



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

**Y Pwyllgor Deisebau
The Petitions Committee**

**Dydd Mawrth, 16 Tachwedd 2010
Tuesday, 16 November 2010**

Cynnwys
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Procedural Motion

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

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

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Christine Chapman	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Andrew R.T. Davies	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Veronica German	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats

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

Joanest Jackson	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Andrew Minnis	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Naomi Stocks	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.01 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.01 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Christine Chapman:** Good morning, everyone, and welcome to today's meeting of the Assembly's Petitions Committee. I remind everyone to switch off their mobile phones. If there is a fire alarm, the ushers will tell everyone what to do and, if necessary, direct everyone to the fire exits. We have received no apologies today.

9.02 a.m.

Deisebau Newydd
New Petitions

[2] **Christine Chapman:** Today's first new petition, P-03-305, was raised by Alison Bagshaw, who collected 313 signatures. It calls for school libraries to be made statutory. I have written to the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning, seeking his views on the petition. Are Members happy to await his response? I see that they are.

[3] The second new petition, P-03-306, is on saving the Theatre Royal in Barry. This petition was raised by the Theatre Royal arts and cinema trust, which collected 142 signatures. It was handed over to us last week, on the steps of the Senedd. A related petition, for which 470 signatures were collected, calls for the Theatre Royal to be preserved and developed as a theatre, cinema and community arts and culture centre. I have written to the Minister for Heritage, seeking his views on the petition. Are Members happy to await his response? I see that they are.

[4] The third new petition, P-03-307, relates to design for innovation in Wales. This petition was raised by Gavin Cawood, who collected 369 signatures. It calls for the role of design in future innovation, public service and social enterprise policies and programmes to be considered. I have written to the Deputy Minister for Science, Innovation and Skills,

seeking her views on the petition. Are Members happy to await her response?

[5] **Veronica German:** I think that this is broader than just science; I am looking at the social enterprise side of it, and at innovative ways of delivering services. Maybe we should broaden our approach.

[6] **Ms Stocks:** We checked with the Welsh Government's co-ordination unit regarding who would be the most appropriate Minister for initial correspondence, and we were advised that it would be the Deputy Minister for Science, Innovation and Skills.

[7] **Christine Chapman:** When we see the response, we can consider the matter.

[8] **Veronica German:** It was an interesting petition.

[9] **Christine Chapman:** Yes, it was good.

9.04 a.m.

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol Updates to Previous Petitions

[10] **Christine Chapman:** We have a lot of updates today. The first two petitions on the list are P-03-081, on student loan regulations, and P-03-296, on unfair proposals on student loans. The first petition calls for changes to student loan regulations, and the second for opposition to proposals by the Russell Group of universities to increase student loan repayments. We agreed to revisit the first petition once the Browne review had been published. The Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning has responded in relation to the second petition. We are considering these petitions together, but we will look at them separately as well. Do Members have any views on these petitions?

[11] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** We have had the Browne review, which has given a steer on the way that England is going. I do not cover higher education, but I am led to believe that the Minister is reviewing the position for Wales in light of what Browne is recommending and the implications of whatever Westminster decides will be the process in England. So, would it be pertinent to wait until the Minister has undertaken his review here in Wales? At the moment, there seems to be a great deal of innuendo and suspicion about what might happen. There is no point trying to fan the flames of doubt. We need hard facts with which to go back to the petitioners.

[12] **Christine Chapman:** I think that the response will be available very soon, so it would be worth waiting for it.

[13] **Veronica German:** I think that the first one is quite different, because it is particularly about optometry and pharmacy as second degrees. I do not think that that is really dependent on Browne at all, and we should ensure that we get a separate response.

[14] **Christine Chapman:** We will.

[15] **Veronica German:** There is a danger of that getting lost among all the bigger headline stuff, which is a different issue all together.

[16] **Christine Chapman:** We will make sure that that is referred to once the statement has been made.

[17] The second update is on petition P-03-092, which called for a relief road on the A465 to Tafarnaubach. We have received correspondence from the petitioners. I understand that there has been a meeting to which Trish Law, Nick Smith MP and Alun Davies were invited. Are there any thoughts on what we should do on this?

[18] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I think that we need to understand what has happened as a result of that meeting. Has anything come to the Petitions Committee on the outcome of that meeting?

[19] **Christine Chapman:** No. It was held on 5 November, I think.

[20] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** So, it happened quite recently. We need to find out whether there were any outcomes. However, given the length of time that this petition has been with us, we need to push this forward to see whether we still have a role or whether, in essence, the council will have to take the lead on it and people will have to make their own choices.

[21] **Christine Chapman:** We will make sure that we get an update on that before we proceed.

[22] The third update is on another petition that has been with the committee for quite a while, which is P-03-136, on parking in the Heath and Birchgrove areas of Cardiff. It calls for solutions to parking problems around the Heath hospital. We have had a great deal of correspondence from the local health board and the petitioners. All of us appreciate the petitioners' frustration about the ongoing problems with car parking in those areas. It is a difficult one. It has been with us for quite a while and things have changed, but, basically, we do not have the power to make the local health board or Cardiff Council take specific action. That is the difficulty. We have taken a number of actions in relation to the petition to try to get some of these issues addressed. We have corresponded with the health board, the Welsh Government and the council. As you know, we took oral evidence from the petitioners. It is a difficult one because we are quite limited as a committee. We are a committee that can highlight the issue, but it is often very difficult for us to follow things up. I really appreciate the frustration of the petitioners. I think that I would feel equally frustrated if I lived in that area. Are there any thoughts on this?

[23] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** To be fair, Chair, anyone with an understanding of the university hospital realises the magnitude of the problem there. I saw a sign the other day in a doctor's surgery that said that there are 25,000 vehicle movements in any working day at the Heath hospital. It is incumbent on the local health board and the local authority to provide for those vehicle movements. One thing that held the petition up in the early days was that the local health board was in the process of establishing its transport plan and its sustainability plan. However, now that the transport plan is up and running, I think that we should have the health board in to give evidence and to address the plan that it put in place so that the transparency of the committee can offer some answers to the petitioners, who have genuine concerns about the overspill at the Heath hospital. If it is not addressed, it will get worse.

9.10 a.m.

[24] **Christine Chapman:** Yes; I understand that it has got worse in the last two years anyway.

[25] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** So, I recommend that we call the health board in.

[26] **Christine Chapman:** Yes. We have had some correspondence. Is that in relation to—

[27] **Ms Stocks:** We had some correspondence from the petitioner overnight highlighting that he is aware of documentation that is sent to out-patients for Llandough Hospital, which does not include details of transport other than the car park and a map of the site. I know that the petitioner is asking for similar details from the Heath, but he believes that the information that is sent out to out-patients there may be similar and that it does not give enough information on other forms of transport, other than car transport.

[28] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Of course, if we were minded to have the local health board in, one piece of evidence that it could provide before the meeting would be the information that it provides to patients on travel options. This petition obviously is specific to the University Hospital of Wales, but it might be of interest to consider Llandough, given that it comes under the same LHB. However, that might be taking it outside the remit of the petitioner, as it is UHW in essence that we are looking at here.

[29] **Christine Chapman:** I think that we can make those arrangements. We will get back to you on that.

[30] **Veronica German:** By then, we may have had further, detailed discussions with the council about the east Cardiff park and ride, and how that could link in and encourage people to use it. I presume that it is trying to ensure that it stops off at the hospital, rather than just whizz past.

[31] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** It seems that the various bodies are working in isolation rather than being joined up. The council has a role to play, as does the LHB. To be fair to WAG, I think that it has played its role in putting down the sustainability objectives that it expects public bodies to meet. Bringing the LHB in will hopefully offer a bit of transparency into what it is doing.

[32] **Christine Chapman:** We will look at the timetable and try to do this as quickly as possible.

[33] **Ms Stocks:** We would be looking at the first meeting after Christmas. We only have one more formal meeting before Christmas, as well as the informal meeting, but we have business in both of those meetings, so we would look to invite the LHB in for that first meeting after the Christmas recess.

[34] **Christine Chapman:** That seems reasonable; thank you.

[35] The next update is on the P-03-143 petition on Ysgol Penmaes, which calls for improvement to rural transport, especially in Powys. We have received correspondence from the Deputy First Minister and Trafnidiaeth Canolbarth Cymru. Again, are there any thoughts on this?

[36] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** There seems to be an issue around how the funding formula for the local transport grant is arrived at. I am not quite sure how we could allay that. Is it a question of clarifying with the local transport consortia how it is arrived at, or is it a direction that comes from WAG?

[37] **Ms Stocks:** I think that it is from WAG.

[38] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Is it possible for us to find out how the formula is arrived at?

[39] **Christine Chapman:** We could do that.

[40] The next update is on P-03-162, calling for improvement to road safety in

Llansbyddydd. We have received correspondence from the Deputy First Minister. Would you be happy to write to the Deputy First Minister to ask when the proposed improvements, detailed in the safety review, will be made?

[41] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I know that we have discussed this a little bit, but when we write to him, can we try to pin down specifics, rather than seasons or years?

[42] **Christine Chapman:** We are being very specific, because we are getting so many petitions coming in.

[43] **Veronica German:** They are not very specific coming back though, are they?

[44] **Ms Stocks:** We try to correspond with the co-ordination unit on those for which we do not get specific dates, and we have written to all Ministers saying that we need more details and that, if they are unable to give dates, they need to tell us why.

[45] **Veronica German:** You notice ones that say 'within six months' and when you press the Government it says 'Oh well, it probably is six months then'. If it is six months, then say six months.

[46] **Christine Chapman:** We are very specific now, in order to try to speed the process up as much as we can. The next update is on P-03-204, calling for greater public accountability and consultation in higher education. We have received correspondence from the University and College Union. We have written to the Minister asking to be informed of the findings of his review into higher education and governance. So, again, are you happy to await the publication of this review?

[47] **Veronica German:** I think that we need to.

[48] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. The next petition is P-03-206, calling for free swimming to be available all year around. As you can see, we have received correspondence from the Minister for Heritage and the Welsh Local Government Association. Are there any thoughts on this one?

[49] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I remember going down to get this petition. If I remember rightly, was it not our hundredth petition?

[50] **Ms Stocks:** Yes, it was.

[51] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I am not quite sure how much further we can take this petition. I think that we have done what we can on it, therefore, I think that we should move to a summary report and the closure of the petition.

[52] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. The next petition is P-03-208 on historic counties, which calls for a review of preserved county boundaries in Wales. We have had correspondence from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government. Are there any thoughts on this petition?

[53] **Veronica German:** I think that we have exhausted this one as well. I do not think that there is much else that we can do. We have had that response; I do not think that we are going to go any further on this one.

[54] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I am happy to support that view.

[55] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. The next petition is P-03-216 on IVF treatment, which

calls for three full IVF cycles to be provided on the NHS. You have seen the correspondence from the Minister for Health and Social Services. Would you be happy for us to write to the petitioners asking for details of any cases of patients not being able to access the second IVF cycle, so that that detail can be brought to the Minister's attention, as she suggested in her correspondence?

[56] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I am led to believe that there have been staffing issues in the Cardiff and Vale University Local Health Board area with regard to the team that provides the IVF service. It might be worth directing the petitioners to seek examples in particular local health board areas. That would mean that particular issues could be raised with the relevant LHBs, rather than on a geographical basis.

[57] **Veronica German:** Yes, so they could find out whether there are particular problems in particular areas.

[58] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** The petition is calling for three cycles. We recognise that that is quite challenging, but, at the end of the day, that is what is stated in NICE guidelines. It would be nice for us to try to elicit an answer from the Minister as to whether that is the short, medium or long-term goal of the Assembly Government.

[59] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, we will do that. The next update is on P-03-220, which calls for the lowering of the speed limit on the A40 near Abergavenny, and P-03-240, which is on improvements to the A40 at Llanddewi Velfrey. Both petitions are calling for speed reductions to improve road safety on different sections of the A40. We have had correspondence from the Deputy First Minister and the petitioners from Llanddewi Velfrey. We have asked the Welsh Assembly Government for a more specific time frame than the six months given in the letter for the speed limit review. However, it states that it cannot be more specific than that, other than to state that it is likely to take place towards the end of the six months.

[60] **Veronica German:** So, at this rate, that could be after the elections in May.

[61] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** The sad thing regarding this, and with regard to the petition on parking in the Heath and Birchgrove areas, is that there is a limit to what this committee to do, and if the Deputy First Minister chooses to say that it will take six months, then that is his prerogative. It is not an ideal situation by any stretch of the imagination, but that is the time frame that the Government is working to on this petition. It is therefore for the petitioners to deem whether the answer that we received from the Deputy First Minister is the right answer in this case. I am not quite sure how much more we can extract from the Deputy First Minister on this, so, regrettably, we will have to wait for the six months to pass to see whether the survey has been undertaken or not.

[62] **Christine Chapman:** So, is it too early to close this petition, given that we are happy to return to it once the new petitions committee is up and running?

[63] **Veronica German:** I think that we will have to wait for that period of time to be over. If we were to close petitions after the Assembly Government has given us a rough idea of the time frame, that would be a good way for it to get out of being accountable for them. If it tells us, 'Oh well, we're going to do this in nine months' time', and we say, 'Oh well, okay then' and that is the end of it, we will never know if it has been done or not in that period of time.

[64] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** This could well be a classic handover petition, because there is a timeline to it. It is not an indeterminable timeline; six months takes us to April next year, from the date of the letter, so it is one of those petitions that we will have to pass on to a

successor petitions committee.

[65] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, we will do that. The next petition is P-03-223, on section 6 of the Welsh Language Act. This petition calls for section 6 of the Welsh Language Act 1993 to be amended to bring Members of Parliament under the provisions of the Act. We have had correspondence from the Chair of Legislation Committee No. 2. Are there any thoughts on this petition?

9.20 a.m.

[66] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Is there scope to get a bit more research on this, and a legal brief to see what is possible? Has it been done?

[67] **Veronica German:** Yes.

[68] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Forgive me.

[69] **Ms Jackson:** The Welsh Language Act 1993 as currently drawn includes an executive power to amend section 6. Obviously, the exercise of the power would be down to the relevant Minister. I think that you have had some correspondence in the past from the Minister on this. That is just from memory, as this goes back some time. I cannot comment on the appropriateness or otherwise of exercising the power, because that is political.

[70] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Go on, have a go. When the MPs go up in arms, we can blame you then, Joanest. [*Laughter.*]

[71] **Christine Chapman:** Is it possible to have some clarification on that, Naomi?

[72] **Ms Stocks:** The Minister has stated that the Government has considered amending section 6, but that it did not feel that it would be appropriate to legislate to bring MPs under the Act so that they would be required to prepare Welsh language schemes, because it would be seen as using the Act to govern the behaviour of individuals rather than organisations. It feels that it is more appropriate for MPs to claim translation costs through the expenses scheme in Westminster and that that is a more appropriate way to ensure that MPs are corresponding in Welsh with their constituents. However, I know that the petitioner has said that he is particularly interested in ensuring that MPs produce annual reports bilingually rather than providing all correspondence bilingually.

[73] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** You should send to the petitioner the letter that the Minister has sent to the committee. In the light of the contents of the letter, I am not sure whether this can be taken any further. I would almost recommend the closure of the petition.

[74] **Christine Chapman:** Is everyone happy with that?

[75] **Veronica German:** I think so.

[76] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, can we do that then?

[77] The next update is on petition P-03-225 on Gorseinon College. The petition calls for extra funding to be made available to keep courses running at Gorseinon College. We have received correspondence from Gower College, Swansea, which was formed following a merger between Gorseinon and Swansea colleges. In the light of what has happened, are you content to close the petition and produce a summary closure report?

[78] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Yes.

[79] **Veronica German:** Yes, definitely.

[80] **Christine Chapman:** The next petitions are P-03-227 against the proposed Metrix access road in Llanmaes and P-03-252 opposing RAF St Athan's northern access road at Boverton. We agreed to revisit these petitions in light of the outcomes of the strategic defence review. As you know, the strategic defence review halted the development of the defence technical college in its proposed form at St Athan.

[81] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Given the fact that the planning permission exists—it was approved in September—although the Ministry of Defence has terminated the Metrix contract for the defence training academy, I presume that there is still planning permission for another project to come there, although those behind the project may wish to redesign it and would then have to resubmit the application. Just because Metrix has been taken out of the equation, the road has not been taken out of the equation because the planning permission has been given. I would like some clarity as to whether the planning permission was specific to Metrix's proposals for the defence training academy or whether the planning permission is still valid and that even if the defence training academy did not go ahead, the road could still be built, even though it would probably be illogical to do so. That blight is still hovering over the community, is it not, if it is the case that another developer could come in and build the road because the planning permission is still in place?

[82] **Christine Chapman:** We need to seek clarification on that. We need to write to the council.

[83] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** We need to write to the Vale of Glamorgan Council to seek clarity as to the status of the various planning consents that have been given.

[84] **Christine Chapman:** Yes, we need to find out what will happen now. I think that that is sensible.

[85] The next petition, P-03-230, calls for International Conscientious Objectors' Day to be commemorated. We have received correspondence from the First Minister, which you have seen. Do Members have any thoughts on the petition?

[86] **Veronica German:** I cannot see how much further we can go with it.

[87] **Christine Chapman:** The letter talks about the Assembly Government's criteria in relation to deciding on the commemoration of various events.

[88] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** We have taken it as far as we can. It is now a case of closing the petition and writing a summary report.

[89] **Christine Chapman:** The next petition is P-03-232, which calls for an independent inquiry into the funding of the purchase of the Ffynone and Cilgwyn woodlands. We have received correspondence from the Forestry Commission Wales, the Minister for Rural Affairs and the petitioners. I understand that the Public Accounts Committee will be taking evidence from Forestry Commission Wales on 24 November on this matter. Would Members be happy for us to write to the Public Accounts Committee to make it aware of the petitioners' continued concern, to ask whether these issues could be taken into account when it questions the Forestry Commission Wales and to ask for an update, possibly following the evidence session? I see that you are happy for us to do that.

[90] The next petition is P-03-238, which calls for an independent inquiry into the issue of pollution at Burry inlet. We have received correspondence from the Minister for

Environment, Sustainability and Housing on this petition, and we have received further correspondence from the Minister on the petition that calls for improvements to the Llanelli sewers. It came too late for that petition to be added to the agenda, but there was quite a lot of information in it.

[91] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** We may need to go back to the petitioners to highlight what we have received to date and to ask them whether they are aware of how the evidence on the pollution in 2005 was taken into account, to get an understanding of their view of that. We could also ask the Minister to provide us with a copy of the final report into cockle mortality, when it is published.

[92] **Christine Chapman:** Are Members happy to do that? I see that you are.

[93] The next petition is P-03-244. It calls for local authorities to be required to publish waiting lists of road safety schemes. We have received correspondence on the petition from the Chair of the Enterprise and Learning Committee, and he has said that the committee would not have time to conduct an inquiry into that. Would you be happy to write to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government to make him aware of the petition and ask whether he would look at issuing guidance to local authorities to ensure that there is much more transparency on the publication of road safety schemes, so that the public can find out a little more about the timescales that are being used?

[94] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I see a bit of a problem starting to creep in. We always have good dialogue with the scrutiny committees, and perhaps the clerking team, in liaising with petitioners, could identify whether, given the time constraints on the Assembly, there is the ability to take the petition through to the outcome that we would like to see, given that most committee timetables are now booked out until 31 March.

[95] **Ms Stocks:** We are providing guidance to petitioners when they submit new petitions that they should consider their closing date carefully, for example, given that there is limited time left in the third Assembly, and that that might impact on consideration of the petition. We are providing them with guidance and advice but, ultimately, if the petitioners still want to submit something in this Assembly, that is for them to decide.

[96] **Christine Chapman:** The next petition, P-03-245, calls for the closure of the Snowdon Mountain Railway on one day a week. We have received correspondence from the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing and the Snowdonia National Park Authority. Do Members have any views on this one?

[97] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** As it is calling for the closure of the mountain railway on one day a week, would it be possible for us to find out the company's view of such a proposal?

[98] **Veronica German:** I think that we can guess what it would be.

[99] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** That might have a dramatic impact on its business model and so on, but it would be pertinent to ask it.

[100] **Veronica German:** We will then have all the information.

[101] **Christine Chapman:** The next petition, P-03-248, calls for improvements to public transport for people with disabilities. We have received correspondence from Arriva Trains Wales, and the Committee on Equality of Opportunity has published its report into the accessibility of railway stations in Wales, so a lot of work was done there.

9.30 a.m.

[102] **Veronica German:** The Committee on Equality of Opportunity is now looking at access to public transport in general, so there is work going on. We should keep the committee informed of the petition and ask it to keep that in mind. A lot of work is going on on that.

[103] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** The original report had good coverage. It highlighted to many people some of the basic flaws in our transport system that could be rectified with not much money and a bit of thought. It is quite amazing.

[104] **Veronica German:** It is interesting that some of the accessibility issues are to do with things that you would not normally think of straight away, such as large-print timetables so that people are able to see them and know where they are when they are on public transport. They are not the kinds of things that first come to mind. The petitioners should also be informed, because they might want to go to that committee to hear its deliberations.

[105] **Christine Chapman:** We will do that.

[106] The next petition is P-03-253, adoption of private sewers. It calls for the swift adoption of private sewers. We have received correspondence from Ofwat. I know that the public consultation on the draft regulations for the transfer of private sewers is currently live, and is due to close on 24 November. Are you content for us to write to the petitioners with details of the Ofwat correspondence and to write to the Minister asking to be informed of the outcomes from the public consultation on the draft regulations?

[107] **Veronica German:** Yes.

[108] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Hopefully, we could elicit a timetable from the Minister as to when she might bring forward proposals from the consultation. It closes on 24 November, which is only a week tomorrow. There must be some sort of time frame for responding to consultation responses and ultimately to bring forward proposals.

[109] **Christine Chapman:** The next petition is P-03-257, which calls for the restoration of broadcasting services on S4C2. We know that Assembly proceedings are now broadcast on S4C overnight. Do you have any thoughts on that?

[110] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** We have done what we can on this petition, and it is a case of producing a report and closing the petition.

[111] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, we will do that.

[112] The next petition is P-03-263, which calls for the pitch at Stradey Park to be protected. We have received correspondence from the Minister for Heritage and Carmarthenshire County Council. We will also have a briefing on the criteria for local listing. Are there any thoughts on this petition?

[113] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** The Minister has given us his view, and the points that he raises in his letter are thought-provoking. Is it possible to see what the petitioners think about what the Minister has set out? In particular, he referred to the various regulations that cover this matter, Cadw and so on. So, is it possible to seek the petitioners' view on that?

[114] **Veronica German:** And on the information that we have received from the local authority.

[115] **Ms Stocks:** The petitioner has sent a response in relation to the letter from

Carmarthenshire council, which was circulated to committee members on Friday. There is also a printed copy. The petitioner raised concerns about some of the information in the correspondence from Carmarthenshire council in relation to the process that has been undertaken with regard to the planning application for the development at Stradey Park.

[116] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I had not seen that letter, so could we put this on the agenda—

[117] **Ms Stocks:** Okay, we can put it on the agenda of our next meeting.

[118] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Would that be possible? It is a lengthy and detailed letter.

[119] **Ms Stocks:** Yes.

[120] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I make no criticism at all of the clerking team. I appreciate that letters come in. However, given the volume of papers that we have today, it is difficult to bring all this together. I understand fully that if the petitioner asks for a letter to be discussed, it is difficult to you to say, 'We can't do that'.

[121] **Ms Stocks:** We will allow time for it to be considered at the next meeting. That is not a problem.

[122] **Christine Chapman:** The next petition is P-03-272, which calls for the code of practice for the welfare of equines to include a reference to not using them underground. We have received correspondence from the Minister for Rural Affairs. As you know, she said that there are currently no equines underground. However, they could be used. Are there any thoughts on this one?

[123] **Veronica German:** In the letter, the Minister is clear about difficult decisions and priorities, so perhaps we should write to her and ask when she would envisage any decisions being made on future codes of practice and the consultation processes. I would say that the gist of the letter is that the Government would like to do this, but there are greater priorities at the moment. Therefore, it would again be useful to have some idea of a timescale. Then we could relay that information back.

[124] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. We will do that. The next one, P-03-273, is on the transportation of wind turbines in mid Wales, and calls for guidance to be issued to ensure that communities are consulted on windfarm developments, and that the impact of transportation of components is assessed fully. We have had correspondence from the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing. Have you any thoughts on this one?

[125] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** There are issues about the conflict, and, in particular, the guidance that is given. The Minister's letter touches on various correspondence that she has entered into, but what the petitioners want to know is how these things will be resolved. Is there a train of thought within the Department of Environment, Sustainability and Housing at the moment to deal with these concerns? We have all driven around mid Wales, where a lot of these windfarms will be located, and the road network is not brilliant, by any stretch of the imagination. Is it possible to elicit from the Minister some form of proposal, given that quite a few windfarms have turned up problems? Residents of mid Wales and other areas that will be hosting these windfarms could then have some reassurance that their issues have been addressed.

[126] **Christine Chapman:** We do need further information.

[127] **Veronica German:** Definitely, because it is all very well saying that it requires a concerted and cross-cutting response—we know that—but what sort of response will it be and

how will that be facilitated?

[128] **Christine Chapman:** We will seek further clarification and much more specific information.

[129] The next one, P-03-277, is about changing the decision to sell alcohol at the Urdd Eisteddfod. It calls for the Welsh Assembly Government to only provide funding for the Urdd Eisteddfod on the grounds that alcohol is not served. You will have seen correspondence from both the petitioner and the Urdd. What are your views?

[130] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I think that we have taken this as far as we can. We have had quite a bit of detailed information, which has certainly informed my understanding of the funding of the Urdd. I propose that we do a report and close the petition.

[131] **Christine Chapman:** That is fine. The next petition, P-03-283, calls for charging to be introduced for NHS treatment for incidents that are alcohol-related. Again, you will have seen the letter from the petitioner. Would you be happy to write to the Welsh NHS Confederation and possibly the British Medical Association Cymru to ask for their views on this issue and how this can be best addressed?

[132] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** I would certainly bring in the Royal College of Nursing on that. The BMA is an important organisation, but, at the end of the day, it is only one organisation.

[133] **Veronica German:** We could also bring in whichever organisation represents the paramedics, since it was a paramedic who highlighted the issue.

[134] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** There are various issues to be discussed to try to get the professional understanding of it, but, ultimately, such a decision would be political, and would fall to the Minister of the day. I am not sure whether any other part of the United Kingdom is considering charging in these circumstances; I do not think so.

[135] **Veronica German:** No, I do not think so. It is a bit of a slippery slope, is it not? However, that is just a personal opinion. What about CHCs?

[136] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Community health councils?

[137] **Christine Chapman:** We could write to a wide range of people.

[138] **Veronica German:** I thought that they might look at it from a patient's perspective.

[139] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** The other organisation to consider, because it deals with the law and order side of this, is the police. Do they feel that there would be a deterrent from charging people for the damage that they inflict, not in a civil matter, but to the health fraternity?

[140] **Veronica German:** Are there not charges already in place for ambulances, if there is an issue with the way in which ambulances are called out? That is in the back of my mind somewhere.

9.40 a.m.

[141] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** It would be well worth contacting the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust to see whether it has a protocol in place for trying to recoup money, and, if not, whether it is minded to offer evidence or advice on what it thinks about charging.

[142] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, we will do that then. The next petition, P-03-291, calls for a multi-platform sexual health resource. Again, we have had correspondence from the Minister on this. Would you be happy for us to write to the Minister asking for details of this action plan?

[143] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Yes.

[144] **Veronica German:** Yes, again, we need more information, please.

[145] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. The next petition, P-03-293, is on the review of the schools admission code. We have had correspondence from the Minister. Are you happy to seek the petitioner's view on this response initially?

[146] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** Yes.

[147] **Veronica German:** Yes.

[148] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. The next petition, P-03-298, calls for funding to be made available to develop Welsh-language resources for people with dyslexia. Again, we have had correspondence from the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning. It is up to you, but we could write to him to find out what the outcomes were from the meeting between Dyslexia Wales and officials, and also to seek the petitioner's views on this correspondence.

[149] **Veronica German:** Yes, to see what they think, and whether it rings true, I suppose.

[150] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. The final update is P-03-302, which calls for operations to be suspended at Bryn Compost Ltd until the odour pollution is dealt with. You will have seen the correspondence received from the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing. Are there any thoughts on this one?

[151] **Andrew R.T. Davies:** As we have had a detailed letter from the Minister, it would be worth getting the petitioners' view on what they believe that the Minister and her officials have done to date, and also asking for more information on the improvement measures that are being introduced to deal with the odour. Having some understanding of what has been developed to deal with the problem—because the problem is obviously known about—could then be achieved.

[152] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, good. That brings the updates to a close. We now need to go into private session for the final item.

9.41 a.m.

Cynnig Trefniadol Procedural Motion

[153] **Christine Chapman:** I move that

the committee resolves, under Standing Order No. 10.37, to exclude the public from the final part of the meeting.

[154] I see that the committee is in agreement.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 9.42 a.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 9.42 a.m.*