

Agenda – Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date: Thursday, 9 February
2017

Meeting time: 09.30

For further information contact:

Marc Wyn Jones

Committee Clerk

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1 Private informal discussion

(09.30–10.20)

(Pages 1 – 4)

Discussion about possible future work on smarter energy.

2 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

3 Inquiry into the future of agricultural and rural policies in Wales – cancelled

(Pages 5 – 7)

George Eustice, Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

4 Energy policy in Wales: heat from hydrogen

(10.20–11.20)

(Pages 8 – 26)

Jon Maddy, University of South Wales

Guto Owen, Director, Ynni Glân

Mark Crowther, Director, Kiwa Ltd

Steve Edwards, Wales and West Utilities



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Break

(11.20–11.30)

5 Energy policy in Wales: storage technology

(11.30–12.15)

Oliver Farr, Solar Plants

Jacqueline Edge, Energy Storage Research Network

Andy Ling, Perpetual Systems V2G

6 Paper(s) to note

Further information on air quality in Newport

(Pages 27 – 28)

7 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from Item 8 of this meeting and the Committee's meetings on 15 February and 8 March.

8 Consideration of oral evidence

(12.15–12.45)

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George Eustice MP
Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Nobel House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

7 February 2017

Dear Minister of State

Withdrawal of attendance at the meeting of the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee – 9 February 2017

I am extremely disappointed that you have withdrawn from your appearance before the Committee at such short notice.

The Committee has sought to engage with UK Ministers throughout its inquiry into the future of agricultural and rural policies in Wales. Invitations to attend meetings have been extended to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and yourself. In doing so, the Committee has been extremely flexible in trying to accommodate your attendance, by offering several potential meeting dates and the possibility of a video conference.

The Secretary of State rejected the Committee's invitation and agreed, instead, to meet me as Chair of the Committee. The Secretary of State subsequently cancelled that meeting at short notice.



You agreed to attend a meeting of the Committee. However, you have now notified me, two days before the meeting is due to take place, that you will not attend.

You will understand that the apparent refusal of UK Ministers to engage with the Assembly's lead Committee on agricultural policy is a matter of grave concern.

Given the importance of agricultural and farming policy in Wales, it is vital that Assembly Members and the people of Wales hear directly from Ministers in the UK Government. Furthermore, ensuring that future agricultural policy is a success in Wales and at a UK level will depend heavily on cooperation and mutual respect between the Assembly and the UK Government. The Committee's recent experience in trying to engage with UK Ministers brings into doubt the UK Government's commitment to that spirit of cooperation and respect.

I note that the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, in answer to a parliamentary question, said that:

".....no powers existing in the devolved Administrations will come back [to Westminster], but there will be powers coming from the European Union and we will have to decide where they most properly land, whether that is Westminster, Holyrood or wherever."

Agricultural policy is devolved. Leaving the European Union will not result in the transfer of any devolved powers to the UK Government. It will result only in a removal of EU restrictions on the exercise of those devolved powers. The position expressed by the Secretary of State demonstrates a misunderstanding that this Committee wishes to address with relevant UK Ministers as a matter of urgency.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to the UK Government's Devolution Guidance Note, paragraph 12 of which states that:

"On all occasions, and whatever the intention as regards attendance, Ministers and their officials should deal with devolved Committees with the same courtesy, respect and promptness as they would use in dealing with Westminster Select



Committees. The Government wishes the devolved arrangements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to continue operating effectively within the new constitutional frameworks that have been provided. Behaving in the proper way towards the devolved legislatures' Committees is one way of achieving this aim."

I expect, as a matter of courtesy and respect to the Committee and to the Assembly, that you will agree to attend a meeting of the Committee on Wednesday 15th February or Wednesday 8th March, the only remaining sessions at which we can take evidence for this inquiry.

Yours Sincerely



Mark Reckless AM

Chair of the Committee on Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs



Agenda Item 4

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

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Date: 01/02/2017

To whom it may concern,

**RE: Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee – 18th January 2017
(Air Quality)**

With regard to the recent Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee 18th January 2017, aspects of air quality were discussed in great depth, in which Newport, and in particular Caerleon was mentioned. As such, being the officer that deals with air quality within Newport, I would like to provide you with some additional information to consider.

From the information you have gathered thus far, you are aware that Newport has nine AQMAs. Additional monitoring data (yet to be published) suggests exceedances of the air quality standards outside of the existing AQMAs. This means the number of AQMAs in Newport is likely to rise over the next 12/18 months.

During the committee meeting, comments were made by Public Health Wales on their consultation with Newport concerning our detailed assessment, and appraisal of the existing Caerleon AQMA.

Public Health Wales expressed the view that the Caerleon AQMA should be expanded to cover the whole of the area, not just the area of exceedance. The reasoning behind this view is that the AQMA is due to the traffic flowing through it from the wider area.

Whilst this is a valid view, the guidance on designating an AQMA allows for flexibility to suit the strategy of the local authority. The only criterion that must be met is that the AQMA must include the area of Technical Exceedance. It is Newport's view there is little other guidance or link with other policies (planning, highways, health etc) to define an AQMA or its use.

To provide some defined reasoning behind the boundary of an AQMA and embed air quality within the planning process, Newport is in the process of developing supplementary planning policy guidance for air quality. Within the draft guidance two zones have been defined:

1 – AQMA: An area of technical exceedance for which a detailed air quality assessment will be required to support a planning application. The focus of the assessment is to ensure the health of new receptors is not put at risk due to areas of existing (known) poor air quality.

2 – Air Quality Planning Buffer: The local network of roads that are intrinsically linked to the AQMA. A simple air quality assessment will be required in which the net change in traffic will need to be provided along with an air quality traffic mitigation plan.

The air quality SPG also attempts to capture the full range of possibilities that lie outside of existing AQMAs and major developments.

It is the view of Newport City Council that AQMAs should be limited to the areas of technical exceedance. Else if they are expanded to encapsulate the wider area they lose their focus and definition which can be open to challenge through the planning system.

With this in mind, I hope the committee can understand the rationale behind keeping the AQMA limited in extent, and not declaring the whole of Caerleon as an AQMA as suggested by Public Health Wales.

Air Quality Progress in Newport

Furthermore, it may not be publically apparent at this point in time, but Newport City Council has been working on a number of actions and initiatives for air quality. These will become clear in the following months with the consultation of a revised air quality action plan. The action plan will have strong links to schools/education and active travel. It will also cover actions for every vehicle type that makes up the road fleet in Newport, along with proactive measures to explore low emission zones and various other air quality control mechanisms at the council's disposal.

However, there are proposals in the medium to long term that will significantly alter the traffic flow within the regional and local area. Newport City Council has provided comments with regard to air quality on some of these schemes, for both construction and operation.

If you would like to discover more about the actions that Newport City Council are developing and implementing, along with our views on air quality management I would be more than happy to attend a committee meeting, if you so desire. In the mean time I hope you find these comments of some use.

Yours Sincerely

Peter Mackintosh
Senior Scientific Officer