

82
Jane Hutt AC/AM

Y Gweinidog dros Blant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau
Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-082
Ein cyf/Our ref JH/00779/08

Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

RECEIVED
10 JUN 2008

APSO

7 June 2008

Dear Val,

Thank you for your letter of 20 May 2008 providing a copy of the petition presented by the pupils of Ysgol Hen Felin.

I was pleased to note the commitment of these children and young people to do something not just for their own club, Viva, but to request that there is wider access across Wales for similar facilities.

The Assembly Government is committed to providing every child and young person with the opportunity to reach their potential so that they can play a full and active part in the life of their community. I have set up a task group comprising members of the Disabled Children Matter Wales campaign and senior officials to advise Ministers on priorities for funding and delivery of services for disabled children, young people and their families. I have also met with campaign members and will continue to meet with them to ensure that this agenda is taken forward.

I understand that a high priority recommendation of the task group is likely to be the promotion of access to play and leisure opportunities for disabled children and young people. This is very similar to the request made by the petitioners. I will be taking the task group's recommended priorities to the Cabinet Committee for Children and Young People shortly, and this will provide me with the opportunity to engage the Cabinet colleagues you mention in consideration of this issue.

We were able to make £1 million available in 2007-8 to support more play opportunities for disabled children and are continuing this funding for a further three years. Nevertheless we will consider whether more can be done in the light both of this petition and the task group recommendations.

Please be assured that we remain committed to improving the life chances and equal opportunities of disabled children and young people in Wales.

Best wishes,

Jane

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Ffacs * Fax 029 2089 8475
Correspondence: Jane.Hutt@Wales.gsi.gov.uk
Printed on 100% recycled paper

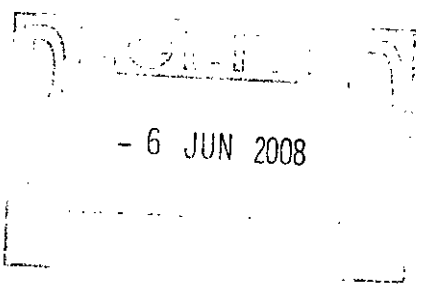
Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

7/250 88

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



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/01004/08

- 6 JUN 2008

Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

RECEIVED
09 JUN 2008

04 June 2008

Dea Val

gns

Thank you for your letter of 13th May 2008, enclosing a copy of a petition that urges the National Assembly to invest more in regular, affordable bus services in rural Wales.

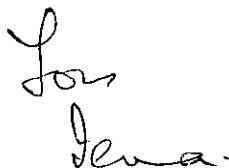
I believe that the Assembly Government has an excellent track record in supporting the provision of rural bus services. I recently published the Welsh Transport Strategy 'Connecting the Nation' that sets out our vision and priorities for an integrated transport system. The strategy recognises that improving access to key services like jobs, shops, hospitals and schools is essential if we are to sustain our diverse communities in a sustainable way. Essential services are generally located in key settlements and so our priority will be to develop rural public transport links including community transport, taxis and innovative services such as demand responsive transport.

Proposals set out in the emerging Local Transport Act, now before the UK Parliament, will provide an enhanced framework for bus quality partnerships. Partnerships will encourage authorities to invest in infrastructure such as stops and facilities while operators will ensure more and better quality services as well as bus quality contracts. I have also put in place a Strategic Management Advisory Board that will be responsible for developing and enhancing the TrawsCambria Network of bus services that run between Mid and South Wales. The Board will be required to prepare a 5-year strategic framework that will set out priorities for taking forward the Network.

I am also keen to extend the role that community transport and taxis can play in providing rural services. Again, there are proposals in the Local Transport Act that will relax the regulatory regime for both community transport and taxis to create the best environment to help grow the contribution they can make to an integrated public transport system. We are working closely with Carmarthenshire County Council and the Wales Transport Research Centre to pilot a new demand responsive transport service. We hope that the proposals will have the potential for application elsewhere in rural Wales.

I have also announced plans to review the way that the Assembly Government provides subsidy to the bus industry. We want to target funding in a more effective way to encourage better quality services that meet local needs. We already provide concessionary travel for elderly and disabled people on rural bus services and this initiative has been very successful.

The Regional Transport Consortia are preparing regional transport plans that will set out a series of detailed steps for improving the integration of local transport. We are working closely with the Consortia as they develop their priorities and plans. Future funding decisions will be based on the details of the regional transport plans.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Ieuan Wyn Jones'.

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

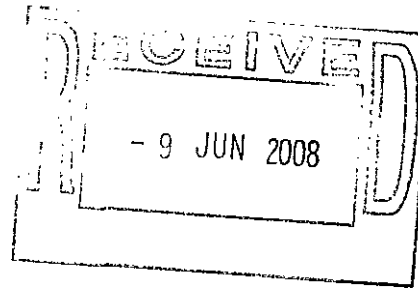
118
Jane Davidson AC/AM

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

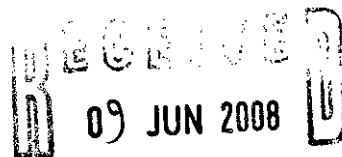


Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-118
Ein cyf/Our ref JD/00618/08



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



5 June 2008

JVD

Dear Val,

PETITION – WELSH CANOE ASSOCIATION – ACCESS TO WATERWAYS

Thank you for your letter dated 8th May regarding the above petition which was considered by the Petitions Committee on 24th April.

The Welsh Assembly Government is keen to promote wider public access to Wales' extensive inland waters (rivers, lakes, canals and reservoirs) for healthy recreation. I believe there is scope for these resources to be used more widely by the public – and on a responsible and sustainable basis – with consequent benefits for local communities and visitors to Wales in terms of improved recreation opportunities.

However, the existing legal position on access to rivers in particular is complex, with much enshrined in common law. Rather than pursue legal options, therefore, the Welsh Assembly Government is seeking to make progress here via consensus-building and via practical action.

For example in 2007/08, the Assembly Government funded a number of pilot projects designed to create new opportunities for water access. One good example is a new updated agreement between landowners and user groups for increased canoeing to take place on the upper reaches of the rivers Wye and Usk. This approach has been successful in increasing the number of access points for canoeists on those rivers, while significantly improving the provision of information.

In addition, the Assembly Government has asked the Environment Agency Wales to produce a new Strategic Plan on Water-based Recreation in Wales. I will be launching this on 5th June. The new Plan identifies a wide range of potential new opportunities for water-based recreation in Wales and the Assembly Government will be providing over £400,000 in new resources this year to assist early implementation of ideas within the Plan.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Ffacs * Fax 029 2089 8129
PS.minister.for.ESH@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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

Printed on 100% recycled paper

Key elements of the Plan will be taken forward on a consensus-based approach, which takes account of the needs of different user groups as well as the interests of landowners. I envisage that the focus will be on new local voluntary agreements that encourage responsible access to water.

In terms of new legislation, as the petition envisages, this would require a new Legislative Competence Order as the first step. I do not see this as a priority for the Assembly Government at this stage, however, because it is not within our One Wales agenda. I am hopeful that real progress can be made through consensus and the practical advice that the Welsh Assembly Government is actively pursuing with its key partners.

I hope this information will be helpful to you and to the Committee.

Yours,

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

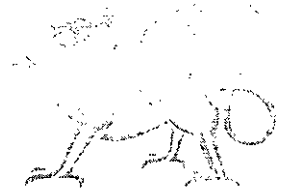
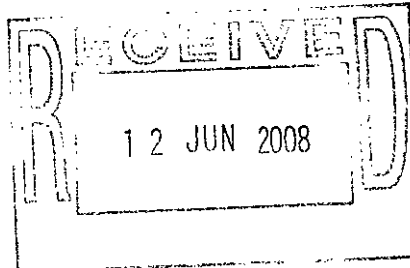
Jane Davidson AM

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

Edwina Hart AM MBE

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

Our ref: EH/02451/08
Your ref:

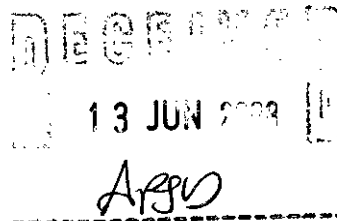


Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA
English Enquiry Line: 0845 010 3300
Fax: 029 2089 8131
E-Mail: Correspondence.Edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd CF99 1NA
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg: 0845 010 4400
Ffacs: 029 2089 8131
E-Bost: Correspondence.Edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk



Dear Val

11 June 2008

Thank you for your letter of 13th May 2008 regarding the Petitions Committee's query on whether I have the power to direct local authorities to resume Hapsite monitoring of the former Nant-y-Gwyddon landfill tip and the homes of local residents.

Section 83 of the Government of Wales Act (GOWA) does extend to local authorities and may be used in this case, albeit the power will be to enter into arrangements under which local authorities would be able to provide services to or exercise functions on behalf of Welsh Ministers. It will not empower Welsh Ministers to require the local authority to resume monitoring. As the power is permissive in nature it does not extend to directing a local authority to enter into an arrangement should it not wish to do so. In addition it must be established that either the services are in support of Welsh Ministers' functions, or the functions to be exercised are ones of the Welsh Ministers. It is unlikely that Welsh Ministers' functions under GOWA extend to this.

The Health and Social Care Bill is due to come into force in October 2009. This may offer the opportunity for Welsh Ministers to make Regulations on the monitoring of public health risks.

The potential impact of NYG site on the health of local people has been the subject of considerable professional investigation. The work was reviewed by the Agency for the Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) a specialist agency from USA. They concluded that the public health investigations appeared to be adequate and that epidemiological evidence did not support any relationship between

exposure from the site and long term health conditions such as cancer and birth defects.

Another area of concern related to occasional unusual odours reported by local people, that they have attributed to emissions from the landfill site, and whether these may be harmful. The most likely source of such odours were volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which are known to be present in landfill gas. The Council commenced monitoring of VOCs in the homes of concerned residents in March 2002 using sophisticated equipment. VOCs are present in all our homes (e.g. paints, varnishes, cleaning products etc) and as expected monitoring detected a range of VOCs in all the homes studied. The range and concentrations found were similar to other studies in other locations and the monitoring was unable to attribute the VOCs to the landfill site. In any case, the concentrations of the chemicals were extremely low (typically a few parts per billion).

The Council asked the Local Health Board to provide an opinion on whether or not the levels of chemicals being recorded through the air quality monitoring programme were a risk to public health. The Health Protection Agency (HPA) and National Public Health Service (NPHS) conducted some of this work given its specialist nature. Based on current scientific information the following conclusions were reached:

- That the levels of chemicals found were consistent with those which we might expect to find in our homes.
- That for the chemicals for which we do have known levels of risk, the levels detected in the air quality monitoring are many, many times lower.
- There is no scientific evidence of any current or ongoing harmful effects on health.
- The remediation work that has been undertaken on the site has reduced the potential gas released from the site as it is fully covered and has an improved gas collection and flare system.

On the basis of the evidence and the action that had been taken, the LHB concluded that the Nant-y-Gwyddon site did not represent a risk to public health. The measures necessary to protect public health had been taken through the capping of the site and ongoing monitoring on and at the perimeter of the site has been maintained since. The Council and the LHB agreed that further public health investigations, including air quality monitoring in homes, was no longer justified and ceased in July 2006. This decision was communicated to RANT by the Local Director of Public Protection and the then Local Public Health Director at a meeting

in July 2006 and to the wider community by way of a newsletter sent to homes in September 2006. There has been no significant complaint or interest from the wider community since. Any deliberations on whether to reinstate community monitoring should carefully consider the potential harm that could be caused to the wider community by drawing attention to a perceived environmental risk, particularly when there is no scientific or public health evidence that any risk exists.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be the initials 'LW' followed by a small mark.

123

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

RECEIVED
13 JUN 2008

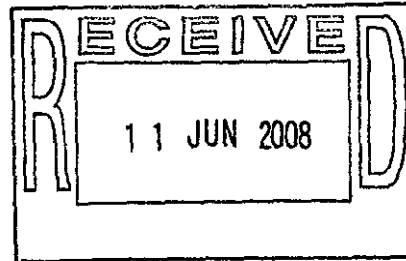
ASU



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-123
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00978/08

Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA



09 June 2008

Dear Val

I refer to your petition and accompanying letter of the 15 May 2008, requesting Welsh Assembly Government support to a policy for the adoption of unadopted roads by local authorities.

The highway network in Wales is divided between the trunk road and motorway network which is the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government and the network of local roads which is the responsibility of the local highway authority.

The question of a private road being adopted by the local authority so as to become a public highway is dealt with under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980. The policy of the Welsh Assembly Government is to encourage local authorities to use their powers under section 38 of the Highways Act in circumstances where local authorities consider it appropriate.

The financial elements which make up the individual service areas of a local authorities' standard spending assessment (SSA) are unhypothecated, be it in education, transport or social services etc. They do not represent spending targets for individual services or are in any way meant to be prescriptive.

There is no policy to provide hypothecated grants for the adoption of unadopted roads into the local authority road network.

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

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Ffacs * Fax 029 2089 8198
PS.DeputyFirstMinister@wales.gsi.gov.uk

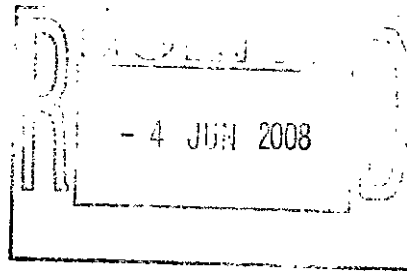
130

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

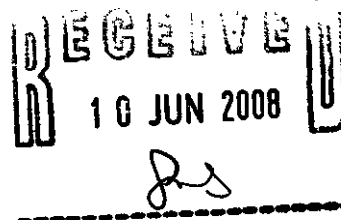


Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00980/08



Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA



30 May 2008

Dez Val

Thank you for your letter dated 13th May 2008 regarding the petition currently under consideration by the Petitions Committee about broadband provision in St Brides.

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that widespread access to affordable, secure broadband is important to businesses and citizens across Wales. To this end, the Welsh Assembly Government is working with the telecommunications industry and the communications regulator, Ofcom to share information on communications infrastructure issues, understand barriers to investment, including regulatory and economic issues, and inform future policy making in this area.

St Brides is connected to the Castleton telephone exchange. The Welsh Assembly Government is aware that St Brides is a broadband notspot due to its distance from the local telephone exchange at Castleton. Broadband signal strength degrades the further it has to travel from the telephone exchange and if a signal has to travel further than 5km it is unlikely that a viable broadband signal can be obtained by end users.

You will know that on 9th April I announced steps I am taking to address broadband notspots in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government will shortly be undertaking a procurement to engage with a telecommunications company or consortium to address identified broadband notspots in Wales, where it is feasible and economically viable to do so. It is important that constituents in broadband notspots register their inability to access broadband services via the Welsh Assembly Government notspot registration website at www.brnw.org.uk or www.cadbec.org.uk for the Welsh version or by telephoning 01443 846700. So far, we have 17 registrations from St Brides' residents on our database.

In addition, we are working with BT in areas where it has acknowledged it might be able to provide a solution to broadband notspots. We hope to reach agreement with BT soon. Details will be published on our website as contractual terms are agreed.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400
Ffacs * Fax 029 2089 8198
PS.DeputyFirstMinister@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Of course I cannot guarantee that all identified notspots across Wales will receive broadband through this procurement. Ultimately, commercial, technical and funding considerations will apply. However, I remain committed to addressing the problem of broadband notspots and hope my recent announcement demonstrates this.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ieuan Wyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

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