

Agenda – Y Pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol a Thai

Lleoliad:	I gael rhagor o wybodaeth cysylltwch a:
Ystafell Bwyllgora 2	Catherine Hunt
Dyddiad: Dydd Mercher, 31 Ionawr 2024	Clerc y Pwyllgor 0300 200 6565
Amser: 09.30	SeneddTai@senedd.cymru

(Rhag-gyfarfod 09.15 – 09.30)

- 1 Cyflwyniad, ymddiheuriadau a dirprwyon**
(09.30)
- 2 Bil Cyllid Llywodraeth Leol (Cymru) – Sesiwn dystiolaeth 6**
(09.30 – 10.15) (Tudalennau 1 – 23)
Rachel Bowen, Cyfarwyddwr Polisi, Swyddfa Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru
Steffan Rhys, Cyfarwyddwr Cynulleidfaedd a Chynnwys Cymru, Reach plc
Gavin Thompson, Golygydd Rhanbarthol, Newsquest (Cymru)
Rob Taylor, Wrexham.com
- 3 Papurau i'w nodi**
(Tudalen 24)
- 3.1 Llythyr gan y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol – Canlyniad cyfarfod y
Grwp Rhyngweinidogol ar gyfer Tai, Cymunedau a Llywodraeth Leol**
(Tudalennau 25 – 26)
- 4 Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42(vi) i benderfynu gwahardd y
cyhoedd o weddill y cyfarfod**
(10.15)
- 5 Y Bil Cyllid Llywodraeth Leol (Cymru) – trafod y dystiolaeth**
(10.15 – 10.35)



(Egwyl 10.35 – 10.45)

6 Cyllideb Ddrafft Llywodraeth Cymru ar gyfer 2024–25 – trafod yr adroddiad drafft

(10.45 – 11.45)

(Tudalennau 27 – 69)

Mae cyfyngiadau ar y ddogfen hon



03442 640 670

Rydym yn croesawu
galwadau yn Gymraeg

Adeiladau Cambrian
Sqwâr Mount Stuart
Caerdydd CF10 5FL

Cambrian Buildings
Mount Stuart Square
Cardiff CF10 5FL

John Griffiths AS
Cadeirydd
Y Pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol a Thai
Senedd Cymru
Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF99 1SN

8 Ionawr 2024

Annwyl John,

**Pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol a Thai y Senedd:
Ymgynghoriad ar y Bil Cyllid Llywodraeth Leol (Cymru)**

Rwy'n falch o weld bod yr ymgynghoriad presennol yn galluogi pobl i gyflwyno eu sylwadau drwy'r post yn ogystal ag yn electronig. Mae allgáu digidol yn broblem gynyddol i bobl hŷn ledled Cymru.

Mewn perthynas â hyn, nodaf mai un o'r cynigion yn y Bil uchod sy'n ymwneud â system y dreth gyngor yw disodli'r gofyniad presennol i gyhoeddi gwybodaeth mewn papurau newydd gyda gofyniad i gyhoeddi hysbysiad o'r taliadau treth gyngor ar wefan yr awdurdod lleol a "rhoi trefniadau amgen addas ar waith i sicrhau bod gwybodaeth o'r fath ar gael i ddinasyddion sy'n ei chael yn anodd cael mynediad at gyfleusterau ar-lein".

Mae hyn yn destun pryder gan fod Arolwg Cenedlaethol diweddaraf Cymru yn dangos nad oes gan 31% o bobl dros 75 oed fynediad i'r rhyngwrwd gartref ac nad yw 33% o bobl dros 75 oed yn defnyddio'r rhyngwrwd (gan gynnwys teledu clyfar a dyfeisiau llaw), o'i gymharu â 13% o bobl 65-74 oed a 0% o bobl 25-44 oed. Mae hyn yn golygu nad yw oddeutu 101,200 o bobl dros 75 oed yn defnyddio'r rhyngwrwd.

Felly, mae'r newid hwn yn debygol o gael effaith anghymesur ar bobl hŷn. Mae 'trefniadau amgen addas' hefyd yn ddisodliad niwlog o'r gofyniad mwy penodol i gyhoeddi mewn papurau newydd, ac mae perygl y bydd yn ddewis amgen annigonol.

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Tudalen y pecyn 17

www.olderpeoplewales.com

Ym mis Tachwedd 2021, fe wnes i ddefnyddio fy mhwerau cyfreithiol i gyhoeddi canllawiau Adran 12 i awdurdodau lleol a byrddau iechyd ynghylch [mynediad at wybodaeth a gwasanaethau mewn oes ddigidol](#) er mwyn helpu i fynd i'r afael â hawliau pobl hŷn nad ydynt ar-lein.

Ar hyn o bryd rwy'n gwneud rhagor o waith ar allgáu digidol. Mae dros 150 o bobl hŷn wedi rhannu eu profiadau diweddar o allgáu digidol gyda mi a byddaf yn cyhoeddi adroddiad ar y mater hwn cyn bo hir. Mae pobl hŷn yn disgrifio teimlo eu bod yn cael eu gadael ar ôl, 'wedi gweld eu dyddiau gwell', ac wedi'u hynysu o ganlyniad i gymaint o fusnes bob dydd yn symud i fod ar-lein yn unig neu ddigidol yn gyntaf. Mae perygl y bydd y cynigion yn y Bil presennol yn ychwanegu at hyn ymhellach fyth ac maent yn ddiangen.

Mae'n bosibl y bydd dinasyddion yn fwy tebygol o weld gwybodaeth ddefnyddiol nad oeddent yn ymwybodol ohoni (ac felly ddim yn bwriadu chwilio amdani'n benodol) wrth bori drwy bapurau newydd cyhoeddedig. Mae'n ymddangos yn llai tebygol y bydd pobl yn pori drwy wefannau awdurdodau lleol.

Am y rhesymau uchod, dylid cadw'r gofyniad i gyhoeddi hysbysiadau o'r taliadau treth gyngor mewn papurau newydd a dylid dileu'r ddarpariaeth yn y Bil i hyn fod drwy wefannau awdurdodau lleol, gyda darpariaeth all-lein amgen amhenodol. Nid oes rheswm pam na all y Bil bennu bod taliadau'r dreth gyngor yn cael eu cyhoeddi ar-lein ac mewn papurau newydd.

Byddwn yn hapus i drafod mater allgáu digidol ymhellach. Cysylltwch â Ruth Thomas (ruth.thomas@olderpeople.wales) os hoffech drefnu cyfarfod.

Yn gywir



Heléna Herklots CBE
Comisiynydd Pobl Hŷn Cymru

Local Government Finance (Wales) Bill consultation submission

About us:

Newsquest is the UK's leading local news publisher. Our local newspaper and website brands are spread across Wales, from the Leader in Wrexham to the Western Telegraph in Pembrokeshire, the Rhyl Journal to the South Wales Argus. Our registered business address is in Newport, where a number of our UK-wide operations are based, in addition to local journalists.

What:

We write in response to the consultation over the Local Government Finance (Wales) Bill to call for the removal of Section 20 from the Bill.

Why:

Section 20 would remove the requirement for local authorities to publish council tax changes in their local newspaper. This will have the unintended consequence of causing harm to the local newspaper industry and in turn, how well informed the public are and ultimately damage democracy in Wales.

How:

There are two strands to this harm. First, notices in local newspapers reach people who would otherwise be excluded. Second, notices provide an important revenue stream for the printed newspapers which helps enable journalism in our local communities and removing that revenue would be catastrophic for some communities.

Reach

Wales has a higher level of digital exclusion than the wider UK, [with 7% of people without the internet](#). Independent research shows that local newspapers are an essential platform for ensuring that the public, particularly the elderly and disenfranchised, have access to critical information that may have a profound impact upon their lives.

Local newspapers continue to be an effective way to reach these groups. In correspondence with the Finance Minister, she suggested councils may look at other methods such as posting notices in libraries and council offices. We believe this would be a poor alternative and as local authorities retreat to providing fewer services, many such facilities will not exist or be very remote to many communities.

While the requirement is publish in a printed newspaper, the power of the notice reaches beyond that. The local news industry understands the changing reader habits of many people and has [worked together to create the online public notice portal](#) and proactively promotes public notices in news articles and other ways to ensure this important information reaches both a wide audience and a hard-to-reach one.

Revenue

Public notices provide an important revenue stream for local news publishers, helping print editions continue. This was highlighted in the recent report by the [Wales Public Interest Journalism Working Group](#). They are not a subsidy – as highlighted above they provide good value for a vital service – but this spend has the additional benefit of supporting a public good in local journalism.

While this Bill deals specifically with notices on council tax changes, we believe this change will set a direction of travel that will ultimately extend to other areas, such as planning and transport. The minister's own comments on her reasoning behind the clause lend weight to this concern.

Publishers continue to build a financially sustainable future for local news but in a very challenging environment. At Newsquest, our company's financial performance is stable, but while we are bucking the industry trend the challenges are real. The duopoly of tech giants Google and Facebook dominate the digital advertising space and can take away significant amounts of audience, and therefore advertising revenue, on the change of an algorithm. Taking away public notices further destabilises the platform we are working hard to build.

Why that matters

This is about far more than the jobs we support or the businesses that we help. Communities without local news are less well-informed about local matters and local democracy. They suffer a damaging democratic deficit.

In Wales this carries even greater importance due to the lack of depth in Welsh national media. For many people, their local newspaper is not only where they read about what is happening in their local community but also likely to be the only place they read about their local Senedd member or relevant decisions from the Welsh Government. Yet this direction would leave local media in Wales worse off than in England, despite the additional need.

Conclusion:

Section 20 is not a central element of this Bill. It does not impact its key aims and objectives. Removing it would have little impact on the Welsh Government's ambitions but keeping it will be damaging to our industry, to local communities and, ultimately, to the Welsh Government and Senedd.

Gavin Thompson

Regional editor at Newsquest.

On behalf of Newsquest Media Group.

Dear Sir/Madam

Please consider this as a submission to the consultation on the Local Government Finance (Wales) Bill.

Section 20 of the bill as drafted contains a clause which would remove the requirement on local authorities to publish a notice of changes to council tax in at least one newspaper circulating in its area¹. It would allow local authorities to publish the notice on their own websites instead.

Statutory public notices are an important source of income for news publishers at a time when their revenue is under extreme pressure from falling newspaper circulation, declining print advertising and the challenges faced in monetising the enormous audiences being reached online. These pressures are exacerbated by the dominance and unpredictability of Facebook and Google as referrers of audience to news websites, the domination of the advertising market by Meta and Google, and the expansion of the BBC into online news at the expense of its local radio output. All of these together amount to a tangible threat to the future of news providers in Wales, who are also facing significant rises in their costs because of inflation.

If the Welsh Government's intention is to move away from requiring public bodies to place statutory public notices in newspapers, it risks causing a devastating impact on news reporting in Wales at a time when the industry needs support. For Reach, which publishes WalesOnline, North Wales Live, four daily print titles (the Western Mail, Daily Post, South Wales Echo, South Wales Evening Post) as well as Wales on Sunday and many weekly titles serving communities across Wales, any threat to such a vital source of income would have a direct, devastating impact on our editorial operations and our titles serving communities in Wales. It increases the risk of titles closing, news provision in Wales being further hollowed out and more journalists who have dedicated their working lives to reporting in Wales being put out of work.

¹ [Section 20 of the Wales bill](#) removes [subsections 8, 9 and 10 of Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992](#)

There is a sentence in the new bill obliging councils to “make arrangements for the public who would otherwise not be able to access that notice to do so”, however there is nothing explicit in that statement that would oblige a local authority to advertise with a news organisation.

There are only a small number of public notices relating to council tax that this would affect every year. However the bill would set a precedent and if the Welsh Government’s intention is to introduce these changes in future legislation as it updates the myriad of laws that impose obligations on public bodies to advertise in newspapers, it will have a significant impact on news organisations in Wales that receive this advertising, as well as on their staff and titles.

The Working Group on Public Interest Journalism set up by the Welsh Government has been discussing the difficult issue of whether the requirement to publish in a printed newspaper should be reworked to also include online only providers. There is a difficult decision to be made here about balancing the impact on longstanding newspaper titles, the communities they serve and the professionally run and trained newsrooms they support, with the interests of supporting the online-only sector.

However, the wording of the bill as it stands would not support any journalism in Wales and would only damage it. The damage the clause would do also seems to directly flout the 2021 co-operation agreement struck between Plaid and Labour and its pledge to “work to strengthen the media in Wales”. It would leave news organisations in Wales in a worse position than those across the border in England and further exacerbate the democratic deficit we face.

Yours faithfully,

Steffan Rhys — Editor, WalesOnline
David James — Deputy Editor, WalesOnline
Catrin Pascoe — Editor, Western Mail
Jonathan Roberts — Editor, South Wales Evening Post

January 2024

Dear Members,

On behalf of Wrexham.com, a small independent news outlet in north Wales, I would like to offer comments on a minor, but hugely important, part of the Local Government Finance (Wales) Bill. Namely welcoming Section 20 regarding publication of notices that sees the removal of the archaic requirement to '*publish a notice of the determination in at least one newspaper circulating in its area*'.

The wider statutory notice requirements such laws have is effectively a huge legally protected subsidy to print / legacy newsbrands. I believe this is anti competitive along with restricting startup, or growth, of entities such as ourselves. No other industry benefits from a legal requirement for spending with a specific entity in such a manner.

"Circulating" also creates practical, often surreal, situations. We have seen newspapers reduce in circulations, mirroring the situation across the world, as people move elsewhere for information. On similar legal notices Wrexham Council acknowledge there is a point where circulation would be so small it would not comply legally , but won't commit to a figure between 0-2500 copies as a line to draw... as there is no legal definition of words used.

Numerous FOI responses indicate that circulation data is not even known (or apparently not even of interest!) by Welsh Government nor councils, so the act of placing the notice is all that matters to comply with an obsolete law, not the actual communicating with the public bit - the important part!

There will no doubt be incredible push back from print publishers due to the huge revenues involved, but continuing a subsidy in all but name is not the good basis for law.

In 2017 I gave evidence to the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee (<https://business.senedd.wales/documents/s500003801/20%20July%202017.pdf>) on this very topic. Six years later I believe the words hold true:

"Statutory notices certainly are a tick box in the legal framework as opposed to actually genuinely wanting to communicate, 'This is happening to you in your community—are you interested in it?' To be blunt, I'm convinced that statutory notices aren't even read by the people who publish them, because we've picked stories out of statutory notices out of the back of newspapers and run a story on it, and then we see that story being run in the newspaper several days later, because they've read it on us."

Back then I favoured a change in the law to keep things as broad as possible rather than look to define who should be eligible as technology and audiences move forward - this change does just that.

Wrexham.com welcomes the broad wording used in the current proposals. We would also welcome long overdue change in similar laws as promptly as possible!

Thanks
Rob Taylor

Eitem 3

Y Pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol a Thai

31 Ionawr 2024 - clawr y papurau i'w nodi

Rhif y papur	Mater	Oddi wrth	Gweithredu
Papur 5	Cytundeb Cysylltiadau Rhyngsefydliadol	Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol	I'w nodi



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

John Griffiths AS
Cadeirydd
Y Pwyllgor Llywodraeth Leol a Thai
Senedd Cymru

SeneddTai@senedd.cymru

23 Ionawr 2024

Annwyl Gadeirydd

Canlyniad cyfarfod y Grŵp Rhyngweinidogol ar gyfer Tai, Cymunedau a Llywodraeth Leol

Yn unol â'r cytundeb cysylltiadau rhyngsefydliadol, cynhaliwyd trydydd cyfarfod y Grŵp Rhyngweinidogol ar gyfer Tai, Cymunedau a Llywodraeth Leol ar 13 Rhagfyr 2023. Yn Weinidog arweiniol ar gyfer y Grŵp hwn, gofynnais i'r Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd fynychu'r cyfarfod ar ran Llywodraeth Cymru gan fod eitemau'r agenda yn dod o dan ei phortffolio hi.

Cadeiriwyd y cyfarfod gan y Gweinidog Tai, Paul McLennan ASA a oedd yn bresennol ar ran Llywodraeth yr Alban. Cynrychiolwyd Gweithrediaeth Gogledd Iwerddon gan Mark O'Donnell, y Dirprwy Ysgrifennydd Tai, Adfywio Trefol a Llywodraeth Leol; Paul Price, y Cyfarwyddwr Polisi Tai Cymdeithasol a David Polley, y Cyfarwyddwr Polisi Cyflenwad Tai. O Lywodraeth y DU, roedd Jacob Young, yr Is-ysgrifennydd Gwladol Seneddol dros Ffyniant Bro a Lee Rowley, y Gweinidog Gwladol dros Dai, Cynllunio a Diogelwch Adeiladau yn bresennol.

Croesawodd y grŵp gyflwyniad gan yr Athro Ken Gibb o Ganolfan Gydwethredol y DU ar gyfer Tystiolaeth Tai (CaCHE) ar ymchwil ynghylch effeithiau rheoleiddio ar y Sector Rhentu Preifat, y materion a'r heriau.

Wedi'r cyflwyniad, cafodd y grŵp gyfle i drafod yr heriau y mae pob llywodraeth yn eu hwynebu o ran cartrefi fforddiadwy a chyflenwad tai. Trafodwyd hefyd y cynnydd sydd wedi'i wneud o ran diogelwch adeiladau, gwaith cyweirio cladin, yswiriant, y marchnadoedd morgeisi a benthyca a choncrit awyredig awtoclafiedig cyfnerth (RAAC).

Gwnaeth y grŵp gydnabod y berthynas waith gadarnhaol sydd rhwng swyddogion ar draws y meysydd tai a diogelwch adeiladau a chytunwyd i swyddogion barhau i gydweithio fel hyn.

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0300 0604400
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Cadarnhawyd y bydd Llywodraeth y DU a swyddogion o Weithrediaeth Gogledd Iwerddon yn cydweithio ar baratodau ar gyfer cyfarfod nesaf y Grŵp Rhyngweinidogol, sydd i'w gynnal fis Mawrth / Ebrill 2024.

Yn gywir

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Evans AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Cyllid a Llywodraeth Leol

Minister for Finance and Local Government

Mae cyfyngiadau ar y ddogfen hon