janet Ryder:** The statistics on age and recruitment are interesting—

[114] **Eleanor Burnham:** I am sorry to cut across. You asked for more of an analysis, did you not? I think that you asked for certain bands to be broken down.

[115] **Ann Jones:** Yes, and we have that here.

[116] **Janet Ryder:** That analysis is interesting, particularly if you look at the kinds of work that people in the upper age range have been recruited into, and the scales at which they have been appointed. I do not know whether it is worth further discussion, but it is an interesting breakdown.

[117] **Ann Jones:** We will write to Lorraine and ask what we can do to promote the older person.

[118] **Eleanor Burnham:** The other issue for me is where jobs are advertised. I have received queries from some people in north Wales about that. Some people are still concerned, as you must be, about the perceived narrowness in where jobs are advertised. They are advertised in the *Western Mail*, perhaps the *South Wales Argus*, the *Daily Post* and on websites. Some people, in disadvantaged situations, are still not able to access websites. It would be useful to have an analysis of that, and maybe even of how much money is being spent on advertisements in the media that are used at the moment.

[119] **Ann Jones:** Okay. We will write and ask for a breakdown of the advertising budget, and how it is spent.

[120] **Eleanor Burnham:** Yes, and on where it is spent, for example on advertisements in the *Daily Post*, *Western Mail*, *South Wales Argus* or whatever.

[121] **Ann Jones:** Is there anything to add on this paper, or are we happy with just those two points?

[122] **Janet Ryder:** I raised another issue, which was about training for lip reading and how to deal with people with different disabilities. Item 7 in the paper gives a good, comprehensive answer, and we can be proud of that in the National Assembly.

[123] **Ann Jones:** Perhaps we should write to say ‘congratulations’. We often ask for more information and throw bricks, but perhaps we should also throw bouquets.

[124] **Janet Ryder:** We could use that as an example, and ask the health boards or the police forces how they measure up against that and what kind of training they offer.

[125] **Ann Jones:** Okay, we could do that. Are we happy to move on? I see that you are.

10.28 a.m.

Cwmpasu Ymchwiliad Nesaf y Pwyllgor—Hygyrchedd Gorsafoddd Trenau Scoping of Next Committee Inquiry—Accessibility of Railway Stations

[126] **Ann Jones:** Paper 3 is a scoping paper for the committee’s next inquiry, which is into the accessibility of railway stations—I think that Eleanor and I managed to cover most of it during questioning today. We have the scoping paper in front of us. We have to be careful that we do not stray into subject areas; we have to look at the equality aspects of all of this. We have tried to narrow it down so that we are not outwith Standing Orders on this.

[127] **Eleanor Burnham:** You made an eloquent point earlier, that if—

[128] **Ann Jones:** If it is right for most—

[129] **Eleanor Burnham:** Absolutely. For older people, those who have back problems, those with a Zimmer frame, or those with buggies, it is a big hassle.

[130] **Ann Jones:** Yes, but we have to be careful that we do not stray into policy matters. Having said that, our terms of reference on this are sufficient for us to identify the problems of people who have disabilities or who are disadvantaged in travelling.

[131] **Eleanor Burnham:** My only concern is that the issue is not just about stations, but the trains as well.

[132] **Ann Jones:** We can look at that.

[133] **Eleanor Burnham:** Can we do that?

[134] **Ann Jones:** If it comes out in the inquiry, we can.

[135] **Eleanor Burnham:** You understand what I am saying: it is only half the battle to get on and off the platform. The other issue is getting on and off the train.

[136] **Ann Jones:** Yes, you are right. However, we have to be careful, as the Standing Orders set out our remit as in relation to equality. We have to be careful that we do not stray into policy matters.

[137] **Eleanor Burnham:** I know that, but the issue is not just about stations, but using the trains.

[138] **Janet Ryder:** On access to stations, from looking at the response, Wrexham does not

feature anywhere as an inaccessible station and yet if you are travelling at night and need to cross the lines in any way, you cannot do so if the station is not manned—sometimes you cannot do it if it is manned. That makes a major interchange totally inaccessible and I think that that is wholly within the remit of this committee.

10.30 a.m.

[139] **Ann Jones:** I think so, too. We can look at those issues. Are you happy with the terms of reference, so that we can send the consultation letter out?

[140] **Joyce Watson:** You refer to it as ‘the accessibility of railway stations’, but people are saying that that is linked to the accessibility of the transport provided, which is the train itself. Should we perhaps add something, in brackets?

[141] **Eleanor Burnham:** What about ‘railway services’?

[142] **Ms Roberts:** There are a lot of issues in the Equality Bill that relate specifically to transport. I am more than happy to look into that in more detail and provide a short note for the committee, but there are specific provisions in the Equality Bill that relate to trains.

[143] **Ann Jones:** Okay, we will do that. We will stick to this scoping paper for now and if Helen goes away and prepares a paper for us and we decide that we need to include it, it could just be a follow on from that.

[144] **Ms Rogers:** As the paper stands, it does deal with access onto the train, but it does not focus on what happens on the train. That might be an additional aspect.

[145] **Ann Jones:** We could address access onto the train and then address access on the train as an additional aspect. If we wrap them all up in one big inquiry, things can get lost.

[146] **Mohammad Asghar:** Some councils are encouraging taxi drivers to provide disabled access to their taxis. So, if that is the case with taxis, why not with buses, trains and everywhere? So, that is what we need to encourage in the legislation.

[147] **Joyce Watson:** It is there.

[148] **Ann Jones:** I think that transport is included. Can we stick to the accessibility of railway stations as in the scoping paper, so that we can get the consultation letter out? There is a whole raft of people to whom we want to send it. If Helen prepares a paper for us on trains and what the Equality Bill says about those, then we can also address trains, Eleanor. We will tackle accessible stations first and then address trains, so that it does not all get mixed up in one large inquiry; people would then be able to deal with one recommendation, but not another, if they so chose.

[149] **Ms Rogers:** I think that the focus is on the stations because the Welsh Assembly Government has powers relating to infrastructure, but not to trains and rail services. That is why that is separate.

[150] **Joyce Watson:** When we look at the accessibility of railway stations, will we look at their accessibility in terms of allowing the low-floor buses, which you were just talking about, on to their property? If they are not enabling people who rely on public transport to be able to get off a bus and on to a train in the first place, it is possible that we miss—

[151] **Ann Jones:** We look at that where there is an integrated transport hub.

[152] **Ms Rogers:** You could ask people about that, and they would say, 'I could not get up to the station in the first place'. Some of that information has already come out, along with the fact that the roads are busy and no buses go straight up to the station.

[153] **Ann Jones:** We can look at that.

[154] **Eleanor Burnham:** On the transport organisations, may I suggest that you add the Wrexham and Shropshire Railway Company?

[155] **Ann Jones:** Have we not included it?

[156] **Eleanor Burnham:** No, I do not think so, unless I have misread the paper. It operates from Wrexham to Shrewsbury on the same line as Arriva Trains Wales.

[157] **Ann Jones:** Okay, we will add that to the list; well spotted. Are there any other points on this? I see that there are not. That is the end of our meeting. The next meeting is on 2 March when we will review the progress made on improving the accessibility of polling stations. The Association of Electoral Administrators, Scope and the Electoral Commission are all coming in to tell us how they have improved the accessibility of polling stations so that everyone can go to vote. Thank you very much.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 10.35 a.m.
The meeting ended at 10.35 a.m.*