

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: Tuesday, 7 March 2017

Meeting time: 09.06 – 09.40

This meeting can be viewed

on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/3946>

Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	Mike Hedges AM (Chair) Gareth Bennett AM Simon Thomas AM (In place of Neil McEvoy AM)
Witnesses:	
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Kayleigh Driscoll (Deputy Clerk) Kath Thomas (Deputy Clerk)

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to meeting. Janet Finch–Saunders sent her apologies. Simon Thomas attended in place of Neil McEvoy.

Transcript

View the [meeting transcript](#) (PDF 273KB) [View as HTML](#) (99KB)



Cynulliad
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Wales

2 New petitions

2.1 P-05-742 Stop Forsythia Closing

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and, in light of the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children's statement confirming that that Communities First will be phased out, agreed to write to him to ask:

- how he intends successful Communities First schemes and projects to be supported in the future; and
- whether the continued investment in the Flying Start and Families First programmes will support the sustainability of youth centres such as Forsythia.

The Committee also agreed to consider the contents of a forthcoming statement by the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language on the future of youth work delivery.

2.2 P-05-743 End the Exotic Pet Trade in Wales

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs to raise the specific questions asked by the petitioner, and ask that the Committee is informed of the outcome of the discussion at the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group.

2.3 P-05-744 Stop Gazumping; Follow Scotland's Buying Process

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to:

- close the petition as a result of the additional clarity about the reservation of powers in this area to the UK Parliament provided by the Wales Act 2017; and
- write to the petitioner to suggest that they consider submitting a petition of the UK Parliament and writing to the UK Government Department for Communities and Local Government on the issue.

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-04-475 Wanted – Buses for Meirionnydd

The Committee agreed to close the petition on the basis that it is not possible to further progress the issue given the difficulty in contacting the petitioner, and the fact that the petition was considered as part of the Enterprise and Business Committee's Inquiry into Bus and Community Transport in the Fourth Assembly.

3.2 P-04-513 Save the Wrexham/Barmouth X94 bus service

The Committee agreed to close the petition in light of the fact that X94 service has been replaced by the T3 service operated by a different provider and to thank the petitioner for raising this issue.

3.3 P-04-515 Increase Funding for Welsh Bus Services

The Committee agreed to close the petition on the basis it is not possible to further progress the issue given the difficulty in contacting the petitioner, and the fact that the petition was considered as part of the Enterprise and Business Committee's Inquiry into Bus and Community Transport in the Fourth Assembly.

3.4 P-04-686 Install a Traffic Lights System at Cross Hands Roundabout

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to close the petition on the basis that it is not possible to identify how to take the petition forward in the absence of contact with the petitioner.

3.5 P-05-729 Removal of M4 Speed Restrictions at the Brynglass Tunnels

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to close the petition and, in doing so, write to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure to ask him to inform the Committee of the findings on the proposed review after 12 months of data has been collected from the enforcement of the Variable Speed Limit.

3.6 P-05-733 No Further Actions on Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ) In Wales At All

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to

- write to the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, to share the petitioner's comments, and ask whether a regulatory impact assessment on the economic and social impact of the proposals has been carried out, and how the Welsh Government is considering alternative approaches; and
- await an announcement of the Welsh Government's chosen course of action following the consultation.

3.7 P-04-532 Improving specialised neuromuscular services in Wales

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to:

- write to the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport to ask if the petitioners can be provided with the assurances they are seeking regarding:
 - whether a national decision-making forum with resources is sufficiently aware of service risks and assigns an informed priority to the situation; and
 - neuromuscular services are included within the scope of the national review of neurosciences in Wales being led by WHSSC
- write to all Local Health Boards seeking their views on the issues raised by the petition.

3.8 P-04-570 Inequitable Access to Treatments That Have Not Been Nationally Appraised in NHS Wales

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to await the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport's statement on the recently published review of the Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR) process and seek the petitioners' views again at that point.

3.9 P-05-699 A Treatment Fund for Wales – There Must be an End to the Healthcare Postcode Lottery

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to:

- close the petition on the basis that it is not possible to identify how to take the petition forward in the absence of contact with the petitioner; and in doing so

- await the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport's statement on the recently published review of the Individual Patient Funding Request (IPFR) process, and forward it to the petitioner for information.

3.10 P-05-693 Give Every Child in Wales the Meningitis B Vaccine for Free

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to:

- write to the Minister for Social Services and Public Health to share the information received from Meningitis Now and the Meningitis Research Foundation and ask whether further evidence from the JCVI has been considered by the Welsh Government since the previous correspondence in August 2016, in particular relating to vaccinating children up to the age of 2, and between 3 and 5; and
- seek the petitioner's views again on all the latest correspondence received at that point.

3.11 P-04-481 Close the Gap for deaf pupils in Wales

The Committee considered correspondence on the petition and agreed to write to the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language to seek answers to the concerns and questions raised by the petitioners.

3.12 P-05-704 Bring Back January Exams for AS/A level Students

The Committee agreed to close the petition on the basis that it is not possible to identify how to take the petition forward in the absence of contact with the petitioner.

3.13 P-05-722 Protect Special Educational Needs

The Committee on the petition and agreed to:

- contact the petitioner to seek their views on the latest correspondence; and
- write to Neath Port Talbot Council to ask them to address the specific comments made by the petitioner about her experiences in trying to access support services in their area.

3.14 P-04-439 Ancient veteran and heritage trees of Wales to be given greater protection

The Committee considered correspondence and agreed to close the petition, given that the petitioners are members of the Task and Finish group which has made recommendations to the Welsh Government, and the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs commitment to consider which actions to take forward.

3.15 P-04-681 Allow Public Recording of Local Government Meetings

The Committee agreed to close the petition due to the confirmation received from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government of his intention to make broadcasting of Council meetings a statutory requirement.

3.16 P-05-730 Local Government Finance and Funding

The Committee agreed to close the petition on the basis that the petitioners currently have the opportunity to provide their views to the development of proposals on local government reform, and that there is little further value that the Petitions Committee can offer alongside that process.

4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the remainder of the meeting

The motion was agreed.

5 Review of the National Assembly for Wales Petitions System

The Clerk of the Committee provided Members with an update on the implementation of potential changes to the National Assembly for Wales's Petitions System.