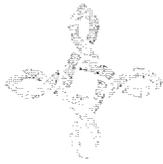


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AS



GIG  
VHS

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Caerdydd a'r Fro  
Cardiff and Vale  
University Health Board

Ysbyty'r Eglwys Newydd  
Whitchurch Hospital

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Ysbyty'r Eglwys Newydd  
Whitchurch  
Wales Health, Telephone Network  
02920 2069 1191 / 02920 745684

**David Francis  
Chair**

21 January 2010

Ms Val Lloyd  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CARDIFF  
CF99 1NA

27 JAN 2010

Dear Ms Lloyd

**RE: PETITION - PARKING IN THE HEATH AND BIRCHGROVE AREAS OF  
CARDIFF**

I write in reply to your letter of 18 December 2009 and must apologise for the delay.

I enclose a copy of the University Hospital of Wales Sustainable Travel Plan as requested. This was first submitted to the National Assembly before the deadline of 31 March 2009 and received ratification on 1 July 2009. The Plan is to be updated this year.

I hope that this will be helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

**DAVID FRANCIS  
Chairman**

GD7 FM

Enc



**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM**

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

Our ref: EH/00328/10

Your ref: P-03-150

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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E-Mail: Correspondence.Edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

8 February 2010

Thank you for your letter dated 29 January on behalf of the Petitions Committee asking to be provided with the findings of the Cancer Services Co-ordinating Group's all Wales report and a summary of the progress made by the NHS since the April self assessment.

The results of the April 2009 self assessment against the National Cancer Standards showed areas of non compliance. The update report on the position at the end of October was prepared for me by the Cancer Services Coordinating Group and showed improvement. This information is for use by the Assembly Government for performance management purposes and by the NHS to inform its future planning and delivery of cancer services and is not intended for public consumption.

In the light of the reports on performance, the Assembly Government will write to the Local Health Boards (LHBs) setting a new deadline of the end of September this year to achieve full compliance across Wales. LHBs have been asked to produce action plans by the end of February setting out the action needed in order to achieve this. Each LHB is required to designate a formal executive lead for cancer services.

The Assembly Government is also setting up a Cancer Implementation Group, responsible for overseeing and performance managing this process. This group will report progress to me.

**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM**

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

Our ref: EH/00326/10

Your ref: P-03-153

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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8 February 2010

*Dear Chris.*

Thank you for your letter of 29 January regarding the Task and Finish Group's report on the regulatory options for restricting access to body piercing for those under 16 years old.

The Non-Surgical Cosmetic Task and Finish Group have, in their meeting on the 23 February will focus on issues regarding age and consent. I will write to you further with their considered view.

*Edwina Hart*

**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM**

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

Our ref: EH/00325/10

Your ref: P-03-156

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



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9 February 2010

Thank you for your letter dated 29 January on behalf of the Petitions Committee about sleep apnoea requesting details of the further development work required by Local Health Boards (LHBs) to fully comply with the Respiratory Directives.

The National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare (NLIAH) undertook the 2nd annual audit of LHBs progress against the key actions set out in the Directives in December 2009. The results show that considerable progress has been made in meeting many of the key actions since 2008 however further development work is still required by LHBs to achieve full compliance. NLIAH's audit report identifies the particular gaps that remain outstanding in each LHB area and I have written to LHBs requiring them to achieve full compliance with the Directives in time for the next audit in September 2010.

To assist LHBs in achieving this, a workshop is being held on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010 which will bring together all those involved in the planning and provision of respiratory care to identify and share best practice with each other and lessons for practical implementation.

**Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM**  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-162  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00275/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

22 February 2010

*Dear Christine*

Thank you for your letter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> February regarding the petition to improve safety on the A40 Trunk Road near Llanspyddid.

I can confirm that we are carrying out a safety review on this part of the trunk road. My officials anticipate that they will have completed the review by the end of this financial year. Until then, I am unable to comment on any potential improvements that may or may not be required.

We are looking at the speed limit at Llanspyddid as part of this safety review. Therefore, its inclusion in the more general exercise to review all the speed limits across the trunk road network in Wales by December 2014 is not required.

*Ieuan*

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport

**Pwyllgor Menter a Dysgu**  
**Enterprise and Learning Committee**  
Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Christine Chapman  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

3 February 2010

Dear Chris

**PETITION: EUROPEAN FUNDING**

Thank you for your letter dated 2 February 2010 concerning the above petition. You asked me to notify the lead petitioner about the Enterprise and Learning Committee's forthcoming inquiry into the implementation of the 2007-2013 programmes of European Structural Funds.

The Committee Clerk is today writing to Mr Wyn Pryce to inform him about the inquiry's terms of reference and will invite him to submit written evidence. We shall keep the Petitions Committee informed of progress.

I hope this information is useful to the Petitions Committee.

Yours sincerely



**Gareth Jones AM**  
**Committee Chair**

Dr Siân Phipps  
Clerc y Pwyllgor / Committee Clerk  
Tel: 029 20 898582  
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sian.phipps@wales.gsi.gov.uk

**Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM**  
**Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-187  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00368/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CARDIFF CF99 1NA

28 February 2010

Dear Christine,

I am replying to your letter of 10 February regarding the petition to abolish the tolls on the Severn Crossings.

As I explained in my letter to Val Lloyd of 14 January, the Severn Crossings are owned by the UK Government and the tolling regime is determined by the Severn Bridges Act 1992. The current concession agreement with Severn River Crossing PLC is forecast to end in 2016, at which time the operation of the Crossings will revert to the Highways Agency. Under the 1992 Act, the Secretary of State can continue tolling for a further five years in order to establish a maintenance fund for the Crossings.

In the circumstances, any plan to collect evidence or to undertake an official assessment of the impact of the tolls is a matter for the UK Government. Whilst I recognise the effect of the tolls on certain businesses, I am also conscious of the point made by the Minister for Business and Budget in the short debate on 20 January about the need to keep the tolls in perspective. Transport costs generally account for no more than 5 to 10 per cent of production costs, with toll charges accounting for only a very small proportion of total transport costs for the vast majority of businesses.

You also asked whether the Highways Agency was intending to set the full toll rate permissible after 2016. This is something that I will want to discuss with the UK Government nearer the time. Their approach will no doubt be informed by an assessment of the structural condition of the Crossings and the subsequent maintenance requirement.

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
**Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth**  
**Minister for the Economy and Transport**

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**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM**

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

Our ref: EH/07133/09

Your ref: P-03-188

26 NOV 2009

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
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*Dau Val*

*CP7*

25 November 2009

Thank you for your letter dated 16 November enquiring about how recruitment pressures on the Health Service in respect of medical staff are being caused by the new immigration rules.

The under recruitment of junior doctors into training is a UK wide problem and Wales has therefore been affected. There is a particular problem UK wide in Paediatrics. The reasons for under recruitment can be attributed to a number of factors, including the changes to immigration rules but also the fact that NHS Wales needs to do more to publicise itself as an attractive place to work. The final stage of the introduction of the European Working Time Directive has also brought challenges for the NHS.

Immigration rules are set by the UK Borders Agency with no powers within this area being devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government. Changes to UK immigration rules have made it more difficult for non EU doctors to either work or train in the UK. Whilst they can still come, the more rigorous rules make it less attractive and application rates are therefore much lower than in the past. I wrote to the Home Secretary earlier in the year to highlight some of the difficulties being incurred. A particular problem was that non EU graduates who had permits to attend medical schools in the UK were not eligible to apply for specialist training posts. This particular problem has now been resolved and they will now be eligible to apply in the first round of recruitment which starts in December 2009.

The UKBA is working with the NHS across the UK via an NHS Stakeholder Group which includes representatives of the 4 country administrations and the relevant Trade Unions and my officials attend these meetings. The UKBA were also helpful in ensuring that the new LHBs were able to transfer the necessary licences from

the previous Trusts so that there was no delay in the process of any non EU recruitment.

I have asked my officials to obtain specific examples of problems caused by the current regulations and will respond to you in due course with any details.

Representatives from the NHS, the Deanery, the BMA and officials from within the Welsh Assembly Government are also working together in the Junior Doctors Review Group, which was established in August, to try and seek solutions to the immediate problem with an aim to develop a strategy for improving recruitment in the future. Membership consists of representatives for doctors (consultant, middle and junior grades), employers, BMA, post and under graduate deaneries, and WAG officials. Its terms of reference include monitoring of vacancies, working conditions and EWTD compliance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. J. Jones', written in a cursive style.

Y Pwyllgor Iechyd, Lles a  
Llywodraeth Leol

Health, Wellbeing and Local  
Government Committee



Cynulliad National  
Cenedlaethol Assembly for  
**Cymru Wales**  
Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

18 NOV 2009

AM

MS

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA

17 November 2009

Dear Val

Thank you for your letter of 16 October regarding the Special Care Baby Unit at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital.

The Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee has identified maternity services as a potential area for a scrutiny inquiry and I will circulate a copy of your letter to Members for information.

Yours sincerely

**Darren Millar**  
Chair



**Home Office**  
**UK Border Agency**



**Swyddfa Gartref**  
**Asiantaeth Ffin y DU**

**Asiantaeth Ffin y DU**  
Adeiladau Cyffredinol  
31-33 Ffordd Casnewydd  
Caerdydd  
CF24 0AB

**UK Border Agency**  
General Buildings  
31- 33, Newport Road  
Cardiff  
Cf24 0AB

Val Lloyd  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
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4 FEB 2010

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**Email** jane.farleigh  
@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk  
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2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010

Dear Val

5 FEB 2010  
C157

Thank you for your letter of 16 November to Lin Homer regarding changes to the immigration rules and the recruitment of middle grade doctors. Your letter has been passed to me for a response.

On 31 March the Government ceased awarding points for Bachelor degrees under the Tier 1 (General) category of the Points-Based System. The effect of this change was not to exclude doctors and other highly skilled workers from coming to the UK, but to be more selective about the type of migrants who can come to the UK with open access to the labour market, in order to protect job opportunities for resident workers.

Such workers can still apply to come to the UK, but they must do so under the Tier 2 (General) category. This means they must have an offer of a job which has passed the Resident Labour Market Test, showing that no suitable resident workers were available to fill that post (unless the post is on the Shortage Occupation List).

We have designed the Points-Based System to be flexible and we have always said that we will move the bar up and down according to the UK's economic needs. This change was made to respond quickly to rising unemployment and falling vacancies in the labour market. However, we also asked the independent Migration Advisory Committee to undertake more detailed research and make recommendations on the future criteria for Tier 1 and Tier 2. The Committee has now published its recommendations on both Tiers.

A consequence of the change we made in March was that graduates of UK medical schools from overseas could no longer switch into Tier 1 on beginning their specialty training. They would have to switch into Tier 2 instead.

The Medical Students Representative Council and the British Medical Association advised us about the potential impact of this change on graduates of UK medical schools from overseas. We accept the points that they made. These graduates play an important role in the UK's health sector, and the Government values the contribution that they make to health services and educational establishments.

We therefore agreed that, exceptionally, the UK Border Agency would allow non-EEA graduates of UK medical schools to be recruited to Speciality Training posts under Tier 2 without first testing the resident labour market, although other doctors not applying for Speciality Training posts would be subject to the test. This was an interim arrangement that applies only to the 2009 round of recruitment.

We cannot continue this arrangement on a long-term basis as it effectively treats this group of doctors as if they were on the Shortage Occupation List without any recommendation from the Migration Advisory Committee that they meet its criteria for inclusion on that list. This would likely lead to calls for similar treatment to be extended to other groups in similar circumstances.

The change in March and the end of this interim arrangement should not impede workforce planning or impact on the provision of health services. If it is the case that the number of vacancies for doctors exceeds the number of suitable resident workers applying, then the Resident Labour Market Test will have been passed and non-EEA doctors can be appointed under Tier 2.

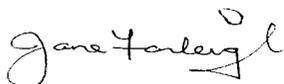
We were approached by the Department of Health who requested we consider future arrangements for doctors beyond this year's recruitment round. The Department of Health engaged with Wales' Health officials and other key stakeholders, arranging for them to feed in their views to us and taking a lead role in ensuring that the details of these arrangements meet the needs of, and are communicated to, Wales as a devolved administration.

We have provided for non-EEA graduates of UK medical schools to undertake the Foundation Programme under Tier 4, and we are finalising arrangements for them to begin Speciality Training in the Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) category.

We have also put in place arrangements so that doctors who have already begun Speciality Training may be sponsored under Tier 2 by their Deaneries, and will not be subject to the Resident Labour Market Test as they move from one Speciality Training post to another.

In their Tier 1 report, the Migration Advisory Committee recommended that points for Bachelor degrees be reinstated, but that the pay thresholds for the category should be substantially increased. These recommendations, if accepted by Government, will most likely come into effect in Spring 2010. The effect of these recommendations would be that doctors in higher grades could once again apply under Tier 1 (General).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jane Farleigh'.

Jane Farleigh  
Regional Director, Wales and South West of England  
UK Border Agency

NS/AM.

**Alun Ffred Jones AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog dros Dreftadaeth  
Minister for Heritage



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P/03/217  
Ein cyf/Our ref AFJ/00165/10

RECEIVED

01 MAR 2010

Christine Chapman AM  
Bank Chambers  
28a Oxford Street  
Mountain Ash  
CF45 3EU

25 February 2010

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter of 10 February 2010 regarding the petition for the National Library of Wales (the Library) to reverse its decision to close on Saturdays from 1 April 2009.

I am pleased to inform you that the Library has now confirmed that it will re-open on Saturdays from 8 May 2010. I have been informed that the Library will be open from 9:30am to 5pm on Saturdays, and the following services will be provided:

- The exhibition galleries, shop and café will be open as before.
- There will be a member of staff on reception to welcome visitors and process reader ticket requests
- Meeting rooms may be booked as usual, with any buffets to be arranged in advance
- Facilities such as photocopying will be self-service only
- The reading rooms will be open to users including access to electronic resources. As a reduced number of staff will be on duty, readers will need to pre-order physical material (such as books, journals, archives and manuscripts) before midnight on Thursday. Pre-ordering can be done online through the Library's catalogue or by telephone.

Details of Saturday service provision and the date of re-opening are available on the Library's website (<http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=3407>).

Yours sincerely,

**Alun Ffred Jones AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog dros Dreftadaeth/Minister for Heritage

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correspondence.alun.ffred.jones@wales.gsi.gov.uk  
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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM**

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

Our ref: EH/00523/10

Your ref: P-03-219

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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English Enquiry Line: 0845 010 3300  
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E-Mail: Correspondence.Edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

22 February 2010

Thank you for your letter dated 10 February on behalf of the Petitions Committee about the findings of the Pharmacy Task and Finish Group.

The final report from the Task and Finish Group was discussed at the National Advisory Board meeting on 18 January and is available at:  
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/nhswales/organisations/advisory/?lang=en>.

The Group has since evolved into a Strategic Delivery Group to ensure the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group are progressed to completion.

The Group has recognised that the Regulations on applications for new pharmacies, relocations of existing pharmacies and appeals against these decisions are in need of review in order to develop a more planned approach to providing these essential services across Wales. The Group is currently working on defining the remit, terms of reference and timescales of a review group to take this work forward. I will consider their recommendations shortly and will keep you informed of the outcomes from any such review.

**Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM**  
**Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-220  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00369/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

08 March 2010

*Dear Christine*

I am responding to your letter of 10 February following mine to your Committee of 12 January regarding Petition P-03-220 - Lower the speed limit on the A40 near Abergavenny.

My officials are in the early stages of preparing the prioritised sites for review that I referred to previously. This list is still scheduled for summer 2010 and whilst we are not yet in a position to confirm when the speed limit will be reviewed regarding the A40 near Abergavenny, I will write to the Committee in due course when details emerge for this location.

*Yn  
Ieuan*

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
**Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth**  
**Minister for the Economy and Transport**

**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM**

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

Our ref: EH/00369/10

Your ref: P-03-221

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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9 February 2010

Thank you for your further letter dated 2 February on behalf of the Petitions Committee about NHS Chiropody Services.

As I explained in December, a meeting with the stakeholder group that includes Age Concern and Help the Aged in Wales to discuss the final draft of the report is being planned for March following which advice will be submitted to Ministers as a basis for wider consultation.

I have nothing further to report at this stage but will keep you apprised of progress.

**Leighton Andrews AC/AM**

**Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg & Dysgu Gydol Oes  
Minister for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-22  
Ein cyf/Our ref LA/00469/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
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28 February 2010

*Dear Chris*

Thank you for your letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010. I appreciate that you are looking for further information and until recently we have been in the process of analysing the results of the Childcare Sufficiency Audits and it is evident there is still much work to be developed in house before we reach a consultation stage. I can however share with you some of the prominent priorities agreed and progress made to date.

Annual reviews from Local Authorities are to be received by the end of March 2010. The reviews will detail updates on work carried out since the original audit in 2007/08, a summary of the childcare issues in the local authority, good practices/examples of innovative projects and detail of how the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments have been utilised in local authority planning mechanisms.

Visits to Local Authorities have confirmed the need for further support in compiling and reporting on the Childcare Sufficiency Audits. We are currently working to design a toolkit that will be a step by step guide for Local Authorities to produce the next Audit in April 2011 and covers many of the issues raised around data collection, consultation processes and action planning.

Initial priorities for consideration in developing the integrated approach to childcare policy are identified as:

- Infrastructure Development - developing settings in the right area and linked to wider initiatives such as regeneration and community projects and ensuring longer term sustainability of settings.
- Diversifying the Sector – changing patterns of provision to meet parental need and looking at more flexible packages of childcare.
- Supporting Childcare Enterprise – both in terms of commercial enterprise and social enterprise and considering what support packages can be developed.
- Workforce Development – considering how to up-skills the current workforce and attract new entrants, as well as considering the appropriate qualifications for the sector.

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*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

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- Joining up Programmes – ensuring that any investment in childcare support is across programmes and is delivered in a coherent way to maximise the investment available and that fits with the wider strategic objectives and addresses local demand and supply issues.
- Improving Information – ensuring that parents have the right information about childcare options, the financial help available to them and the benefits to both the child and parent of good childcare.
- Ensuring Quality – developing a consistent approach to quality across the sector.

I'm sure you will appreciate in order to take this work forward we need to ensure the correct delivery mechanisms are in place. As this work develops we will consult with key sector organisations.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Leighton Andrews*

**Leighton Andrews AM**

Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg & Dysgu Gydol Oes  
Minister for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning

NS / AM

**Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM**  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-252  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/06458/09

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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04 February 2010

*Dear Val*

Thank you for your letter of 1 December 2009 concerning the petition (PET-03-252) from residents of Boverton about the proposed Northern Access Road for the St Athan Development Scheme. I know that the Committee has also received comments from Llanmaes Community Council on my response to their petition (PET -03-227) on similar issues.

The delay in replying to your letter of 1 December is connected with related ongoing statutory procedures. The issues raised by both petitions (Boverton residents and Llanmaes Community Council) are currently being presented through written and oral evidence given at the Public Inquiry into the Draft Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for the St Athan Development Scheme. The Inquiry began on 12 January 2010 and is still sitting at the time of writing. These representations will therefore be considered by the Inspector who will in due course make his recommendations to Welsh Ministers for a decision to be made as to whether or not to confirm the CPO.

The Committee will be aware from my previous correspondence that there is extensive information on these issues which is in the public domain. This is as a consequence of the planning process that resulted in planning consent being granted for the Defence Technical College and the Aerospace Business Park and related infrastructure works. As planning permissions for the development have been granted, the decision of the local planning authority may only be challenged by Judicial Review.

In addition a considerable amount of evidence has been submitted by the various parties to the Inquiry being held into the proposed CPO. I am sure you will understand that in the circumstances it would not be appropriate for me to comment further on these two petitions. I take the opportunity, however, to clarify certain specific matters raised by the Committee. The information is contained in the Annex attached to this letter.

I will, of course, ensure that the Committee receives a copy of the Inspector's report and the decision of Welsh Ministers at the appropriate time.

*Ieuan*  
**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport

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## **Annex (DFM/06458)/09**

1) The Committee sought clarification on:

- Number of children of school age in the Service Families Accommodation (SFA)
- Overall Service Families Accommodation population

These issues are the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence. Their planning consultants advising on the SFA have informed my officials that the MOD has estimated a requirement for 533 SFA in association with the DTC development. It also estimates that about 70 existing SFA units will be available for use by DTC personnel producing a requirement for 483 new build SFA at St Athan. MoD has also estimated that the SFA houses will accommodate an average of 1.7 children per house: that is 821 children in total, based on 483 new build units. Assuming two adults per house, the total population of the new build SFA is estimated to be approximately 1787. The MoD has stated that these issues were considered by the Vale of Glamorgan as part of its assessment of the DTC planning application. The planning permission granted for DTC is based on the figure of 483 units.

Of the total 821 children, it is estimated that 246 will be aged 0-5, 296 will be aged 5-11 years and 279 will be aged over 11 years. The local education authority has estimated the spare capacity in local primary and secondary schools as at 2014 (the programmed date for opening the DTC) as 155 for primary schools and 119 for secondary schools. The legally binding agreement that accompanies the DTC planning permission requires the SFA developer to make appropriate financial contributions to the Vale of Glamorgan Council to fund the provision of additional nursery, primary and secondary education places.

A copy of the legally binding (Section 106) agreement is available on the Vale of Glamorgan website:

[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/living/planning/planning\\_applications/defence\\_technical\\_college.aspx](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/living/planning/planning_applications/defence_technical_college.aspx)

2) The Committee will find it helpful to know that in granting planning permission for the St Athan development scheme, including the Northern Access Road, the Vale of Glamorgan Council attached a number of important conditions. It follows that the commencement of development without firstly meeting in full the terms of any conditions that require the submission of details prior to the commencement of development will be a breach of planning consent. The developers intend to cooperate fully with the Council in meeting their responsibilities as regards the planning conditions.

3) The Committee will wish to note that as regards the proposed Northern Access Road, planning condition 13 states:

*"No work whatsoever shall commence on the construction of the Northern*

*Access Road approved by this permission until such time as formal confirmation has been received in writing from the applicant / Ministry of Defence that the Defence Technical College (in its submitted form) is to proceed, and that a contract for the undertaking and financing of such development has been signed.*

*Reason:*

*Since the development of the Northern Access Road has been justified on the basis that it is strictly necessary to mitigate the highway impacts of the development, and it is therefore unacceptable to allow its construction until such time as LPA has been given satisfactory assurances that the project will be undertaken at the site."*

Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-227  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00276/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
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28 February 2010

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter of 2 February about the petition (PET -03-227) against the St Athan Development access road from residents of Llanmaes community.

I am grateful for the Committee's continued interest in this matter and have, of course, noted the petitioners concerns.

However, it is inappropriate for me to comment on the issues raised for the reasons set out in my previous reply to the Committee. The two issues on which you have sought my view were raised in the recent Public Inquiry into the draft Compulsory Purchase Order for the Scheme as well as during the planning process before that. The Inspector will be making his report to me in due course and I am sure you will appreciate that I can make no more comment at this stage of the procedure.

I will, of course, ensure that the Committee receives a copy of the Inspector's report and my decision at the appropriate time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ieuan'.

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**

Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport

Y Gwir Anrh/Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AC/AM  
Prif Weinidog Cymru/First Minister for Wales



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Ein cyf/Our ref FM/05941/09

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA

4<sup>th</sup> November 2009

Dear Val

I am writing in response to your letter dated 15 October 2009 asking if the Welsh Assembly Government has any plans to mark International Conscientious Objectors Day with an annual event on 15 May and, if not, for my views on taking steps to do so.

There are no plans for the Welsh Assembly Government to mark International Conscientious Objectors Day with an annual event. I note that the petition submitted by Cynefin y Werin / Common Ground which calls upon the National Assembly for Wales to do so was also proposed in a Written Statement of Opinion on 2 April 2009 that some Assembly Members subscribed to.

Yours  
Rhodri

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Jane Davidson AC/AM

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-238/241  
Ein cyf/Our ref JD/00300/10

Christine Chapman  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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28 February 2010

*Dear Christine,*

**PETITIONS P-03-238 POLLUTION OF THE BURRY INLET AND P-03-241 SAVE OUR SEWERS – LLANELLI STAR**

Thank you for your letter of 2 February 2010 requesting further information on the key findings of the interim report on cockle mortality, and on the Dwr Cymru Welsh Water scheme to supply additional capacity and storm sewage in the area.

As part of the ongoing investigation at Burry Inlet led by the Environment Agency Wales at the request of the Welsh Ministers, Professor Mike Elliott of Hull University is co-ordinating the research programme for the cockle mortality investigation. The draft interim report will be circulated to the cockle working group in advance of their meeting on 19 March 2010, when they will have the opportunity to discuss the preliminary findings with Professor Elliott. The interim report will then be the subject of wider public consultation with all the interested parties and stakeholders. When I receive a copy of the interim report I will write to the committee outlining its key findings.

The Dwr Cymru Welsh Water scheme to reduce discharges into the Burry Inlet should be completed by 31 March 2010. This scheme will allow greater storage of storm water including sewage and the reduction of screened storm sewage discharges from Northumberland pumping station and Llanelli waste water treatment works storm tanks under high flow conditions. The scheme also introduces ultra violet disinfection of the settled storm runoff to reduce the bacteria present in the discharged wastewater. The Environment Agency Wales has analysed trials of ultra violet disinfection on wastewater at both Cog Moors wastewater treatment works (Barry) and at Llanelli and is satisfied that the bacteriological load is reduced through UV disinfection.

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In addition Dwr Cymru Welsh Water has allocated £2million for the removal of surface water in the Llanelli sewerage system. This work includes diversion of surface water only drainage currently flowing into the combined system, resolution of infiltration problems and the introduction of bio-retention. These actions will reduce the surface water entering the combined system and further reduce storm discharges.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Yours,



**Jane Davidson AM**

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-240  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00370/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

28 February 2010

Dear Christine,

I am responding to your letter of 10 February, on behalf of the Petitions Committee, about the pavements at Llanddewi Velfrey and the opening date of the new by-pass.

My officials have met the owner of Ivy Cottage who is agreeable to the proposal to improve the footway fronting his house. This is the most constrained area and an improvement here would provide continuity of the footway on the southern side. Depending on the availability of finance, we expect to carry out the works at Ivy Cottage in the next financial year.

We will be introducing speed activated signs and associated traffic calming patches on the carriageway within the next few weeks. We are not planning to carry out specific evaluation studies on their effectiveness, however nationwide experience is that they are effective in reducing the speed of traffic. As a follow up, we will review the speed limit in Llanddewi Velfrey against our new speed limit guidance document later this year.

I shall be announcing my decision on the preferred route for a bypass of Llanddewi Velfrey shortly and it is planned to publish draft Orders for the scheme in mid 2012. If the scheme passes through the statutory procedures and subject to availability of finance, construction could start in line with the draft National Transport Plan by 2014.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ieuan'.

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**

Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport

## Further Evidence –Assembly Petitions Committee

Answers to additional questions:

### 1. Why do you think that the plan stifles prospects and opportunities for real sustainable economic development for Welsh people?

The simplest way to describe this is as follows:

The ‘sustainable’ economic development talked about in the plan is about providing employment/housing for the incoming population, not the local indigenous population.

The main thrust of the plan is about mixed use sites, i.e. locating new housing development and employment sites together, or as it says in the plan ‘bringing the workers to the work’.

In reality the bulk of economic development that has been delivered has been through housing rather than employment. The economic development the plan talks of is not geared at all toward the indigenous local population. It is about inward investment as opposed to creating local opportunities.

The effects of such economic expansion as set out in the West Cheshire Plan, which involves the population transfer of wealthier incomers, is already well documented throughout the Western world.

Here are just a few examples of studies done as far back as the 1950s:

‘Western Europe Challenge and Change’, D. Pinder. ‘Counter Urbanisation in Western Europe, Progress in Planning’, A. J Fielding, 1982. ‘The History of Cities in the Economically Advanced Areas, Economic Development and Cultural Change’, E.E Lampard, 1955, ‘The Metropolitan Fringe in Hertfordshire’, London School of Economics, R.E Pahl, 1965 etc etc).

In fact it is acknowledged widely these days as elementary poor outdated planning to encourage such a situation to develop.

The plan talks about attracting inward investment, almost invariably this kind of economic development bring their own workforce. The type of economic development that comes is not suited to the local skill base. Examples of this are St Asaph Business Park and Wreccsam Gateway, as well as the massive influx of retail development.

It also becomes stifling for local sustainable development because there is a land supply issue. Again, quite simply when land is turned over to economic development that is not for locals where does local employment get located?

### **Tourism:**

North Wales is becoming increasingly reliant on tourism economically. There is a huge influx of a wealthier population coming in able to buy properties and businesses or to start new businesses related to tourism. Examples of this are Llangollen, where the vast majority of established and new businesses are owned by incomers. It is virtually impossible for local people who are at a financial disadvantage to access these same opportunities. The opportunities that do present themselves for locals are predominantly low paid, part time, seasonal jobs (not providing anywhere near sufficient wages to compete in the local housing or business market).

### **Loss of Status:**

As has been seen in areas like Wrexham, when a wealthier population comes into an area, the average wage is artificially skewed, thereby excluding the area from entitlement to funding. As a result, opportunities for the funding of local projects, business etc is severely stifled.

Wales as a whole receives funding from Europe in recognition of our poor economic opportunities. However in 2009/10, 80% of WEFO funding went to Welsh Assembly projects. Funding has been aimed at key strategic regeneration sites identified in the Wales Spatial Plan. For North East Wales, these key regeneration sites are the same sites identified in the West Cheshire Plan. In fact, both in the Wales Spatial Plan and the WEFO framework, the wording is directly taken from the West Cheshire Plan, in effect excluding locally generated projects and initiatives from the regeneration opportunities. Thus WEFO funding is exclusively funding and supporting little else other than the West Cheshire Plan in North East Wales.

The issues listed above are tangible effects of the plan on the economic opportunities for local people in North East Wales; however, there are many more subtle effects of the overall focus of the plan and this way of thinking.

The plan is not focussed on creating opportunities for economic development of local needs or aspirations and has not been based on studies of the local skills base, local wage or generating local SME's.

The economic development outlook of the plan is completely divorced from other aspects of life in North East Wales. In a nutshell, any economic development in the plan is not aimed at providing employment, business opportunities or housing for the indigenous Welsh population. It's about creating the right conditions for attracting inward investment and migration; it aims to do so by essentially expanding the 'Chester effect' and middle class business culture into North East Wales.

2 In your supporting information, you state that basic human rights are being breached through the adoption of the strategy and the use of population projections by the Government and local councils, can you describe how they are being breached?

The Human Rights charter recognises that human rights are “for all without distinction”. There are several strands of Human Rights legislation (and its general principles) that are very relevant to the West Cheshire Plan and its objectives, e.g. The Convention on The Rights of a Child as one example and there are also numerous others.

The UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on The Rights of Indigenous People’s on September the 13<sup>th</sup> 2007. This followed more than 20 years of negotiations between nation states and an indigenous people’s themselves; this legislation is particularly relevant to our petition given that the plan talks about:

- a) Planned demographic change.
- b) Dilution of Welsh Identity
- c) Erosion of the use of the Welsh language.
- d) Damage to Welsh culture

The declaration incorporates 46 separate articles, many of which are relevant both to the West Cheshire plan and the use and implementation of population projections by the Welsh Assembly Government and local authorities. Here are a few examples:

**Article 2**

Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity.

**Article 6**

Every indigenous individual has the right to a nationality.

**Article 8**

1. Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.

2. States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for:

- (a) Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities;

(b) Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources;

(c) Any form of forced population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights;

(d) Any form of forced assimilation or integration;

(e) Any form of propaganda designed to promote or incite racial or ethnic discrimination directed against them.

#### **Article 9**

Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right to belong to an indigenous community or nation, in accordance with the traditions and customs of the community or nation concerned. No discrimination of any kind may arise from the exercise of such a right.

#### **Article 32**

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

2. States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

3. States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact

#### **Article 40**

Indigenous peoples have the right to access to and prompt decision through just and fair procedures for the resolution of conflicts and disputes with States or other parties, as well as to effective remedies for all infringements of their individual and collective rights. Such a decision shall give due consideration to the customs, traditions, rules and legal systems of the indigenous peoples concerned and international human rights.

## Summary

These rights clearly outline that indigenous people's have a right to a nationality. They also outline that any action which has the aim, or effect of, depriving indigenous peoples of their integrity as distinct peoples, their ethnic identity or cultural values should be prevented or redressed. Additionally any action which dispossesses them of their lands or resources, of forced population transfer, integration or assimilation should equally be prevented or redressed.

The West Cheshire Plan clearly warns of damage to Welsh identity, culture and language, specifically through in migration from the North West of England into North East Wales. Independent studies also recognise this situation and evidence also reinforces that Welsh identity (or Welsh National identity) is being eroded.

The erosion of this identity in recent decades has been due to the use of population projections, which are heavily based on past in migration trends rather than local need. Studies conclude that an over provision of houses through high levels of development has encouraged in migration to the North East. The effects of this development in terms of our environment and quality of life in the North East are also clearly evident.

The effect of this policy has marginalised the local population in a variety of ways. The significant influx of a wealthier population has dramatically increased house prices in the area, ensuring the majority of local people are priced out of the market. Additionally the influx of a wealthier population has artificially skewed the average wage of the area, thereby disqualifying areas in need from provision to which they would otherwise be entitled.

The West Cheshire plan serves to exploit and accelerate this situation and is clearly in breach of many aspects of Human Rights legislation.

3 Your supporting information states that the adoption of the strategy has highlighted significant problems in both local and national government. Can you describe the problems that it has highlighted?

The plan highlights many problems, as does the process by which it was adopted.

### *Creation of a 'sub-region'*

The idea for the creation of the new sub-region was clearly drawn up across the border to address future land supply issues, as stated in the Mersey Belt Study (2002). The subsequent justification for sub-region is based on travel to work patterns, these patterns have emerged due to the creation of an artificial housing market through the use of population projections, based

largely on past in migration trends. These projections are then converted into housing figures in LDP's, this has led to unnaturally high levels of housing development, in migration and subsequently commuting patterns. This situation is acknowledged both in the West Cheshire plan itself and also in independent housing studies such as the North East Wales Housing Market Assessment (2008).

We acknowledge that this 'planning' methodology has been in use for some years before the adoption of the West Cheshire plan. The figures quoted showing net out commuting from the Welsh authorities into England demonstrates this point. To then use these figures to justify expanding the process further and establishing a new sub region, as the West Cheshire Plan has done, is unethical and completely unsustainable.

The basis for the creation of the sub region is not sound, it exploits an unnatural situation that severely disadvantages the local population in North East Wales. It has led to local people being priced out of the housing market, damage to the local environment through high levels of development and to the erosion of Welsh identity across the area.

### ***WAG projection Figures***

Population projections are issued by the Welsh Assembly Government to local authorities. These projections are then converted into predicted levels of household growth in each authority and are then developed into housing targets in Local Development Plans (LDP's).

The Minister Jane Hutt states clearly in her response that WAG do not put pressure on local authorities to use these figures. This is incorrect. Senior planning officers from both Denbighshire and Wrexham have stated that pressure has been put on them to conform to the WAG figures, with their LDP's risking being found 'unsound' by the planning inspectorate should they fail to do so. In Conwy, the authority has been told officially by WAG to reconsider their chosen option as regards their LDP housing projections because their figures were lower than those issued by the Government.

Officers from the Welsh authorities are adamant that pressure is being put on them by WAG to use the projections, the Minister states the opposite. Clearly both cannot be right. This highlights a fundamental problem within our planning system, both by the use of this flawed methodology in the first place and the process by which these figures are then imposed on a local level.

Should there be any queries as regards what is set out above, we would suggest that the Committee call Planning officers from the local authorities mentioned to take evidence from them directly.

### ***Status of the West Cheshire Plan.***

The status of the plan appears to be a grey area. It is described as non statutory but is included within the Wales Spatial plan which is a statutory document. For North East Wales, the spatial plan is based on this strategy and very little else. The West Cheshire plan is also a material planning consideration in the preparation of Local Development Plans in North East Wales.

In the response from the Minister Jane Hutt, it is stated that the plan cannot be 'adopted' because it is non statutory, yet in numerous documents available online several authorities refer to the plan as having been 'adopted', as did the Minister herself when answering questions at your last meeting.

### ***Accountability***

A clear concern is who is accountable for this strategy and its implementation?

At the petitions Committee meeting in Wreccsam, the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) were called to give evidence in support of the West Cheshire Plan, with Assembly members commenting that they had now heard evidence from 'both sides'. Cheshire County Council is listed as the accountable body for the MDA but the MDA are not responsible for the housing element of the plan, which is clearly one of the main concerns. The Wales Spatial plan endorses the West Cheshire Plan but fails to highlight any of the damaging effects it outlines, even though these were listed in supplementary information included in the Wales Spatial Plan update 2008.

The Assembly Government and local authorities have signed up for the plan, with selected representatives from each forming the Welsh contribution to the MDA . Is the Assembly accountable for the actions of the MDA or is it Cheshire council? Is the Assembly accountable for the West Cheshire Plan or is it the Mersey Dee Alliance, or the North West Regional Assembly?

It can be safely said that there are no clear lines of accountability as far as the West Cheshire Plan or the Mersey Dee Alliance is concerned.

Responsibility for mitigating against the damaging effects of the plan, in terms of the environment, Welsh identity, Welsh language and Welsh culture are delegated to the local authorities involved. Despite the plan being adopted in 2006, local Councillors and officers were not aware of this responsibility during the preparation of their local development plans.

## ***Consultation/Scrutiny***

There has been no consultation with the people of North Wales about this plan. Local Councillors and Assembly members have had little if any information about it.

We feel the non statutory label of the plan has excused it from the usual levels of scrutiny that would be applied to any strategy of this scale. Through a process of creeping validation it has been adopted by local authorities, the Welsh Assembly Government and been absorbed into the Wales spatial plan. At no point do any of these bodies/strategies make clear or address the damaging effects listed in the sustainability Appraisal which accompanies the plan.

In conclusion, there are many problems ranging from an inflexible approach to communication with local populations, which renders any attempts at consultation at best unsuccessful and often absolute lip service.

It is often claimed by officers that the public 'don't understand strategies' and only 'react to specific developments in the field across from their house'. In short an attitude that only officialdom knows what's good for us. There are certainly no avenues for genuine open discussion with a view to arriving at consensus. Again the consultation process or lack of it with this major plan highlights this superbly.

Furthermore, within the planning process itself there is no appeal procedure against developments that have gained planning permission although the majority of rejected applications win at appeal with the planning inspectorate. Many times, we have witnessed selective use of policy and selective ignoring of policy as well as grossly skewed information coming from planning officers who seem to be completely unaccountable.

- 4 You have mentioned that that this issue has been pursued via other routes and that you have found them to be lacking, what routes have you pursued and how did you feel that your concerns were not addressed?

Most notably through a local councillor, the matter was brought up before Wreccsam councils Environment and Regeneration scrutiny committee. The reaction by the leaders of the council and members of the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) was evasive, aggressive and condescending, even going as far as accusations of being racist. Furthermore completely misleading information was put forward by members of the MDA and officers. In fact the

scrutiny meeting acted as the springboard for this petition. Again, the council leadership claimed that it was the Assembly that was responsible for the implementation of the housing figures and implied that they had tried to oppose them. We have also tried to discuss the matter with a number of Assembly members and councillors. The response has fallen into two categories.

The first one has been a complete lack of knowledge of the plan other than a vague reference to cross border links followed by an expression of a desire to know more about the plan and its implications.

The second response has been an emotional and often aggressive stance with a complete refusal to engage and discuss or even listen to any issues that we have tried to raise.

5 In your supporting information you state that a culture of discrimination has been allowed to develop in recent decades and that this culture is now embedded within governmental processes, can you describe how you feel this discriminatory culture is embedded?

We are referring to a culture of discrimination within our planning system, within our local authorities generally and within our National Assembly.

An example we would give to support this view is the use of manufactured population projections, without regard to the social, environmental or demographic impacts.

The lack of recognition of a National identity, or even local identity, or the human rights legislation in place to protect it.

The barriers generally put in place to prevent people from engaging with the democratic process, the vilification of those who attempt to participate and the lack of any genuine consultation as regards plans and strategies which directly affect our quality of life.

Because of the complexity and scope of this question, we do feel that although we have provided some examples of key areas, there are many more that need to be looked at, we also have examples of these. We also feel that detailed discussion on the areas covered above and in our supporting evidence is a crucial part of our petition

Included within previous evidence submitted is the description of a branding exercise commissioned by Wreccsam council as part of the 'place marketing' aspect of the West Cheshire plan. This exercise was an attempt to change

the identity of the town to make it more appealing to potential investors and to future residents; this branding exercise is part of the plans main aim 'to create a distinct identity for the sub region'.

Basically, the whole sub-regional strategy and in particular the place marketing strategy that underpins it suggests that values, aspirations and Welsh identity are inferior to suburban English middle class lifestyle.

## **NAW Petitions Committee Further Questions – MDA Response**

### **1. What is being done to encourage investment from indigenous companies and firms within the Sub-Region?**

The Partners within MDA co-operate to share intelligence on local investment intentions, property availability and current demand which enables a joined up-approach to be taken across the area towards meeting the needs of local businesses. The strategy assists with bringing together strategic planning of key employment sites in a co-ordinated way which is designed to meet the needs of businesses across the area. At no time has the MDA ever suggested that it would override local statutory planning processes. The MDA Business Plan states that partners *'coordinate the bringing forward of sites for appropriate uses guided by intelligence and jointly work to overcome barriers where these are cross-border in nature. All site development is subject to the normal statutory planning process and Local Development Plans'*. As stated above most joint working is around employment sites, does not involve housing allocations, and is subject to statutory planning processes.

A wide and growing range of initiatives has been developed to assist and encourage networking and local business investment and support across the area, either developed within local or regional authorities or in partnership. This includes help with procurement, recruitment and general business support. Local authorities work with their local businesses to support them and ensure they are linked into the regional business support organisations that can help them plan for the future, as business support is also a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government and the North West Regional Development Agency, which is facilitated by Flexible Support for Business (FS4B) and Business Link North West. Some examples are Wrexham and Flintshire Business Weeks, 'Make It In Manufacturing' schools enterprise challenges and Jobs Fairs. Other examples are Cheshire West and Chester Council runs a small grant scheme for expanding and start-up businesses. Wirral Council runs the Invest Wirral programme, targeted at both companies looking to relocate in Wirral and local businesses looking for support, networking and business opportunities. As Denbighshire is in the Convergence programme area, Denbighshire Council has been able to join the other three north west Wales authorities in securing funds to run a grant scheme for SME's (the Local

Investment Fund) which complements the Assembly Government's scheme (the Single Investment Fund) by offering grants of less than £5,000 which support the growth of indigenous businesses. Each local authority has a portfolio of business units which it lets to SME's.

Further case study information on the service provided by Wrexham Council to encourage indigenous business investment is provided below, relating to the request for information made at the Committee. Please note however WCBC are not the only authority engaged in this type of work. Although this work does not derive directly from the SRSS it will contribute towards the achievement of its objectives:

*Wrexham County Borough Council*

Wrexham County Borough Council has been involved in economic development and engaging with the local business community long before it became fashionable to do so. The services provided aim to be good value and comprehensive.

A considerable proportion of business and learning activity currently involves the delivery of a range of contracts on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to the local community. The exact value and nature of these contracts varies from year to year, but typically they deliver outcomes that are specified by WAG.

In summary, WCBC services to indigenous businesses include :

i) New Business Starts

Wrexham County Borough Council has been involved with supporting indigenous start-ups for more than 20 years. Support includes delivery of a set of modular business planning workshops starting with an introduction to self-employment. The modules run through the process of legal requirements for companies, consider operating costs, cash flow as well as tax implications and banking needs. There is also a range of outreach seminars in various communities aimed at people considering self employment. These programmes are funded by WAG.

In addition, the Council runs programmes which are designed to encourage under represented groups to consider self-employment. Group and individual

sessions are provided, generally targeted at under 25s, lone parents, women, ethnic minorities, over 50s and first language Welsh speakers. Where there is a barrier to participation in the project the individual will receive additional advice and guidance either by one-to-one support from an adviser or by being referred to a specialist provider in the areas identified. The main aim of the support is to remove barriers and to provide the individual with an informed choice on how to enter self-employment. This programme is also funded by WAG.

ii) Department of Work and Pensions - Six Months Self-Employment Offer

Funding has been made available from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for a programme which is aimed at clients who have been unemployed for six months and are in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance. There is a business adviser dedicated to providing this service which involves liaison with A4E and Job Centre Plus to ensure individuals who can benefit from this support can be targeted. The project aims to encourage people who are unemployed to train and retain benefit.

iii) Supplier Development Service

This service provides a range of assistance to indigenous businesses which want to win public sector contract work. A number of 'How to Tender' workshops are run in the Wrexham and Flintshire area and these are followed up by one to one support for companies putting together pre-qualification questionnaires (PQQs) and/or invitation to tenders (ITTs). The Council assists with developing business policies and procedures required to tender successfully. An element of the programme also offers 'Meet the Buyer' events to introduce local companies to the public sector buyers so that the procurement process can be explained and demystified. This programme is also funded by WAG. For some smaller Local Companies who have little or no experience of dealing with large Public Sector Bodies, the Tender process can seem daunting. This has been recognised and a 'Selling to the Council Guide' has been produced to ensure Companies are given appropriate guidance on the steps they need to take in order to be considered and competing for our business.

European Procurement Law and the principles of the Treaty of Rome exist to ensure equality of opportunity in terms of trade and we must therefore ensure that our methodologies and practices do not discriminate against any potential bidder on the grounds of geographical location. However, the aim is always to give local companies full opportunity and support to compete effectively for Council work. In line with this, the Procurement Strategy identifies 'Supporting the Local Economy' as a key aim. The Council is committed and supportive to the principles of the Welsh Assembly Governments 'Opening Doors Charter' and will fully apply all details of that Charter to help ensure that local small to medium size enterprises are given full opportunity to compete for and provide goods, services and works to the Authority. The Council now promotes the Buy4Wales / Sell2Wales as the route of access to contract opportunities for goods, services and works encouraging local firms to register on the site to gain automatic notification of these opportunities as they arise.

iv) Workforce Development Programme (Human Resource Development Advisers)

This programme is funded by the Department of Children, Education and Lifelong Learning Skills (DCELLS) of the Welsh Assembly Government.

HRD advisers employed by the Council develop organisational learning plans for local businesses for which a training needs analysis is also produced. The HRD advisers act as skills brokers and source funding and training providers on behalf of business clients. The aim is to drive up skills of existing employers and businesses.

v) Flexible Support for Business

This is a programme also funded by WAG. It is an advice and guidance programme that operates and is promoted on an all-Wales basis. The contract in North Wales is actually operated by Conwy County Borough Council on behalf of all six local authorities. It is controlled by a board consisting of representatives from the six North Wales authorities. The service is accommodated in the Wrexham area at Bersham Enterprise Park.

vi) Commercial Premises

The Council is a substantial landlord. The current commercial property portfolio consists of 349 units comprising 66,408 sq.m of floorspace. The majority of these premises are small offices and workshops aimed at encouraging and accommodating new business starts or small and medium enterprises. In addition, there are also 114 town centre market stalls which can provide premises for those taking their first steps into retail self-employment.

vii) General Support for Business

The Economic Development Department provides free advice and support to companies regardless of size, sector etc. Free advice is delivered by means of an area business adviser who tries to build appropriate relationships to assist companies in areas of need. It aims to deliver a service beyond the constraints/parameters of a WAG funded business support schemes. It is an impartial, free of charge service tailored entirely to the client's needs.

viii) Environmental Sustainability

The Council aims, (through ERDF funding) to assist businesses to become more sustainable by encouraging recycling, reducing waste to landfill, improving energy efficiency, considering transport schemes to reduce carbon emissions and encouraging reduced packaging.

ix) Rapid Response to Redundancy

If a local company finds itself in the position of having to make redundancies, the Rapid Response to Redundancy team is available to offer a broad range of high quality services by instigating a regional partnership approach that engages with Careers Wales, WAG and Job Centre Plus. The programme ensures that staff under threat of redundancy can access the appropriate range of support programmes to ensure successful upskilling and reskilling to help them gain employment.

x) Transnational/Export Activity

The Council utilises existing twin town relationship with Markischer Kreis in Germany to encourage international trade. The range of support offered is

designed to benefit both partners by aiding access to international markets and developing new business opportunities.

xi) Forums

The Council co-ordinates a number of forums relating to strategic economic and geographical areas. For example, on Wrexham Industrial Estate the Council has established a manufacturing forum, to encourage lean manufacturing techniques and equality initiatives, a HR/training forum to share good practice and a health and safety forum. Environmental and export forums have also been added also to share good practice. This initiative has now been extended, with the assistance of European funding, into Flintshire to cover the Deeside Industrial Park. The aim is to link companies on Wrexham Industrial Estate with those on Deeside in order to share good practice. Other consultation groups include Wrexham Town Centre Forum etc.

xii) Business Events

A range of events including Wrexham Business Week are undertaken to keep local businesses informed. With a programme of over 60 events Wrexham Business Week is the largest business related event in Wales outside of Cardiff.

xiii) Grants and Financial Incentives

A number of small business grants are administered by the Council funded by the Rural Development Programme. Grants of up to £5,000 are available to eligible companies to assist with capital expenditure on premises for capital equipment.

**2. What is being done on a sub-regional level to alleviate the pressure for further developments in popular areas and to reduce the impact of the dynamics of the Chester housing market?**

The Growth Point team within Cheshire West and Chester Council are looking to establish greater joint working with the surrounding Growth Points of Mid-Mersey Partnership and Mersey Heartlands. The objective of this approach is to try to provide a sub regional (Cheshire and Merseyside) perspective to tackling growth and to increase

the choice and viability of sites that can be brought forward by developers in terms of practical delivery. Through greater co-ordination, barriers to development in less viable locations can be identified on a larger scale in a co-ordinated manner and interventions can be identified and implemented which look to address those barriers. By making the marginal sites more viable it will help to increase the choice of sites for developers in terms of bringing them forward. Through increased choice, the pressure to develop in more profitable areas such as Chester should ease as developers are given the opportunity to grow their businesses throughout the wider area.

In addition, the Cheshire West and Chester Council LDF Core Strategy is currently being developed and it is looking at a number of spatial development options that look to spread development across the main urban areas of Cheshire West (Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford) up to 2026. Spreading development across the West Cheshire area will ensure that the Council's regeneration aspirations for all of its key towns can be realised and will also help to relieve pressure for development in and around Chester.

**3. A key objective for the MDA is to take action to ensure the area's long term competitiveness and sustain its economic, social and environmental future, what actions have been taken or are planned to be taken?**

The MDA is working with Glyndwr University and the University of Chester to plan a strategy that will work with major businesses and their supply chains to understand and action their requirements to enable them to stay in the area and develop, and lead to improved business start up and development rates in areas of economic growth. The initiative builds on a proposal by Glyndwr University to promote economic development in North East Wales through 'Creating a New Knowledge Industry Corridor in North East Wales' (February 2009). This corridor focuses on a number of existing and proposed centres of excellence in partnership with industry to support the North Wales economy. For the MDA partnership it is about recognising how a cross border approach adds value (as the evidence base states that the economy operates across the border), and developing actions to support advanced manufacturing as a priority and putting in place a phased approach to sector support in partnership with the private sector.

As a result of joint working, a joint North West/Wales major Airbus supply chain conference took place in Llandudno in October 2009 through the Next Generation Composite Wing programme, linking Airbus suppliers into local further and higher education providers.

A key project for the area is the development of an advanced materials and high value manufacturing economy. The MDA is supporting Glyndwr University in developing the business case for an Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Centre within the Broughton-Deeside area which will provide jobs directly in Wales and market led activity across the wider area. Deeside College is leading the skills development programme with Airbus and other partner organisations and businesses, which is linked into the local economy. Glyndwr University will be launching its co-located research/training facility at Hawarden Business Park with Airbus in May 2010 as an interim solution to the provision of higher level composites skills, research and qualifications, whilst the business case for the centre is being developed.

Manufacturing in the border area represents a far larger part of the local economy than is the case for the UK as a whole. The maintenance of this sector is critical not only for the future prosperity of the area, but for the wider UK economy, for example, the Airbus plant supports a supply chain employing 60,000 people, with the majority of workers on site coming from North Wales, and the remainder from the North West (due to the wider radial catchment area). For practical reasons it makes sense to collaborate on skills issues for manufacturing across the border in order to assist companies to remain in the area.

The development of the Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Centre provides an opportunity to raise the profile of advanced manufacturing amongst young people in the area so that they can become aware of opportunities on their door step and to be a catalyst for skills development for local people within new and developing industries and the technologies of the future.

*'Make It In Manufacturing' Enterprise Challenges*

The MDA is running 'Make It In Manufacturing' schools enterprise challenges in partnership with The Manufacturing Institute and various manufacturing partners from the area. The idea is to connect local manufacturing businesses with schools in their catchment area in order to encourage children to become better informed about the high value job opportunities available within manufacturing across a number of job roles, to enable them to stay in the area should they wish. The first challenge involved UPM Shotton Paper in December 2009. UPM Shotton is based at Deeside Industrial Park and employs a large number of apprentices, many from the local area. As a border company however it also recruits from the North West of England and therefore it was appropriate to reach out to schools within a wider catchment area within a radius of its site. There will be around three further challenges with other major manufacturers within the next year.

#### *River Dee Green Infrastructure Framework*

The MDA has worked with environmental and countryside agencies on both sides of the border to understand the needs of and demands on the River Dee Corridor in terms of environment, economy and community to understand how to achieve a sustainable future for the River Dee, and is doing further work on understanding how to enhance this. As the River Dee itself is a shared resource between Wales and England for a short length it makes sense to collaborate to understand what is happening on both sides of the border, in order to ensure e.g. the protection of the environment for wildlife and enjoyment.

#### *Strategic Infrastructure Planning and Accessibility*

There are particular transportation coordination issues which face the border area, as there are a number of administrative areas with responsibility for planning up to the border, and it is important that major schemes that run across the border are coordinated and developed for the benefit of the area's people. The transport projects proposed plan for future growth of sustainable transport options to key sites, leisure destinations, ports and airports etc, and include major schemes such as the Wrexham-Bidston Line and the Halton Chord (sustainable access to Liverpool Airport). The MDA acts as a forum to air border issues amongst transport planning bodies, and to influence

investment plans for sustainable transport and other schemes to help manage congestion in the area.

One of the key principles for creating sustainable economic development in this area is to improve the links between areas of regeneration need and areas of success. Increasing economic activity from unemployed and underemployed people will be essential for the sustainable development of the area. There are significant pockets of deprivation throughout the area, in parts of Ellesmere Port, Chester, Deeside/Flintshire, Wrexham, Rhyl and Wirral areas amongst other areas. The MDA will develop specific proposals as plans develop to ensure that all communities can benefit from an improved economy and better jobs.

The MDA has called for improvement of the service on the Wrexham-Bidston Line and there is now a piece of work looking at putting on earlier services as well as doubling the frequency during the day, whilst plans for electrification are longer term. In order to assist people back into work and to meet the challenges of climate change it is still important to look at the provision of new stations and public transport to major industrial and business sites such as Deeside Industrial Park, which could be served by the Wrexham-Bidston Line, and this is a major challenge with implications for people across the border area within the catchment of industry.

The A494/A55 gateway to North Wales is a critical one and one where congestion is still a problem. WAG has committed to undertake a multi-modal study to identify the most appropriate package of measures in the area as part of its national transport plan, and the MDA will be doing what it can to assist WAG on this.

There are many other schemes which impact on the border area which colleagues within transport planning look at the coordination of.

### **Consultation and public engagement with the Strategy:**

#### **4. Who was consulted on the Strategy, and how was that consultation facilitated?**

One of the key elements in development of the SRSS was a formal public consultation phase launched in December 2005.

The consultation activities were jointly arranged by the strategy partners. The Welsh Assembly Government activity was largely under the auspices of Welsh Development Agency at the time prior to the merger of the two organisations.

The Consultation was launched by Ann Jones AM and covered by the Daily Post, local press and a Radio Cymru interview.

Over three hundred invitations to the consultation event were sent to key partner organisations from all sectors (list available), and over a hundred people attended. Thirty six formal responses were received from a range of public, private and voluntary organisations from both sides of the border, and these helped to shape the final document. The individual responses were published on the strategy partners website, and the Sustainability Appraisal Report, publish as part of the strategy document sets out how the opinions expressed during the consultation were taken into account.

In March 2007 the SRSS was jointly launched by Sue Essex AM and Michael Gallagher, North West Regional Assembly. The event was attended by key stakeholders from the cross border area.

As the Strategy was developed within the context of the Wales Spatial Plan there was a further round of consultation on the Wales Spatial Plan that referenced the Strategy.

## **5. How effective do you consider this consultation was?**

The partners consider that the consultation undertaken in the preparation of the strategy and its Strategic Environmental Assessment was effective, appropriate and proportionate.

The strategy document was strengthened by taking into account the relevant consultation responses and the SEA recommendations.

**6. What discussions were held by Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham local authorities about the Strategy and who was involved in these discussions?**

The development of the strategy took place over a number of years and was the natural evolution of a previous informal working relationship. In terms of local authority input, initially it involved the Leaders and Chief Executives of Wrexham, Flintshire, Cheshire, Ellesmere Port and Chester Councils, but was widened out to include the political and senior officer leadership of the current five MDA authorities. The development of the strategy itself included public meetings held in Chester and Mold together with reports to all of the constituent member local authorities. Approval for Wrexham Council to join the MDA was gained on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007 at the Executive Board. Denbighshire Council's involvement derives from the Cabinet meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006. Flintshire Council's approval at Executive was gained on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2007 and confirmed by Full Council on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007, and is available to view on the Council's website.

**7. To what extent are officers involved in the development of Local Development Plans (LDP) aware of the Strategy, and how is it impacting on this work?**

In Wrexham officers developing the LDP are fully aware of the Strategy as a non-statutory document to help inform the development of the LDP given that the Council's Executive Board resolved in November 2006 that: *"the West Cheshire/North East Wales Sub-regional Strategy be endorsed as a non-statutory framework for greater cross-border co-operation and development between North East Wales and West Cheshire over the next 15 years."* Joint cross-border working was also supported in the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP), which was published by the Welsh Assembly Government in November 2005. The WSP was revised in 2008, and recognised: *"For Flintshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire, the cross-border linkages to the wider area of Chester and West Cheshire are crucial. The opportunity in this border area of North East Wales is about harnessing its special characteristics to benefit not only North East Wales but the wider geography, east and west. It will be a place where the strengths of prosperous areas are enhanced and the benefits of economic growth are maximised through linking areas of opportunity with areas in need of regeneration. Working towards this vision, the*

*Mersey Dee Alliance will play a key role in delivering the spatial strategy through close collaboration and continued partnership working across North East Wales, West Cheshire, and the Wirral*". The Wales Spatial Plan provides the overarching policy framework for the preparation of Local Development Plans, including the Wrexham LDP. Local Planning Authorities are required to have regard to both the vision and propositions set out in the WSP. The Welsh Assembly Government's guidance stresses that LDP's need to have regard to the National context, neighbouring authorities, and the wider region/sub region.

Strategy policies relevant to the LDP are set out at para 2.7 of the Deposit LDP. They include the need:

- for 6000-7000 new homes between 2004 and 2021;
- to continue the County Borough's role as a key economic driver for the sub-region;
- to assess the suitability, quality and site readiness of employment land;
- for more employment land at Wrexham Western Gateway (subject to consideration of environmental impact and other possible locations);
- to improve the capacity of key highway routes (e.g. A483(T));
- to strengthen Wrexham/Bidston and other public transport links;
- for a strong presumption against new out of town retail developments; and
- to conserve and enhance the local distinctiveness of settlements, centres, and rural areas, recognising that culture and the Welsh language are key influences on local distinctiveness.

These policies are in line with the LDP and reflect the fact that officers and members from Wrexham County Borough Council worked vigorously during the production of the strategy to ensure that Wrexham's particular interests and strengths were safeguarded, and that the ideas which formed the basis for the strategy were broadly in accordance with Wrexham's adopted and emerging planning policies.

Flintshire has not yet commenced with its LDP but officers are aware of the strategy as many were involved in the process behind the strategy's production, either directly or indirectly. Whilst the Strategy is a non statutory document it will and should form part of the evidence base which authorities must collate and assess as part of the preparation of their LDPs. This will be alongside many other sources of information and trends

which exist which Authorities are encouraged to source and assess (in WAG guidance on LDP preparation) at both a local and regional context.

In Denbighshire the sub regional strategy is one of a significant number of strategies that have been taken into account when developing the Local Development Plan strategy in Denbighshire. Denbighshire formed part of the 'wider reference area' for the study, rather than being one of the core authorities involved. The key aspects that have been taken into account in the development of the Local Development Plan strategy are the linkages between Denbighshire and the economic hub at Deeside and the importance of the A55 as a key link route across north Wales. The housing figures are considered to be less relevant in the development of the strategy as more locally relevant information was available.

Whilst being mindful of the findings of the sub regional strategy the Local Development Plan strategy has been developed paying greater attention to other, more locally specific key plans and evidence such as the Wales Spatial Plan, Welsh Assembly Government Population and Household Projections, specifically commissioned household and population forecasts and the north Wales regional apportionment exercise.

Officers are aware that the sub regional strategy was developed at a time when housing growth in the Chester area was restricted. Since publication of the sub regional strategy, this situation has changed significantly which in the officer's view makes it less relevant in terms of influence on the Local Development Plan strategy.

Overall, local authorities in North East Wales have considered a number of strategy options in relation to housing provision as part of the planning process and through the local democratic decision making process, have chosen different strategies. For example Wrexham Council has chosen largely a strategy of brownfield development, whilst Denbighshire Council has proposed a different strategy, thus any criticism of these policies should be directed to the individual local authority concerned.

**8. Are communities being made aware of the Strategy during consultation on the LDP and if so, how are they made aware?**

In Wrexham specific reference to the sub-regional strategy was made both in the “Key Issues and Strategy Options” document, which was the subject of public consultation in November 2006 – January 2007, and again in the Draft Preferred Strategy, which was subject to public consultation in October – November 2007. It is explicitly referred to in the Deposit LDP which will be subject to widespread consultation in June and July this summer.

Flintshire has yet to commence its LDP so the answer to this at present is no. Local Authorities are required to produce a Community Involvement Scheme to set out how they intend to consult and engage with the community and other relevant interests in relation to LDP preparation. They would only be required to reference the Strategy when as part of the evidence base it was being relied on to support a particular policy or proposal in a draft LDP. The draft Plan itself would then be the subject of consultation, giving people the opportunity to comment on the sustainability and soundness of it. It is unclear in what context Local Authorities consulting on their LDP should make communities aware of the Strategy, when this has already been produced and published and was subject to its own consultation and engagement exercise.

In Denbighshire reference was made to the sub-regional strategy as a background document in an initial issues paper for the Local Development Plan that was published for consultation in November 2005 for 8 weeks. The paper was sent to the following for comment:

- Members
- Town & Community Councils
- MPs
- Local Assembly Members
- DCC Internal Departments, Partnerships & Panels
- Welsh Assembly Government
- Adjacent Planning & Housing Authorities
- Welsh Development Agency
- North Wales Economic Forum
- NE Wales, West Cheshire Sub Regional Strategy Working Group
- House Builders Federation

- Registered Social Landlords
- Local House Builders
- Local Agents
- Countryside Council for Wales
- Council for the Protection of Rural Wales
- Welsh Language Board
- Environment Agency Wales
- Cadw
- Statutory Utilities
- Friends of the Earth
- Sustrans

Extract from paper:

**(e) West Cheshire/North East Wales Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy**

- Draft issued June 2005, aims to develop a sub-regional spatial strategy to 2021. Will inform future reviews of the Wales Spatial Plan. Denbighshire is referred to as part of the 'wider reference' area along with other parts of Cheshire & Wirral.
- Preferred strategy 'growth with social inclusion and environmental sustainability'.
- No reference to Denbighshire in employment sections but does indicate that 8.2% of the likely population growth in the sub-region may be located within Denbighshire – this is the highest percentage of all of the areas within the study. There is no indication as to whether this figure covers the whole County of Denbighshire or just those areas that look directly to the sub region.
- Denbighshire's coastal towns are listed as an area that may benefit from enhancing the links between areas of opportunity and areas of need. The coastal corridor is seen as a critical road and rail transport link based on regeneration need.
- Development within the rural hinterland likely to be for local needs only.

- Opportunities to improve transport links and accessibility between rural areas and the main settlements and centres (i.e. Chester, Deeside & Broughton).

In Denbighshire the Pre-Deposit Local Development Plan which was the subject of a wide ranging public consultation from June – August 2008 made reference to the sub regional strategy in the Policy Context Regional section.

<b>Plan</b>	<b>Key Implications</b>	<b>Related Local Development Plan Issues</b>
<b>West Cheshire- North East Wales Sub- Regional Spatial Strategy 2004 - 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to recognise that there is a great deal of inter-connectivity between Denbighshire and centres further east – with a significant employment market to the east;</li> <li>• Whilst seeking to create sustainable communities there is inevitably going to be west-east transport links between Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham and Cheshire – in recognising this it is important that an emphasis is placed on reducing reliance on the private car and focusing in on public transport (particularly rail);</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denbighshire has some dependency for employment on the cross border region.</li> <li>• Public transport services and connectivity is poor within the County outside of the coastal area.</li> </ul>

No comments were received relating to the sub-regional strategy.

At the Deposit consultation stage October – end of November 2009 no specific reference was made to the sub regional strategy in the main Deposit document. Very few plans and strategies were actually listed in the main document due to the large number of

relevant plans and strategies that would need to be referenced. Readers were directed to the full list of relevant strategies in the Sustainability Appraisal report where a reference to the sub regional strategy was included. At this stage the sub regional strategy was considered to have been overtaken by events and that more up to date and relevant plans and evidence was available (i.e. Wales Spatial Plan 2008 update).

Responses to the Deposit consultation are currently being processed and it is not possible to indicate whether any responses are relating to the sub regional strategy at this time.

### **9. How is the Strategy being monitored, reviewed and evaluated?**

As a non-statutory document the Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy does not directly deliver outcomes that can be monitored and evaluated. This is because the strategy provided some of the evidence base and policy background for the North West Regional Spatial Strategy, the Wales Spatial Plan and Local Plans. These statutory documents then assume the planning policy context and monitoring/evaluation activities are undertaken by the appropriate organisations in Wales and England which are subject to their own formal procedures, for example land use planning and the Wales Spatial Plan are governed by Welsh policy and regulations.

As the Minister for Business & Budget said in her evidence on 23rd February, the strategy itself is based on work undertaken in 2005/06 and does not reflect some of the recent developments within the area, including the impact of the economic recession. and the most recent population and household projections . Therefore, the strategy will be reviewed in the near future.

**Alun Ffred Jones AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog dros Dreftadaeth  
Minister for Heritage



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref yourref  
Ein cyf/Our ref ourref

Christine Chapman  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

|| February 2010

*Dear Christine,*

Val Lloyd wrote to me on 7 January about the petition to save Hedd Wyn's home – Yr Ysgwrn, Trawsfynydd. I am also replying to your letter of 29 January 2010 to Cadw's Director, Marilyn Lewis, asking if the property is listed.

I am familiar with the building and visited it last year. It is indeed listed as a building of special architectural and historic interest and has a high grade – grade II\* - because it is a well-preserved early nineteenth century farmhouse and because of its strong associations with Hedd Wyn. Its current owner, Gerald Williams, receives numerous visitors throughout the year, including school parties, and provides an invaluable service in conducting tours free of charge and explaining its special interest.

I have already indicated in correspondence my commitment to support local and official efforts to ascertain what steps might be possible to safeguard the site. To this end, one of my officials in Cadw has also visited the building and met Mr Williams. The house is in poor repair and my official has advised Mr Williams that Cadw would give sympathetic consideration to an application for grant assistance towards repairs to conserve the historic fabric of Yr Ysgwrn. Guidance was left with him but no application has yet been made.

Given the importance of the site, an opportunity exists for the various organisations within my portfolio to work with other heritage, educational and literary organisations and funding bodies to explore what scope exists to secure a viable future for the site. However, this can be done only with the owner's co-operation. However, we will keep in touch with him and explore all possible avenues.

I hope that this is helpful.

**Alun Ffred Jones AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog dros Dreftadaeth/Minister for Heritage

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*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

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leuan Wyn Jones AC/AM  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-248  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/06123/09

Val Lloyd AM  
97 Pleasant Street,  
Morrison,  
Swansea,  
SA6 6HJ.

*GDZ*

*20* November 2009

*Dear Val*

Thank you for your letter of 20 October 2009, on behalf of the Petitions Committee concerning the Multiple Sclerosis Society Cymru petition entitled: Improved Access To Public Transport For People With Disabilities. You have asked for details of action that the Welsh Assembly Government is taking to make public transport in Wales accessible for all.

I met with the Multiple Sclerosis Society Cymru in July following a plenary debate about accessibility issues in June. I saw it as a useful opportunity to explore ways in which I could work with the Society to address issues of mutual concern. Despite the non-devolved nature of transport accessibility responsibilities, I am keen that the Welsh Assembly Government should continue to work positively with its railway partners to improve access.

I take rail accessibility very seriously and it is a One Wales commitment to improve safety and quality at stations. When the Welsh Assembly Government funds new stations or substantially improves stations, the schemes include DDA compliant access. The new stations on the Vale of Glamorgan and Ebbw Valley Lines comply with the requirements of the DDA. Dedicated disabled parking spaces are provided at all of the stations with parking provision and the information points on the platforms provide audible information about train arrivals and departures. Visual information is also provided for those people with hearing difficulties.

The Welsh Assembly Government works in partnership with the Department for Transport (DfT) and Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) to deliver "Access for All" funding for accessibility improvements at Welsh stations. My officials have recently met with DfT, ATW and Network rail to ensure that delivery will be maintained against current project deadlines.

I am already addressing stepping heights difficulties at more rural railway stations in Wales. Aberdyfi has been selected for the first Welsh trial of the Easier Access Area scheme and installation should be completed by the end of November. Valley Station will be the next station to then benefit from this scheme.

I am already funding £1m per annum over the next three years on top of the National Stations Improvements Programme (NSIP) budget of £6m for Wales and Borders which will deliver station improvements, in partnership with Arriva Trains Wales and Network Rail.

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I am seeking to enhance the NSIP programme to deliver added value and provide additional coverage at more stations, and my officials are currently bidding for Convergence Funding to achieve this. An action plan of targeted stations will then follow.

Legislation is already in place for accessible low floor buses. Small buses will need to be accessible to wheelchairs by January 2015, large single deck buses by January 2016 and double deck buses by January 2017. The Welsh Assembly Government supports the introduction of low floor buses to aid our agenda of increasing the accessibility of public transport provision for the population of Wales. Eighty per cent of Arriva's bus fleet in Wales now comprises low-floor vehicles and Stagecoach in south Wales has a 340 strong fleet that is almost 70% accessible.

On 10 March 2009, I announced plans to extend the Community Transport Concessionary Fares Initiative for a further 3 years until 31 March 2012.

The Blue Badge Scheme is part of my wider plans for improving accessibility to key services. I will be announcing proposals for modernising the scheme in due course. Plans will cover increasing eligibility, better administration and measures to deter fraud and abuse of the scheme.

I am currently considering a report into the accessibility of public transport for people with sensory impairment. I will be announcing in due course how we intend to take forward the reports findings.

*Yours*

*Ieuan*

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport

Our Ref/Ein Cyf:  
Your Ref/Eich Cyf:  
Date/Dyddiad:  
Please ask for/Gofynnwch am:  
Direct line/Llinell uniongyrchol:  
Email/Ebost:

1<sup>st</sup> December 2009  
Tim Peppin  
029 20468669  
tim.peppin@wlga.gov.uk



WLGA • CLILC

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA

Dear Ms Lloyd

### **PETITION: IMPROVED ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

Thank-you for your letter to Steve Thomas, dated 20<sup>th</sup> October, which he passed to me for a response. I must apologise for the delay in replying but I sent the letter to contacts in a number of local authorities and have been awaiting feedback.

The examples included in the letter from Multiple Sclerosis Society Cymru are clearly unacceptable. From the responses received, an action plan of the type suggested in the petition would be welcomed by authorities, provided it was accompanied by the appropriate finance to ensure delivery.

Some actions are already taking place. Buses and coaches with a seating capacity of 22 or more passengers, used for scheduled local bus services, must comply with the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000. The dates for compliance vary depending upon the vehicle. Vehicles entering service for the first time must comply from the outset, but the regulations allow for the 'phasing out' from service of existing stepped entrance vehicles by:

- no later than 1 January 2015 (for single deck buses weighing 7.5 tonnes or less)
- 1 January 2016 (for single deck buses weighing more than 7.5 tonnes); or
- 1 January 2017 (for double deck buses).

To date, the commercial market has provided low floor easy access on a considerable proportion of bus fleets (for example, 80% of the fleet operating in RCT). Commercial decisions to invest in new vehicles ahead of the legal requirement are made on the basis of the overall cost being outweighed by the additional revenue that will be generated from an increase in passengers.

Steve Thomas  
Chief Executive  
Prif Weithredwr

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Another important aspect of improving accessibility is the bus stop itself and the ability of bus drivers to pull-up close to the kerb to enable mobility impaired passengers to board or alight without difficulty. Where funding has become available, some councils have been upgrading stops with new access kerbs and bus boarders as part of wider strategies to improve the roadside infrastructure. However, it should be noted that the effectiveness of these measures and investment in new low floor vehicles can be compromised where there is inconsiderate car parking in bus stops.

Many of the actions required to make public transport accessible to all will require significant commitment and funding to deliver. Whilst progress is being made, measures that depend on operators will require a long timescale to allow them to profile their investment over a number of years. Other measures will depend on cooperation from partner agencies (e.g. from Network Rail in relation to accessibility at stations). Aspirations are therefore unlikely to be met in the short to medium term without additional funding from WAG.

I hope that this information is of use to you.  
Yours sincerely



Tim Peppin  
Director of Regeneration and Sustainable Development.

.cc Naomi Alleyne, Director of Equalities and Social Justice

Jane Davidson AC/AM

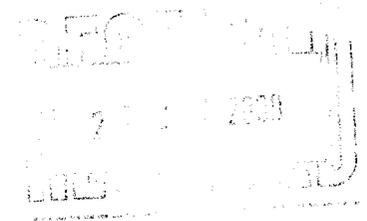
Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-253  
Ein cyf/Our ref JD/6666/09

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair of Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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25 January 2010

Dear Chris

AM GDM

Thank you for your letter of 18 December about a petition submitted by Carmarthenshire resident in relation to the transfer of private sewers, with which you enclose a summary of Assembly Members' views on this issue.

There are many properties in Wales and England that do not currently connect directly to a public sewer but are served by a private sewer. The issues highlighted in your letter and summary of responses to the survey are, I am afraid, all too familiar. The problems associated with private sewers are known, and have received a great deal of consideration for a number of years. Your survey underlines the complexities of the situation, but there are no easy answers.

The affordability of water and sewerage bills for all customers in Wales remains a key Welsh Assembly Government concern. Certainly the problems faced by some with private sewers do seem unfair, but resolving those problems can be costly and it is important that the interests of the generality of water and sewerage customers are reflected in finding a solution.

The Assembly Government's Strategic Policy Position Statement on Water, which was published in March 2009, made it a commitment to make Regulations in 2011 to transfer private sewers into public ownership. We are working through the options that might facilitate this, but finding the best way forward is not straightforward. We are continuing to work closely with sewerage undertakers and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on taking forward the transfer of private sewers and intend to consult on the detailed proposals for the regulations later this year. I am grateful for your Committees' assistance in probing the extent of the problem in Wales. Your comments will help inform our considerations.

The Strategic Policy Position Statement on Water also included a commitment to work towards stopping the further proliferation of the situation. I am pleased to let you know that real progress has been made to address some of the issues that have led to private sewer problems and will stop them happening in the future.

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The Flood and Water Management Bill is currently being progressed through Parliament and contains a provision to ensure that new sewers are built to an adoptable standard and then subsequently adopted. Clause 41 of the Bill requires developers and the sewerage undertaker to enter into a binding agreement (under Section 104 of the Water Industry Act 1991) for the adoption of sewers serving the development. This agreement will contain provisions in relation to the standards which new sewers and lateral drains are built to and to the subsequent adoption of these assets. For sewers and lateral drains that are to be adopted by sewerage undertakers operating wholly or mainly in Wales, the provisions on standards must either be in accord with standards published by the Welsh Ministers or depart from these by agreement.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane', written over a circular stamp or mark.

**Jane Davidson AM**

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

**Jane Davidson AC/AM**

**Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-254  
Ein cyf/Our ref JD/00301/10  
Ms Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff  
CF991NA

14 February 2009

*Dear Chris,*

Thank you for your letter of 2 February concerning third party speaking rights at Planning Committee meetings.

You have asked if I would issue guidance on third party speaking rights to local planning authorities. Draft Technical Advice Note 17 "Planning and Managing Development" (2007) includes advice to local planning authorities on allowing members of the public to address Planning Committees.

TAN 17 encourages planning authorities to provide opportunities for third party speaking rights at Committee as a way of improving the decision making process, whilst acknowledging that as a result, authorities may be faced with additional time pressures at Committee. It advises that arrangements for third party speaking rights should be clear and understandable, and that representations should be concise and planning based. However, the TAN recognises that implementation of third party speaking rights is a decision for each authority to consider.

The draft TAN is in the process of being revised and I anticipate that it will be finalised in this calendar year, following the completion of the current research project on reviewing the planning application process in Wales.

*Yours,*

**Jane Davidson AM**

**Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing**

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P-03-254  
8<sup>th</sup> March 2010  
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WLGA • CLILC

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Dear Christine

### Third Party representations at Planning Meetings – P 03 254

Thank you for your letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010 to Steve Thomas on the above subject, which he has passed to me for a response. Can I apologise for the delay in this reply.

Following discussions with local planning authorities I can confirm that 16 LPAs allow third party representations to speak at committee, a further one allows a representative of a petition to speak. Of these, one authority allows it at one of their three area committees and is assessing whether to extend it, one allows Town and Community Councils to speak and is currently considering allowing other third parties to speak, one is currently trialling the approach. Two currently do not and we are still seeking responses from three others.

Therefore the vast majority of Councils currently allow or are actively considering allowing third parties to speak at planning committees. The reason quoted for any variation relates to local discretion and differing views on how effective this is as a means of coming to better decisions.

I enclose links to the policies in Carmarthenshire and Bridgend as an example of how it works as well as enclosing further examples from Denbighshire, Conwy, Blaenau Gwent and Swansea

<http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/web/groups/public/documents/plan/010348.pdf>

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/English/environment/planning/applications/Documents/Representations%20to%20Committee%20Protocol%20-%20Sept%202008.pdf>

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HAVE YOUR SAY ABOUT PLANNING A Pre Speaking Rights at



04 - Council Report



Public Speaking policy.doc



Public speaking protocol2.doc

I hope that this information is of use to you and your committee.

Finally, I have been gathering information to prepare a response to your letter to me regarding Business rates in Narberth (P-03-271) and I hope to have this with you as soon as possible – again apologies for the delay.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Peppin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot above the 'i'.

Tim Peppin  
Director of Regeneration and Sustainable Development

25

Headteacher / Prifathro: Mr S.L. Marshall

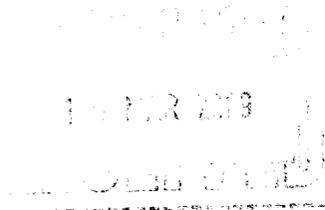


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7<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Dear Ms Chapman

Thank-you for your letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

I am pleased to hear that mainstream provision will continue to have a place within an inclusive approach for all pupils with SEN.

The pupils who compiled this petition were concerned that their placement was to close but this decision has now been reversed.

Thank-you for your help with this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Eileen Young  
Head of Learning Development Centre.

**Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM**  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-256  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00371/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
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28 February 2010

Dear Christine,

Thank you for your letter of 10 February, on behalf of the Petitions Committee, about additional train services to Fishguard.

The Gowerton – Lougher track redoubling is linked to Network Rail's replacement of the Lougher viaduct, which is scheduled to be completed by 2013.

I am aware that SWWITCH have identified "five trains per day to Fishguard" as a priority within their Regional Transport Plan. My officials will discuss this further with the consortia for possible implementation at some later date. I must make it clear that due to the intense pressure on budgets, I am unable to make an early commitment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ieuan'.

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport

**Pwyllgor Menter a Dysgu  
Enterprise and Learning Committee**  
Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NAW

16 March 2010

Dear Chris

**PETITION P-03-256 Additional Trains to Fishguard**

In your letter dated 10 February you asked whether the Enterprise and Learning Committee's report on Future Railway Infrastructure in Wales made any specific recommendations in relation to the Fishguard Petition.

There is a section on the petition in our report (paragraphs 55 to 59) in which we recommend that:

"The Welsh Government should agree to fund the proposal, supported by the regional transport consortium SWITCH and petitioners to the National Assembly, for providing additional trains to Fishguard."  
[Recommendation 11]

We received the Government's response to our report last Thursday (11 March). The Minister has rejected our recommendation on the grounds that:

"It would be inappropriate to agree to a Committee proposal to support a particular Regional Transport Plan priority when there are many priorities across all 4 of the Regional Transport Plans, and where there is already an established process in place for responding to those priorities."

In the Plenary debate on our report on 17 March I shall express disappointment that the Minister has not accepted our recommendation.

Yours sincerely



**Gareth Jones AM  
Committee Chair**

Dr Siân Phipps  
Clerc y Pwyllgor / Committee Clerk  
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## Response to Christine Chapman AM Chair Petitions Committee

Dear Chris,

Thank you very much for your note (11 February 2010) about the petition P-03-257 on restoring broadcasting of Assembly proceedings on S4C2.

This is very timely, as a communication with the S4C Authority was discussed at our last Commission Meeting, and I reported on informal discussions with S4C Chair John Walter Jones, and subsequently discussion between Commission Staff and S4C are continuing. No other broadcasters have been involved in these discussions at this stage.

The current platforms which stream our proceedings are Senedd tv on our website, and our partnership with BBC democracylive on their website in Welsh and English, together with edited highlights such as FMQs broadcast on BBC Parliament. All these use the broadcast-quality audiovisual feed provided for the Commission by our contractor Barcud-Derwen. The proposal made to us by S4C was that they would broadcast a recording of our daily proceedings on S4C digital for late-night transmission, These arrangements have not yet been finalised. A verbal text record of proceedings continues to appear on our website.

All these services are currently subject to reappraisal by the Independent Review of Bilingual Services, chaired by Arwel Ellis Owen established by the Assembly Commission and due to report after Easter.

If the Committee is agreeable I will table our correspondence for our next Commission Meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup> and will keep you informed of the progress of discussions with S4C.

Our objective as an Assembly Commission is to disseminate our proceedings as widely as possible on a range of platforms at reasonable cost within our budget.

I hope the Committee will be re-assured that we are seeking a cost-effective resolution of the petitioner's request.

Sincerely,

Dafydd

## NEWTOWN TRAFFIC SOLUTIONS

### EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF PETITION P-03-261 – LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO NEWTOWN TRAFFIC CONGESTION

#### INTRODUCTION

**NB. A map of Newtown is provided at the end of this document.**

The petition calls on National Assembly for Wales “to urge the Welsh Government to defer a decision on the proposed bypass of Newtown until it has developed and trialled a set of sustainable measures in the town itself to address traffic congestion.”

In September 2009 the Welsh Assembly Government held a Public Consultation Exhibition on its A483/A489 Newtown Study, which looked at ways to relieve congestion and improve transport in and around Newtown. The exhibition displayed six options for achieving these objectives, all of them involving a new bypass. When the exhibitors were asked why the consultation did not include a suite of non-bypass measures for improving traffic flow in Newtown itself and encouraging modal shift away from the private car, they explained that these did not achieve the desired Transport Planning Objectives (TPO’s) in the Stage 1 WelTAG Appraisal. In a subsequent written response the Assembly’s Consultant, Parsons Brinkerhoff, stated “Local Transport Improvement measures were considered as a stand-alone option during the appraisal process, but were found not to be sufficient to achieve the Transport Planning Objectives of the study, for example the problem of low headroom at the Dolfor and Nant Oer Bridges, and also journey time reliability through Newtown were not met.” (Jason Collins, 12.10.09).

The Public Consultation Exhibition made clear that two thirds of the traffic on the roads comprising the main A483/A489 corridor was either internal to Newtown or had an origin or destination in Newtown – a situation which would be expected to focus attention on alleviating local traffic rather than constructing a bypass. After examination of the Stage 1 WelTAG Appraisal, Newtown Traffic Solutions concluded that the non-bypass measures have not been investigated in sufficient depth to enable them to be ruled out.

**Part 1** of this document sets out the reasons for this conclusion by examining:

- A. The rejection of the non-bypass options put forward in the Stage 1 WelTAG Appraisal (Sections 2 & 3)
- B. The limited effort expended to develop soft measures to promote modal shift in lieu of a bypass (Section 4).
- C. The failure to consider a Dolfor Road – Heol Ashley link road to allow high vehicles to avoid the 4 metre headroom Dolfor Road railway bridge (Section 5).
- D. The neglect of the potential of the Cambrian Railway line to relieve the road corridor

Newtown Traffic Solutions have also investigated the extent to which a new bypass would satisfy the study Transport Planning Objectives, and have concluded that it fails in the case of three of them. **Part 2** of this document sets out the basis for this conclusion.

## **PART 1: VIABILITY OF LOCAL TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENT MEASURES ON THEIR OWN**

### **1.1 THE STAGE 1 WELTAG NON-BYPASS OPTIONS**

The non-bypass measures explored in the Stage 1 WelTAG Appraisal were grouped together and considered as two alternative options:

- Option 4 - Trunk Road on-line improvements: Improvements to the existing trunk road, A483 and A489 only, including raising or lowering of the Nant Oer and Dolfor Road railway bridges, linking of all existing traffic signals in Newtown, provision of new traffic signals at the Kerry Road roundabout and Morrison's junction, and improvements to right turn facilities at existing industrial estate accesses.
- Option 6 - Trunk Road on-line improvements plus local transport measures: As Option 4 plus improvements to public transport, cycling, non-motorised user provision, bus priority, public transport connectivity and safe routes to schools/college.

This document focuses on Option 6 as it is the more comprehensive.

### **1.2 TRANSPORT PLANNING OBJECTIVES**

The seven Transport Planning Objectives developed in the Stage 1 WelTAG Appraisal were as follows:

- TPO 1: Maintain economic base
- TPO 2: Meeting relevant environmental targets
- TPO 3: Removing through traffic from local roads
- TPO 4: Increasing level of usage of non-car forms of transport
- TPO 5: Integration of public transport
- TPO 6: Improve journey time reliability (North-South, East-West)
- TPO 7: Reduction in accidents

Non-bypass Option 6 was judged to be inferior to the bypass options in relation to TPO's 2, 3, 6 and 7, so these are discussed here in detail.

#### **TPO 2: Meeting relevant environmental targets**

The detailed wording of TPO 2 is as follows:

Within Newtown settlement boundary limit and within 200 m of any new transportation option:

- Meet targets and comply with appropriate environmental legislation by 2015
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 3% from 2008 levels by 2011 (in accordance with Wales Transport Strategy)

According to the Appraisal Summary Table, Option 6 has neutral effect in relation to TPO 2. However, this appears to be at odds with the entry against TPO 4, where a beneficial effect is reported in relation to the twin objectives of achieving a 10% modal shift for journeys within Newtown and a 2% modal shift for journeys with an origin or destination in Newtown (see below). A 10% modal shift for local journeys would be expected to achieve a similar reduction in greenhouse gas emissions attributed to local journeys, so it is not understood why Option 6 would not meet the TPO 2 objectives.

### **TPO 3: Removing through traffic from local roads**

The detailed wording of TPO 3 is as follows:

- Reduce through traffic on Heol Treowen, Plantation Lane and Milford Road by 50% over 2008 levels by 2015
- Reduce HGV's on Heol Treowen, Plantation Lane by 90% from 2008 levels, by 2015

Heol Treowen and Plantation Lane provide a continuous route parallel to the A483/A489 to the South of the railway line which allows high vehicles to avoid the low railway bridges on Dolfor Road (part of the A483 to Llandrindod Wells) and at Nant Oer on the Llanidloes Road (part of the A489 to the West). Unfortunately the roads concerned are essentially residential and are unsuited to HGV's – hence the objectives of TPO 3.

Although Option 6 ostensibly includes the raising of the Dolfor Road and Nant Oer bridges, it is clear from the Appraisal Summary Table (AST) that this is considered difficult to achieve. On technical and operational feasibility, the AST records "Raising/lowering of railway bridges technically difficult", while the concluding comment states that the railway bridge works are "unlikely to be acceptable to Network Rail". An alternative means of satisfying the TPO 3 objective is considered in Section 4 "An alternative route for high vehicles" below.

### **TPO 6: Improve journey time consistency (North-South, East West)**

The detailed wording of TPO 6 is as follows:

- Reduce journey times during morning and evening peak hours (0800-0900 and 1615-1715) on A489/A483 between A470/A489 junction (Caersws) and A483/B4389 junction (Aberbechan junction) by 10% by 2015
- Reduce journey times during morning and evening peak hours (0800-0900 and 1615-1715) on A489/A483 between A483/unnamed C class Road at "The Dingle" and A483/B4389 junction (Aberbechan junction) by 10% by 2015
- Reduce journey times during morning and evening peak hours (0800-0900 and 1615-1715) on A489/A483 between A483/unnamed C class Road at "The Dingle" and A470/A489 junction (Caersws) by 10% by 2015

Note that reduced journey times are used as a proxy for improved journey time consistency. The study records that current peak hour journey times between Caersws and Aberbechan junction are 17 and 15 minutes in the morning and evening peaks respectively, so the 10% journey time reduction sought is equivalent to 1.5 minutes.

The Appraisal Summary Table states that Option 6 has neutral effect in relation to TPO 6. It seemed very odd that the Option 6 combination of new traffic signals, traffic signal co-ordination, dedicated lanes for right-turning traffic, public transport improvements and cycle facilities would not produce any discernible reduction in journey times, so we contacted the Assembly's Consultant, Parsons Brinkerhoff, to ascertain how the journey time reductions were determined. Their reply made clear that no quantitative assessment of journey time reductions was carried out in the Stage 1 Appraisal: "...the options within the Stage 1 Appraisal were not assessed to the same level of detail as Stage 2. Within Stage 1, the options were reviewed qualitatively against Transport Planning Objectives set for the study. If an option fails to meet these objectives then the option is not progressed to Stage 2, and further, more quantitative and more evidence-based appraisal assessment is not undertaken. Therefore as Option 6 did not meet the Transport Planning Objectives, a detailed quantitative assessment was not undertaken."

This reply begs the question of how the qualitative assessment of journey time savings was carried out and how it could conclude that the Option 6 measures would have neutral benefit. In other contexts, such

measures would be expected to achieve real time benefits. Why not in Newtown? In questioning the conclusion, we are, effectively in a Catch 22 situation. We cannot contest the conclusion, because there is no evidence supporting it that can be contested. There is no supporting evidence because, given that the Option 6 measures are deemed to yield no time savings, it is not worth collecting it!

### **TPO 7: Reduction in accidents**

The detailed wording of TPO 7 is as follows:

Within Newtown settlement boundary limit, reduce road traffic accidents on A483(T), A489(T), Heol Treowen, Plantation Lane and Milford Road by 25% by 2015.

This TPO does not seem to be concerned about road traffic accidents on the bypass itself, which is outside the Newtown settlement boundary limit, so is of questionable value. It is not at all clear that the construction of a bypass would reduce accidents on this stretch of the Severn Valley corridor as a whole more than modal shift brought about by the Option 6 measures.

### **1.3 INVESTIGATION OF SOFT MEASURES TO PROMOTE MODAL SHIFT**

With the UK government's and WAG's ambitious targets to cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the priority in tackling congestion must be the promotion of modal shift, rather than the construction of new roads, because, as the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment (SACTRA) concluded in its 1994 report "Trunk Roads and the generation of traffic", new roads generate new traffic growth.

Given its relatively small size, bus travel, walking and cycling should all be attractive options for the journey to work, school and college. However, bus services in Newtown are infrequent, circuitous and fail to adequately serve the industrial estates, providing the opportunity for major improvement. Despite this, the Newtown Study appears to have devoted little serious effort to investigating how the town bus service could be upgraded. No study was carried out to determine the optimum route network or the modal shift that would be induced by doubling or quadrupling the frequency. Rather, "The study team consulted the local public transport operators within Newtown regarding the expansion of existing services or the introduction of new routes. The response was that they were happy with the existing level of service, but an improvement would be to provide a link between Lon Cerddyn and Park Lane to allow a loop through the housing estates via a bus gate." (Jason Collins, 12.10.09).

Newtown Traffic Solutions do not consider that the consultation described above is sufficient as the objectives of local public transport operators do not coincide with the public interest. The optimum bus network for Newtown needs to be worked out starting from scratch – ie without preconceptions – and this task should have formed an integral part of the Newtown Study.

Similarly, Newtown Traffic Solutions consider that the Newtown Study paid insufficient attention to the potential for walking and cycling to reduce car travel for short journeys. It is a sad indictment that the majority of Newtown's populace drive distances of less than 2 kilometres, both to deliver their children to school by car and to get to work themselves, when Newtown lends itself so well to sustainable travel options.

In addition to a safe cycle route paralleling the A483/A489 and strategic pedestrian/cycle links across the river and the railway, there is a need for proactive initiatives to encourage cycling in the town<sup>1</sup>. These

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<sup>1</sup> Groningen in Holland, for example, spends only 10% of its transport budget on cycling provision yet 60% of all journeys are made by bicycle.

should be targeted at commuters and schoolchildren through work-based Travel Plans and school-based cycle training respectively.

Given the dominance of local traffic and the great potential to reduce it by encouraging a switch to cycling and walking, it is alarming that the Newtown Study did not focus on means of promoting such a switch,

## **1.4 AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE FOR HIGH VEHICLES**

### **Dolfor Road and Nant Oer railway bridges**

As noted above, the Option 6 AST characterised the raising of the two railway bridges as technically difficult.

On examining each bridge separately, it is immediately apparent that there is a real difficulty with raising the Dolfor Road railway bridge, because it is only about 400 metres from Newtown station and the railway line already climbs from the station to the bridge at a gradient of 1 in 130. The bridge headroom is currently 4.0 metres, so the bridge would need to be raised 1.3 metres to achieve the 5.3 metre standard laid down for new construction. This would require an increase in the gradient from the station to the bridge to about 1 in 90, which would be quite steep for accelerating Westbound trains, unless the track was raised at the station itself.

The Nant Oer bridge, on the other hand, has a much more generous headroom of 4.65 metres, so would only need to be raised 0.65 metres to bring it up to the 5.3 metre headroom standard. Moreover, it is on level track and lies 1.2 km West of the Dolfor Road bridge, so raising it should not have any negative impact on subsequent train operation. Like Dolfor Road bridge, Nant Oer bridge carries a single railway track, but the formation is wide enough for double track, so raising the formation for the single track would not require any widening of the embankment. It is expected that the volume of new embankment fill required to raise the track 0.65 m at Nant Oer would be less than a quarter of that required to raise the track 1.3 m at Dolfor Road.

### **Dolfor Road to Heol Ashley link road**

As set out above, raising the Nant Oer railway bridge on the Llanidloes Road is relatively straightforward and smaller scale operation when compared with the operation required at Dolfor Road. Accordingly an attractive compromise solution to the routing of high vehicles through Newtown would be to raise only the Nant Oer bridge and construct a short link road between Dolfor Road and Heol Ashley cul-de-sac, which has a junction with the Llanidloes Road to the West of Nant Oer bridge. This link road would be about 300 metres long and would be along a section of the route of the Brown bypass option.

High vehicles approaching Newtown on the A483 (Dolfor Road) would be required to turn left along the new link road and Heol Ashley to the Llanidloes Road. There, Eastbound traffic would turn right and enter Newtown via the raised Nant Oer bridge.

## **1.5 REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF THE CAMBRIAN RAILWAY LINE**

Based on the traffic counts on the A483 Dolfor Road and A489 Llanidloes Road outside the built-up area, over two thirds of the through traffic is East-West and less than one third North-South. While there is no realistic alternative to the road network for North-South traffic, there is an opportunity to exploit the Cambrian line more fully to relieve the pressure on the A483/A489 corridor for East-West traffic.

The National Transport Plan contains a commitment to upgrade the current two-hourly service on the Cambrian line to hourly before the end of 2010. This development may be expected to have a significant effect on long-distance car travel in the corridor, because the train service will be frequent enough to

make it both suitable for commuters and attractive to business and leisure travellers. Currently, the prospect of a two hour wait at Birmingham or Shrewsbury in the event of a missed connection on the return journey is a major disincentive to use the railway.

It is accepted that the prediction of the modal-shift on the A483/A489 corridor induced by the hourly train service is challenging in the absence of comparable experience elsewhere. In view of this, it would seem prudent to wait for the introduction of the hourly service and monitor its effect closely.

No freight is carried on the Cambrian line at present, despite the existing parallel flows of timber, fuel and supermarket traffic. Transfer of freight to rail has benefits all round, so it is important that WAG ensures that the right incentives are in place to enable this transfer to take place. The construction of a road bypass to remove HGV's from the streets of Newtown is an extravagance when a rail bypass already exists.

## **PART 2: FAILURE OF THE BYPASS OPTIONS IN RELATION TO THE TPOs**

It is the view of Newtown Traffic Solutions that a new bypass would fail to satisfy Transport Planning Objectives 2, 4 and 5. The reasons for this conclusion are considered in relation to each of these TPO's below.

### **2.1 TPO 2: ENVIRONMENTAL TARGETS**

The WelTAG Appraisal Summary Table states that the bypass options will all be "Moderately Beneficial" in meeting relevant environmental targets. While it is accepted that a reduction of traffic on the existing corridor would benefit air quality in New Road, this improvement would be small, as only a third of existing traffic is through traffic, and there is every danger that local traffic would grow to fill the space vacated.

A 2006 report for the CPRE and Countryside Agency "Beyond Transport Infrastructure – Lessons for the future from recent road projects" looked at the accuracy of traffic forecasts for three major bypasses in England and reported as follows:

In towns with bypasses, such as Newbury and Polegate, the new roads did significantly reduce town centre traffic levels. However, these reductions are not as great as originally forecast and there has subsequently been re-growth in traffic levels on the bypassed roads.

Looking at the Severn Valley corridor in total, the construction of a bypass would seem to be the best route to *increasing* CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport rather than reducing them. The landmark report by the Standing Advisory Committee for Trunk Road Assessment (SACTRA) "Trunk roads and the generation of traffic" (HMSO, 1994) concluded that new roads generate new traffic growth. This is because shorter journey times enable people to make longer journeys and commute further to work – ie they release suppressed demand.

The SACTRA conclusion has subsequently been confirmed by the CPRE report referred to above. In particular, it found that the 2004 traffic levels on the Newbury and Blackburn bypasses were 33% and 14% higher, respectively than the mid-range predictions for 2010, as set out in the table below.

Bypass	Highways Agency forecast for 2010 (vehicles per day)	Mid-range forecast for 2010 (vehicles per day)	Actual traffic in 2004 (vehicles per day)	Percentage increase
Newbury	30,000-36,000	33,000	43,800	33%
Blackburn	41,000-51,000	46,000	52,452	14%

**Table 1: Traffic flows on Newbury and Blackburn bypasses compared with predictions**

Based on the findings of the SACTRA and CPRE reports, there must be every expectation that construction of a Newtown bypass would induce significant new traffic growth as has been experienced elsewhere, and therefore result in increased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Climate change is now viewed as the biggest threat faced by mankind. In view of the over-riding importance now attached to the *reduction* of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and road transport's dominant share of UK CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (24%), Newtown Traffic Solutions believe that construction of the bypass should be rejected as inimical to this central plank of WAG and UK government policy.

### **Inadequacy of TPO 2**

It should be pointed out that the **greenhouse gas emission target** in TPO 2 of reducing emissions by 3% from 2008 levels by 2011 is quite inadequate. First of all it is too low in relation to current UK targets, which imply *annual* reductions of 3%, and secondly it does not extend beyond next year, well before any bypass could be opened! As a minimum, the target should cover a 20 year period after the opening of the bypass.

Another serious shortcoming of TPO 2 is that it makes no mention of **noise** and, in any case, it restricts consideration of environmental impacts to within 200 metres of the bypass! The fast speeds of traffic on a well-engineered bypass would mean that noise levels would be much higher than that of traffic on the existing road. The findings of the CPRE study are also relevant here, for it states that "traffic on the M65 near Blackburn is audible as a continuous noise from the surrounding high moorlands some miles distant. .... The wider noise impacts are not considered in the appraisal or the evaluation process, yet noise has a major impact on the character of the countryside."

The impact of the noise of high speed traffic on the valley as a whole does not seem to have been taken into account in the Environment section of the Appraisal Summary Table, where the bypass noise impact is described, inaccurately, as "large beneficial" or "moderate beneficial".

## **2.2 TPO 4: INCREASING USAGE OF NON-CAR MODES**

The detailed wording of TPO 4 is as follows:

- For travel with origin and destination within Newtown, achieve modal shift of 10% from car to non-car forms of transport (cycling, walking and public transport), over 2008 levels by 2015
- For travel with origin or destination within Newtown, achieve modal shift of 2% from car to public transport, over 2008 levels by, 2015

As already discussed above, the construction of a bypass will generate induced traffic and thus encourage more car journeys rather than achieve modal shift. Besides releasing suppressed demand for long distance journeys by road, the road space released by the reduction in through traffic through Newtown will encourage *more* local journeys to be made by car, not less. The bypass option is thus "moderately adverse", rather than "neutral" in relation to TPO 4.

It is noted that TPO 4 restricts modal shift targets to traffic with origin and/or destination in Newtown. The omission of a modal shift target for through traffic appears to be a deliberate subterfuge in order to

avoid confronting the issue of the damaging modal shift that the bypass would induce, as far as long distance journeys are concerned.

It is also noted that, in the case of the target for travel with origin or destination within Newtown, the TPO does not envisage that cycling could play a part, even though commuting by cycling is common for journeys up to 7 or 8 miles. Omitting cycling from this target automatically means that solutions such as a dedicated cycle path from Caersws to Newtown are not considered in the Study at all.

### **2.3 TPO 5: INTEGRATION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

The detailed wording of TPO 5 is as follows:

- Within Newtown limit interchange penalty linking bus services and train services to 20 minutes, by 2015
- Within Newtown, during morning and evening peak hours (0700-0900 and 1600-1800) limit interchange penalty linking bus services to 10 minutes, by 2015

Clearly the bypass does nothing to satisfy these objectives.

### **2.4 LOCAL ENVIRONMENT**

There is no TPO relating to localised environmental impact, however Newtown currently enjoys unspoilt views from a peaceful and unique settings. The elevated placement of the bypass would ensure that its visual and auditory impact would be felt over a considerable area - most of its residential areas in fact. Indeed, it is pointed out that the proposed route is 'all high quality with strong coherence and rural character; the southern scarp slope is exceptional with long views and dramatic topography', and 'introduction of a road would have considerable adverse impact'. This begs the question of whether a road should be considered in landscape of this quality

### 3. CONCLUSION

Scrutiny of the Stage 1 WelTAG appraisal leads to two principal conclusions. Firstly, that the appraisal did not investigate transport measures within Newtown to the depth required, leading to erroneous conclusions in relation to the meeting of transport planning objectives.

In particular:

- there was no quantitative assessment of the journey time savings arising from dedicated lanes for right-turning traffic, new traffic signals, signal co-ordination and modal-shift
- there was no independent study of how the bus network and service level could be better tailored to the needs of the population
- there was no consideration of a low-cost route avoiding residential areas enabling high vehicles to bypass the low Dolfor Road railway bridge.

The second conclusion is that the bypass fails to satisfy the transport planning objectives relating to environmental targets and modal shift. In particular, it fails to take account of the way shorter journey times release suppressed demand, thus leading to increased traffic overall.

It is much to be regretted that the Newtown Study preceded major transport improvements already in progress<sup>2</sup> or under consideration<sup>3</sup> in and around Newtown. Indeed the study findings must now necessarily be viewed as dated and inaccurate.

Given the burgeoning evidence that building more roads creates more traffic whilst giving limited benefit<sup>4</sup>, that 'soft measures' are significantly lower cost whilst being highly beneficial to public health<sup>5</sup>, WAGs wider environmental responsibilities and supposed commitment to walking and cycling<sup>6</sup> and the

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<sup>2</sup> Improvements in progress:

- Synchronised traffic lights and the Tesco SCOOT traffic management system. A huge improvement in traffic flow has already occurred as a result of this work
- New signals/removal of the New Bridge roundabout
- Hourly Cambrian line train service
- Abermule - Newtown cycle path
- Vaynor and Trehafren estate cycle path

<sup>3</sup> Improvements under consideration:

- Bus services and Lon Cerddyn - Park Lane bus gate (under review: Council Regeneration and Development Board Sub-committee)
- Newtown - Llanidloes cycle path. (Subject to a PCC study)
- Pedestrian route: railway - town centre
- Newtown Traffic Solutions have compiled a further list of suggestions (too extensive to include here, but available upon request). PCC Transport Policy Office have lauded these as both practical and cost effective.

<sup>4</sup> Atkins meta-study of Highways Agency Post-Opening Project Evaluation reports reports (POPE, 2008) states, "Forecasting of economic benefits is generally not accurate". The report found that time savings, which make up a sizeable proportion of the economic benefits, were generally very small: often just a couple of minutes off a morning commute which might take half an hour or more." Use of public transport generally decreased, due to the increased ease of car journeys and cycling decreased due to faster driving on freed-up smaller roads.

<sup>5</sup> A report published in medical journal *The Lancet* (5.12.09) shows walking and cycling to reduce greenhouse gas emissions also has major health benefits, including reduced cardiovascular disease, depression and dementia. The authors, led by James Woodcock from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, wrote: "**Policy makers should divert investment from roads for motorists towards provision of infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.**"

<sup>6</sup> WAG walking and cycling action plan, 2009 - 2013 states, "Our key objectives here are to: \*Improve the health and well being of Wales through increased physical activity; \*Improve the local environment for walkers and cyclists; \*Encourage sustainable travel to combat climate change; \*Increase levels of walking and cycling through promotion of facilities and \* Ensure that walking and cycling are prioritised in policies, guidance and funding."

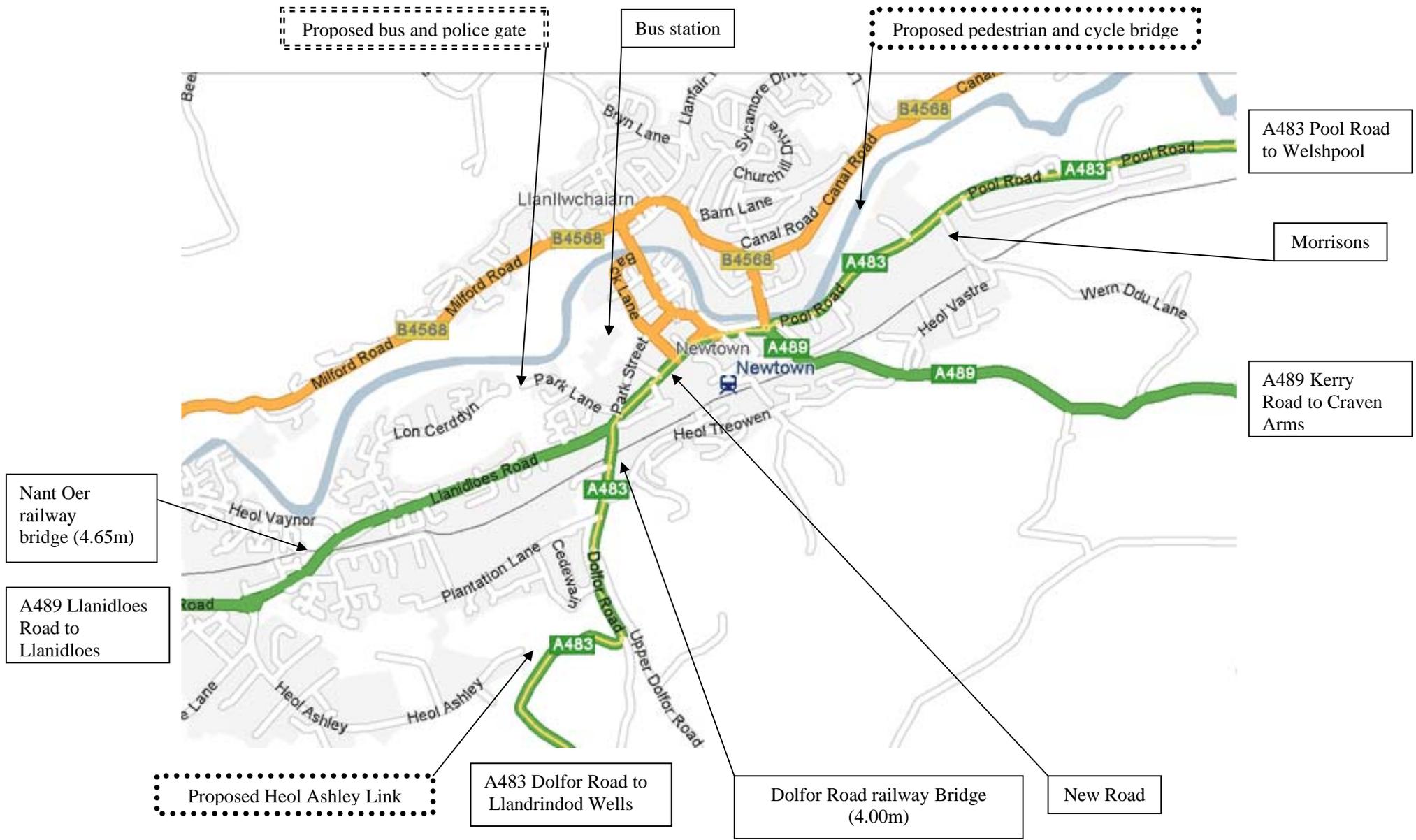
inevitable damage that local trade would suffer, Newtown Traffic Solutions find it surprising that a bypass should even be considered until all other possibilities have been exhausted.

Section 2.2.4 of the WelTAG Guidance states:

The Planning Stage requires practitioners to adopt an objective-led approach. This means that planning starts by identifying problems and opportunities and defining what is to be achieved – the ultimate outcomes expressed as transport planning objectives (TPO's), rather than focusing on the means to achieve the outcomes i.e. the projects, schemes, plans or strategies themselves.

Despite this, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the A483/A489 Newtown Study has started from the premise that the long discussed bypass is the solution to Newtown traffic congestion and then merely sought to justify this outcome. Correct application of the WelTAG Guidance, informed by the Welsh Assembly Government's overarching sustainability objective, would have led to an in-depth assessment from scratch of all the options.

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**Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM**  
**Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-261  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00102/10

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair of Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Ty Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

29 January 2010

*Dea Val*

Thank you for your letter of 11 January 2010, on behalf of the Petitions Committee, regarding a petition received in connection with the A483/A489 Newtown Public Consultation.

The petition is currently being considered as part of the consultation process, which ended on the 24 November 2009.

I will be announcing the results of the public consultation exercise later this year .

*Yon  
Ieuan*

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport

**Pwyllgor Menter a Dysgu  
Enterprise and Learning Committee**

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Christine Chapman  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

3 February 2010

Dear Chris

**PETITION: LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO NEWTOWN TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

Thank you for your letter dated 29 January 2010 concerning the above petition.

The Enterprise and Learning Committee did consider Regional Transport Planning during our recent inquiry on the Future Railway Infrastructure in Wales, but in a rail, not road, capacity. The Committee would not normally examine the detail of any individual road scheme, such as the Newtown by-pass.

I understand that the Finance Committee looked at the Trunk Road programme last year, so there may be some merit in asking similar questions of the clerks of that Committee.

Yours sincerely



**Gareth Jones AM  
Committee Chair**

Dr Siân Phipps  
Clerc y Pwyllgor / Committee Clerk  
Tel: 029 20 898582  
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Jane Davidson AC/AM

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-264  
Ein cyf/Our ref JD/00110/10

Christine Chapman  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff  
CF991NA

5 February 2010

*Dear Chris,*

#### **PETITION: HELP STOP THE ALARMING LOSS OF WILDLIFE HABITATS**

Thank you for your letters of 11 and 29 January 2010 requesting Elin Jones' and my views on the issues raised by the above petition. The issues raised in your letter fall between Elin Jones' portfolio and mine. Elin Jones' officials have inputted into this letter as necessary.

Although much positive action has been taken in Wales and real progress has been made in protecting and conserving our wildlife and natural habitats, emerging evidence does suggest that we will miss the important and challenging targets set for biodiversity in 2010. The evidence base here is actually quite mixed – and this is something we are also working to improve in the future. However, the available data does suggest that we are continuing to see a loss of biodiversity in Wales due to the effects of diffuse pollution, loss of land to development, effects of climate change, etc.

While this is disappointing, we have a lot to be proud of in Wales in terms of the progress being made on protecting key habitats and species and in promoting the importance of biodiversity. It should also be noted by the Committee, I think, that Wales is not alone in struggling with the challenges here. The fact is that no other country will meet the targets set by the Convention on Biological Diversity and the European Union for 2010.

The Welsh Assembly Government has taken a positive stance to promoting action on biodiversity, working with all partners who have a role to play. In particular, we have made considerable progress in our Biodiversity Action Planning Process and we have new legislative powers through the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (which places a Biodiversity Duty on all public bodies) and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 which will help improve the sustainable management of our marine environment. Real progress has been made on the ground in conserving important habitats and species such as Arable Field Margins, Aquifer-fed Fluctuating Water Bodies, Deptford Pink, Sand Lizard, and Lesser Horseshoe Bat. The River Dee is also an example of a whole ecosystem in Wales which is in good overall condition.

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*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)*

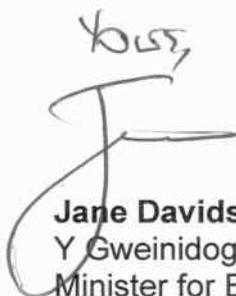
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Despite the progress achieved in these and other areas, however, the Welsh Assembly Government recognised last year, that the key biodiversity targets set for 2010 could be missed. As a result, I launched a review last September into the reasons for this and what new action might be usefully taken to enable us to 'get back on track' and achieve our longer term biodiversity objectives. The review involves a wide range of stakeholders, including the RSPB, through the Wales Biodiversity Partnership and will inform future action here by the Welsh Assembly Government. So the inquiry the petition is calling for is effectively under way already.

2010 is also the International Year of Biodiversity, and the Assembly Government is taking the opportunity this year to review and refresh our overall policy approach here. As the Committee will recognise, our natural environment faces particular challenges in the years ahead, not least from climate change. A truly sustainable approach will be to address climate change pressures and habitat conservation and species protection together, while at the same time securing land and marine management regimes which promote healthy ecosystems.

This holistic approach is already reflected in the development work being undertaken on the new sustainable land management scheme Glastir. This programme will deliver a new agri-environment scheme from 2012 which will have a clear focus on enabling land managers to improve the delivery of those ecosystem service outputs that underpin actions to improve biodiversity in our countryside. Biodiversity is a key objective of the positive management that continues to be carried out on 3200 Tir Gofal farms. It is proposed to trial some of the enhanced options being developed as part of the Glastir targeted element within a sample of 30 Tir Gofal farms. These measures are targeted at a number of priority bird species including Golden Plover, Lapwing and Curlew. In 2009 the RSPB (in partnership with Butterfly Conservation, Plant Life, Wildlife Trusts and the Bat Conservation Trust) successfully tendered for Lot 2 of the Welsh Assembly Governments Agri-environment monitoring contract. Lot 2 is a species monitoring contract which aims to ascertain whether agri-environment schemes contribute to maintaining and enhancing species abundance, which includes the specific monitoring of birds. My aim would be to build further on the good work of Tir Gofal and the proposed Glastir. To take this forward I plan to develop this year a new Natural Environment Framework which will complement the existing Wales Environment Strategy. The Framework will take full account of the findings of the review which has been initiated on the existing biodiversity targets and will also consider if additional legislative powers would be helpful in securing further positive progress on this front.

I issued a Written Statement on 18th January to all AMs on the position here and my forward plans and this Statement provides fuller information which may be of interest to the Committee in considering this particular petition. As indicated, however, the inquiry which the petitioners are calling for is already under way and I will be consulting widely on the outcome and proposed next steps in Wales later this year in the context of the draft Natural Environment Framework.



**Jane Davidson AM**

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Christine Chapman, AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

08 February 2010

Dear Christine

**PETITION: HELP STOP THE ALARMING LOSS OF WILDLIFE AND HABITATS**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the statement received from the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing. While we welcome this statement, which pulls together targets, current actions and identifies some actions for the future, it does not tell us anything new or provide any explanation of why the 2010 biodiversity target has been missed.

RSPB Cymru does not consider that the statement adequately addresses the petition's main requests, which are to publicly examine the reasons why we have failed to meet the 2010 target and to make recommendations on future targets, and how to ensure they are delivered. We are therefore continuing to call for an inquiry into why the target to halt biodiversity loss by 2010 has not been met.

**Biodiversity is a key indicator of sustainable development** and while Wales has had a duty to promote sustainable development since the first Government of Wales Act 1998 - it is clear we are also **failing on this duty**.

The recent Wales Audit Office report, Sustainable development and business decision making in the Welsh Assembly Government,<sup>1</sup> highlighted that:

*Limitations in the Assembly Government's business processes have impaired their effectiveness in embedding sustainable development objectives and principles in decision-making.*

And that

*Sustainable development is seen as a one of a number of competing priorities rather than the means by which the Assembly Government manages its competing priorities.*

We believe that these concerns also apply to biodiversity and that Wales has continued to promote policies that promote development at the expense of biodiversity and that we are failing to live within environmental limits.

RSPB Cymru is calling for a full and open inquiry, held in public in the National Assembly for Wales, into the reasons why the 2010 target to halt biodiversity loss has not been met. An inquiry is needed to critically examine the wide range of complex issues associated with the 2010 target and to make recommendations for what should happen next. The inquiry should:

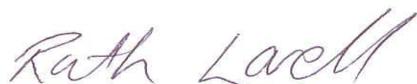
- Bring together all the partners with responsibility for delivering action for biodiversity, to question them on their experiences of delivering for biodiversity
- Examine how the government has spent public money to deliver action for biodiversity
- Examine how policies have been implemented across governmental departments.
- Examine any inconsistent and conflicting government policy that has undermined efforts to meet the 2010 target.
- Look at how biodiversity can be embedded into government policy (i.e., how “biodiversity conservation will be built in to everything we do” in accordance with One Wales, One Planet, WAG’s current Sustainable Development Strategy (quote from p45)).
- Make recommendations for the future as to how government policy can be truly sustainable, and expenditure more efficient and effective.
- Make recommendations on how the Assembly Government can strengthen the tools it has at its disposal to encourage biodiversity conservation: regulation, financial instruments, exhortation and the market.

Although the 2010 target will be missed, we believe an inquiry should also look at successes and examine what has worked. The focus and energy behind this should be captured and we suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government should adopt an **interim target to halt biodiversity loss by 2020**.

The natural environment, and the range of species it supports, is one of Wales’ greatest assets, attracting millions of visitors each year and supporting many thousands of jobs. RSPB Cymru sees this as an opportunity to embed and enshrine biodiversity protection at the heart of Welsh policy, thus ensuring that future generations can enjoy the benefits of our country’s landscape and natural resources as we do today.

I hope this information of use to the Committee in its consideration of our petition. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



Ruth Lovell  
Policy Advocate  
RSPB Cymru

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<sup>i</sup> Sustainable development and business decision making in the Welsh Assembly Government, Wales Audit Office 2010.  
[http://www.wao.gov.uk/assets/englishdocuments/Sustainable\\_Development\\_english.pdf](http://www.wao.gov.uk/assets/englishdocuments/Sustainable_Development_english.pdf)

**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM**

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

Our ref: EH/07401/09

Your ref:

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Bae Caerdydd  
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11 December 2009

*Dear Val*

Thank you for your letter of 2 December, on behalf of the Petitions Committee, concerning the new Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan.

It is the responsibility of the Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board (LHB) to ensure that the health needs of its population are met. A Business Case was submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government outlining what services would be delivered at the new hospital. This went through due process prior to approval being given to commence the building of the hospital.

The LHB has decided that Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan will best serve the needs of the public by providing outpatient services, mental health facilities, ante-natal care and over 100 single-bed patient rooms when it opens in 2010.

Should you wish to contact the Aneurin Bevan LHB directly, they will be able to provide you with the reasons behind the decision not to include an Accident and Emergency Department at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan. If so, please write to:

Mr Andrew Goodall  
Chief Executive  
Aneurin Bevan Local Health Board  
Block A, Mamhilad House  
Mamhilad Park Estate  
Pontypool  
NP4 0YP

*Andrew Goodall*

**Edwina Hart MBE OStJ AM**

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

Our ref: EH/07574/09

Your ref: P-03-268

20 JAN 2010

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
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19 January 2010

*Dear Val*

Thank you for your further e-mail of 19 December, sent on behalf of the Petitions Committee, in which you request clarification on a number of issues in relation to the Accident and Emergency Unit at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan.

It might be helpful to the committee if I were to provide some background information.

A major Accident & Emergency department, such as the Royal Gwent, is defined as a consultant led service with appropriate resuscitation facilities and designated accommodation for the reception of accident and emergency patients. The criteria set for these departments include the necessity for resuscitation, assessment and treatment of acute illnesses and injury in patients of all ages. These services must be available continuously, 24 hours a day. All incidents can be accommodated at a major A&E department, and those patients that are seriously ill or have a life threatening condition should attend a major A&E department.

Those departments that do not meet the criteria above for a major A&E Department are known as other A&E or Minor Injury Units. These treatment centres are defined as all other A&E/casualty/minor injury units which have designated accommodation for the reception of accident and emergency patients, and can be routinely accessed without appointment. The type of incident that would be dealt with at a minor injuries unit are cuts, bites, stings, muscle and joint injuries.

On your second point about guidelines or criteria issued by the Welsh Government for use by LHBs in determining whether a hospital is provided with either type of

unit, this is a decision that is made when the hospital is being developed, based on meeting the needs of the local community.

Finally, with regards to Assembly Government guidelines for public awareness of which type of unit the public should attend, we would advise those in need of access to unscheduled care to use the most appropriate service available for their specific needs, whether that is A&E, GP out of hours, or another service. NHS Direct are also able to provide advice to patients as to the most appropriate place for them to attend for their specific condition.

I hope that this information answers your queries.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. M.', written in a cursive style.



GIG  
NHS

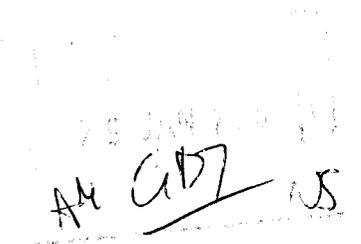
Bwrdd Iechyd  
Aneurin Bevan  
Health Board

Ref: AG/jp/law

Direct Line: 01495 765072

27 January 2010

Ms Val Lloyd,  
Chair, Petitions Committee,  
National Assembly for Wales,  
Cardiff Bay,  
Cardiff CF99 1NA



Dear Ms Lloyd

**Re: Petition: Accident and Emergency Unit at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan**

I am writing in response to your letter of 17<sup>th</sup> December in which you advised that you are currently considering a petition, submitted by Rhianydd Williams, which calls upon the National Assembly for Wales to provide an Accident and Emergency Unit at the new Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan Local General Hospital.

You specifically requested this response to address the following issues: -

- Details of how Minor Injury and Accident & Emergency services for Blaenau Gwent residents are managed
- How paramedic teams decide on patient destination depending on seriousness of the incident and geographical location
- Rationale for the decision to provide a Minor Injury Unit rather than an A&E facility at the new hospital

Aneurin Bevan Health Board was not aware of a petition being raised on this matter which is disappointing as we believe there have been robust communication mechanisms with all stakeholders, including continuous engagement with local communities, throughout the planning, consultation and commissioning phases of Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan Local General Hospital. The proposed service model for this new hospital development has been the subject

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Aneurin Bevan Health Board  
Headquarters  
Block A, Mamhilad House,  
Mamhilad Park Estate,  
Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 0YP  
Telephone: 01873 732732  
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enquiries@aneurinbevanlhb.wales.nhs.uk



of formal consultation with the residents of Blaenau Gwent since 2001, with at least 3 distinct "formal" engagement and/or consultation processes being undertaken by our predecessor organisations during that time.

Before addressing the specific questions you have raised in your letter, it might be helpful to explain the model for unscheduled care that has been developed locally under the auspices of our Clinical Futures Programme, which has itself been the subject of positive public engagement and consultation.

Urgent and emergency care consists primarily of four broad categories of need, namely:

1. **Minor Illness** – colds and flu, rashes, fevers, eye infections, ear infections, respiratory infections
2. **Minor Injuries** – wounds, contusions, eye injuries, sprains and strains, back injuries, foreign bodies
3. **Emergencies** – routine medical conditions (e.g. exacerbations of chronic conditions) routine trauma (uncomplicated fractures)
4. **Major Emergencies** – heart attack, stroke, major trauma, bleeds

**Minor illness** is managed by primary care on a 24/7 basis, in hours through local General Practices and by the Out of Hours service during evenings, weekends and bank holidays. Members of the public can also access NHS Direct Wales for advice in dealing with minor illness.

**Minor Injuries** services are provided in local hospitals in Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Torfaen Localities. These units are prominently nurse led, and form part of the local emergency care network. Each MIU is linked with its corresponding A&E Department, have 24/7 access to clinical support and advice, and work within clear guidelines and protocols that have been developed by the lead A&E Consultant for Minor Injury Units and are based on best practice and associated clinical guidelines. Under the Clinical Futures model each locality, including Newport, will have a minor injuries unit, thus enabling patients to access the appropriate level of care and avoiding unnecessary attendances at Emergency Assessment Units and/or Major Emergency Department(s).

**Emergency** and **Major Emergency** services are currently provided from Nevill Hall Hospital and Royal Gwent Hospital A&E Departments together with Medical Assessment, Surgical Assessment, Paediatric Assessment Units and the significant clinical infrastructure that supports them. Under the Clinical Futures Programme the proposal is to provide three Emergency Assessment Units (namely Nevill Hall Hospital, Royal Gwent Hospital and Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr in Ystrad Mynach) and consolidate Major Emergency Services at a new Specialist and Critical Care Centre.

In short the unscheduled care network for Aneurin Bevan Health Board in future will consist of:

- Primary Care and Primary Care Out of Hours Services
- Minor Injury Units in Ebbw Vale and a number of other locations across our area
- Emergency Assessment Units in Abergavenny, Newport and Ystrad Mynach
- Major Emergencies ultimately at the SCCC which will be located at Llanfrechfa near Cwmbran

This model of care is consistent with the Assembly's policy statements as set out in Designed for Life, and the Delivering Emergency Care Strategy. The local clinical network for unscheduled care has been based on comprehensive needs assessment, clinical quality and safety considerations including critical mass, affordability and sustainability.

With respect to the questions you have raised in your letter, I have addressed each issue in turn.

### **1. Management arrangements of Minor Injuries and Accident and Emergency services**

The management arrangements for Minor Injury Units and Accident & Emergency Units are broadly covered above. Each Accident and Emergency Department is responsible for the management of Minor Injury Units that provide services to populations they cover for Emergency and Major Emergencies.

Blaenau Gwent residents have traditionally had access to a 24 hour Minor Injuries Service and this will be maintained with the re-provision of an MIU within Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan Local General Hospital. The volume of activity for the current service is small with an average of 23 attendances per day during normal working hours and an average of 1 attendance per day in the evening/night period.

Blaenau Gwent residents have traditionally accessed Nevill Hall Hospital for emergencies and major emergency services. Under the existing proposals that status quo will be maintained, and will not change until Specialist and Critical Care Services are consolidated in a single centre in Cwmbran, the planning for which is ongoing. Blaenau Gwent residents also access emergency services at Prince Charles Hospital and the Royal Gwent Hospital.

The proposed MIU planned for Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan will provide a wider range of services than those currently available within the County Borough (these are described in Annex 1). The service will be provided by dedicated staff trained and skilled by our A&E Departments and supported out of hours by the hospital's Nurse Practitioners.

## **2. How paramedics decide on patient destination**

Traditionally patients self present at the MIU, although in recent months ABHB together with all 7 Local Health Boards across Wales have been developing Standard Operating Procedures for conveying patients who call an ambulance but who have a minor injury, directly to their local MIU rather than to an A and E Department. These procedures clearly articulate the range of minor injuries that can be treated safely in MIUs.

ABHB and its predecessor organisations have worked closely with Welsh Ambulance Service Trust to develop guidelines and patient pathways to ensure that paramedics are supported in assessing patients and determining the most appropriate mechanisms for managing patients, including referring patients to see their General Practitioner, accessing community based services including rapid response or conveying the patient to the most appropriate hospital facility. We continue to build on this positive working relationship as we further develop our Clinical Futures Programme.

## **3. Rationale for decision to provide MIU and not A&E in Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan**

Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan is a local general hospital and is planned to provide Blaenau Gwent residents with the majority of their outpatient care, sub acute medical beds, rehabilitation, and routine diagnostic services (e.g. plain x-rays, ultra sound). It does not have the infrastructure of theatres, critical care or specialist diagnostics. Covering a population of around 70,000 people, with close proximity to the Heads of the Valley corridor and ready access to Nevill Hall and Prince Charles Hospitals there is good access to two District General Hospitals.

A&E departments require a critical mass of highly skilled staff and an extensive infrastructure including diagnostics, theatres, critical care and a full range of specialist services. They also require a critical mass of patients in order to maintain clinical competence.

With increased specialisation across clinical specialties critical mass for some services is in excess of populations of 500,000. This together with increasing challenges in terms of the restricted working hours of junior doctors mean that all health communities are struggling to maintain existing emergency medical rotas.

These factors were transparent when Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan Local General Hospital was being planned; it was never intended to be a District General Hospital because the population of the Borough cannot sustain one and providing an A&E Department has never been an option. Nevertheless, we are committed to maintaining the minor injuries services in place and these will be enhanced further from the current service. In addition, we are developing a

broader range of services within this new hospital that should provide better access for the local population.

I trust the above is helpful in explaining our plans for Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan and will reassure the petitioners about the services that will be offered to the residents of Blaenau Gwent. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Andrew Goodall**  
**Prif Weithredwr/ Chief Executive**  
**Bwrdd Iechyd Aneurin Bevan/ Aneurin Bevan Health Board**

Enc

## Range of Conditions suitable to be treated in Minor Injury Units in ABHB.

Chief Complaint (Examples)	Exclude
<b>Minor allergies (reactions) / envenomation (stings &amp; bites)</b> Provided: E.g. Weaver fish stings provided no difficulty in breathing or swallowing with symptoms	Exotic spider bites Any suspicion of anaphylaxis
<b>Animal bites / attacks</b>	Exotic animal bites. Snake bites. Wounds with avulsed and/or crushed tissue
<b>Assault</b> Providing injuries not considered serious	Sexual assault Suspected NAI Head injuries if <sup>1</sup> : High energy GCS < 15 at any time Amnesia before or after the injury Any vomiting before or after the injury Any seizure since the injury Head injury with drug or alcohol involvement Any suspicion of skull fracture History of bleeding or clotting disorder (inc current anti-coagulant therapy) Age >65 years Children > 3 with head injury
<b>Burns (scalds)</b> Provided: <b>&lt; 3% BSA burn</b>	Burns >3% BSA. Any burn that may compromise the airway, breathing or circulation. Electrical burns. Inhalational burns.
<b>Eye problems / injuries</b> Including: Minor eye injury (abrasions; contact lens problems; small FB's; arc eye)	Penetrating wound to the globe Chemical burns; chemicals in eye. Medical eye problems <sup>2</sup> (allergies; infections; watery discharge)
<b>Falls</b> Provided: From a standing height Injury is minor	Falls as a result of 'collapse'. Fall from any height or > 5 steps/stairs Neurological, vascular, tendon injury. Compound fractures.

<sup>1</sup> To be considered in conjunction with full NICE clinical guideline 56 – Head Injury (2007)

<sup>2</sup> Some local variation may exist

<b>Chief Complaint (Examples)</b>	<b>Exclude</b>
Public assistance has been requested (no injuries and no significant symptoms)	Deformed limbs. Patients in severe pain. If patient requires significant social assessment & intervention (see falls pathway).
<b>Heat &amp; cold exposure</b>	Core temperature < 35.5 or >39.5 centigrade (if measurement available). Cardiac dysrhythmias.
<b>Haemorrhage / lacerations</b> Provided: Bleeding is controlled Wound is 'uncomplicated'	Deep / penetrating wounds involving underlying structures. Severe crush injuries. Severe nose bleed (shocked). Patients taken warfarin or other anti-coagulants and patients with known bleeding problems
<b>Overdose / poisoning</b> – only following consultation with TOXBASE via clinical desk / control Provided: Substance is non / low toxicity It was accidental (i.e. no suicidal / self harm intent) Patient does not require observation	Moderate to high lethality Previous par suicide. Active suicidal intent. Previous history of mental health problems. Inappropriate history / clinician concern.
<b>Sick persons / miscellaneous</b> Examples: Requests to cut ring off finger Retained foreign objects <sup>3</sup> <i>Pain (ill-defined)</i> Definite simple syncope (if GCS = 15 and no significant features outlined above)	Behavioural emergencies. All other conditions to be considered on its merits (may be discussed with MIU nurse/ NHSDW Nurse Advisor / Clinical desk for further advice) Ingested Objects Infected wound
<b>Road Traffic Crashes / transportation accidents</b> Provided: Low energy / low risk mechanism of injury Velocity <30mph Injuries are minor	Any suspicion of major trauma. High risk mechanism of injury (>30 mph; ejection, rollover) If other occupants have sustained severe injuries or if fatalities at scene. Any complaints of neck pain that cannot be cleared clinically (or has been immobilised)
<b>Traumatic injuries (general injuries)</b> Provided: Injuries not serious Minor crush injuries to extremities (distal to wrist or ankle) Peripheral entrapment only	Head injuries <sup>4</sup> if: High energy GCS < 15 at any time Amnesia before or after the injury Any vomiting before of after the injury Any seizure since the injury Head injury with drug or alcohol

<sup>3</sup> There may be some local variation here

<sup>4</sup> With consideration of NICE Head Injury guidelines

Chief Complaint (Examples)	Exclude
	involvement Any suspicion of skull fracture History of bleeding or clotting disorder (inc current anti-coagulant therapy) Age >65 years Deformed limbs Chest / truncal injuries Severe crush injuries Children under 5 if imaging indicated

**Additional Information - Average Activity Level for Blaenau Gwent - Minor Injuries**

Minor Injuries	Break Down of Current Activity
Average day time attendances	700 per month 23 per day
Average night time attendances	28 per month 1 per night
<b>Total Adult Attendances per annum</b>	<b>8,340</b>
Average <16yrs Attendances per annum	116 per month 4 per day
<b>TOTAL Attendances per annum</b>	<b>9,700</b>

**Leighton Andrews AC/AM**

**Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg & Dysgu Gydol Oes  
Minister for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref  
Ein cyf/Our ref LA/00068/10

Val Lloyd AM  
97 Pleasant Street,  
Morrison,  
Swansea,  
SA6 6HJ.

30 January 2010

Dear Val,

Thank you for your letter of the 7<sup>th</sup> January regarding concerns around how work based learning is meeting the needs of vulnerable young people across Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government's plans around skills, employment and work based learning are set out in *Skills that Work for Wales*. It adopts an inclusive model of support to benefit all client groups. In order to respond to the needs of disadvantaged young people specifically, during April 2009 the Welsh Assembly Government published the NEETs Plan – *Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Wales*. This plan outlines how Welsh Assembly Government departments are improving services and developing new approaches that are tailored to address the needs of specific 'at risk' groups.

My new Department funds Skill Build, which is a skills training programme for both younger people and adults. Skill Build is aimed at learners who are vocationally unfocused and who may lack confidence, motivation and/or poor Basic Skills. It aims to provide learners with personal and employability skills that enable them to effectively enter the labour market and retain sustainable employment.

The eligibility criterion for Skill Build does not prohibit homeless people from accessing the programme. Once on the programme, the learning provider can signpost the homeless person to additional support with a view to assisting them in finding suitable living accommodation. The Welsh Assembly Government is currently undertaking a Skill Build review project to further strengthen its Work Based Learning provision. The project aims to incorporate best practice, ensuring equality of opportunity.

Pto..

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Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

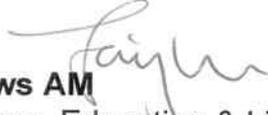
Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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Correspondence: Leighton.Andrews@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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During 2009/2010, the Welsh Assembly Government has supported Llamau's Learning for Life "L4L" programme, via its Basic Skills National Support Project. Learning for Life provides pre-vocational learning and education with activities in a variety of settings to improve personal, social, educational and vocational opportunities. Eighty per cent of service users on the project are aged 16-21 with dysfunctional backgrounds and low attainment. L4L works intensively preparing them for education, training and work.

*Yours ever*



**Leighton Andrews AM**  
Minister for Children, Education & Lifelong Learning  
Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg & Dysgu Gydol Oes

Jane Davidson AC/AM

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-273  
Ein cyf/Our ref JD/00152/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

25 January 2010

*Dear Chris,*

#### **PETITION P-03-273 TRANSPORTATION OF WIND TURBINES IN MID WALES**

Thank you for your letter of 7<sup>th</sup> January regarding the petition from Welshpool Town Council which was sent to the Deputy First Minister. As the petition raises issues associated with the planning process, I am replying to you on this matter.

As you may be aware responsibility for consenting wind farm proposals over 50MW currently lies with the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, these powers will soon transfer to the newly established Infrastructure Planning Commission and the Welsh Assembly Government has no formal role in the consenting process for such developments. Proposals under 50MW fall to local planning authorities to determine under their Town and Country Planning powers and it is this category of wind farm development where the Welsh Assembly Government policies are relevant.

Requirements for consultation on planning applications by local planning authorities are set out in Article 8 of the Town and County Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995, and these are clearly prescribed. There is no intention to revise the requirements.

I am aware of the broader issues associated with the development of large wind farms in Mid Wales; in particular the concerns of some people regarding the impact on the road network during the construction phases of wind farms. In April last year we wrote to all local planning authorities to remind them of the requirements for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for wind farms. This letter set out the guidance on EIA which states that applications should not be considered in isolation and that highway considerations need to be fully considered before any planning consent is given.

The Welsh Assembly Government is fully committed to working with stakeholders in order to address and resolve the matters associated with the movement of wind turbine components in Mid Wales. We have already commissioned a study into the nature of the problems and we are working constructively with relevant stakeholders such as the police

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and the Powys County Council, as the relevant local planning authority, in order to address the issues.

As you will be aware the One Wales agreement states that the Welsh Assembly Government will review its planning guidance on renewable energy contained in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 8 following the production of an over-arching Energy Statement. It remains our intention to produce a revised version of the TAN by the end of the year. As part of the policy revision process there will be a public consultation on the revised TAN and this will be the appropriate mechanism to comment on the Assembly Government's Planning Policies. Consequently, I cannot support the calls for a public inquiry as advocated in this petition.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

**Jane Davidson AM**

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing



Christine Chapman  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

3 February 2010

Dear Christine

**Petition: Transportation of wind turbines in Mid Wales**

Thank you for your letter regarding the petition from Welshpool Town Council about the transportation of wind turbines.

The Sustainability Committee carried out an inquiry into carbon reduction from energy production in Wales in 2008 and this was one of the issues that arose during the inquiry.

The committee made the following comments and recommendations in our report published on 13 May 2009:

*2.10 We received evidence during the inquiry about the importance of the adequacy of existing infrastructure during the construction and connection phase of new energy production facilities.*

*2.11 Road access for large plant and machinery to sites where new power plant was to be installed had proved difficult for new sites, especially those in*

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*more rural areas and had led to long delays in installation work and local disruption.*

*2.13 The main infrastructure issues have so far been encountered mainly by developers installing renewable energy projects. The Committee is concerned, however, that new sites for fossil fuel power stations and possible carbon capture and storage technologies could also suffer from a lack of existing infrastructure. We therefore recommend:*

***Headline recommendation 2: The Welsh Assembly Government undertake a thorough review of the adequacy of the transport infrastructure and grid connection for the construction of both fossil fuel and renewable energy plants in the areas identified in the strategic framework recommended in HL1.***

The Minister for Environment Sustainability and Housing responded on 8 July 2009:

***Response: Accept in part***

*The issues raised mainly concern on-shore wind projects. We are aware that development of on-shore wind farms, particularly in Mid Wales, have implications for the management of transportation of construction materials. We are discussing the question of a strategic approach to managing these transport issues with BWEA, industry developers and other stakeholders including the Assembly Government's own transport experts. Our aim is to ensure there is collaboration minimising the impact of this activity on local communities.*

***Financial Implications:*** *The cost of the highway improvements necessary for wind turbine components to be transported to sites by means of Abnormal Indivisible Loads is yet to be established. The safe movement of components will require a dedicated police resource. The windfarm developers will be responsible for these costs.*

During the plenary debate on 15 July 2009, the Minister said:

*On transport infrastructure, that is mainly a restraint with regard to large onshore wind projects that are located in remote areas. The size and output of wind turbines has increased substantially in the years since the publication of TAN 8. I am fully aware that the transportation of component parts and construction materials, particularly in mid Wales, presents a major challenge. That needs a strategic approach, which is being prepared by the Assembly Government's transport team. The British Wind Energy Association has a major role to play in the ongoing discussions between industry developers, stakeholders, local highway authorities and the Assembly Government's transport experts. I want to do what I can to help in this process and I am pleased that your report acknowledges the importance of well-placed wind in this agenda.*

We have received no further information from the Minister about this issue since the inquiry.

I hope that this information is useful to the Petitions Committee

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mick Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mick Bates AM  
**Chair, Sustainability Committee**

WS AM

**Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM**  
**Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-276  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00245/10

Christine Chapman AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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RECEIVED  
23 FEB 2010  
11:00 AM

23 February 2010

*Dear Christine*

Thank you for your letter of 26 January, following a petition you received from Sustrans concerning the provision of safe cycling environments in Wales.

I am concerned that a recent survey showed that many women do not feel safe cycling on our roads. I am committed to enhancing cycling across Wales. Increasing the number of people cycling can make a very useful contribution to improving health and fitness in our local communities as well as helping with the lifestyle changes we all need to make to help tackle climate change.

Our commitments to promoting sustainable modes of travel are set out within One Wales, the Wales Transport Strategy, the Walking and Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009-13 and our draft National Transport Plan. The National Transport Plan sets out a series of proposals for increasing the use of more healthy and sustainable modes of travel, and will include commitment to improve safety and attractiveness of walking and cycling routes. The final National Transport Plan will be published shortly.

We are already investing in cycling through local authorities and other organisations and will continue to build on this investment to ensure that facilities for cyclists are improved and this in turn will increase the number of people choosing to cycle.

*Yours  
Ieuan*

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
**Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth**  
**Minister for the Economy and Transport**