



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Deisebau](#)

[The Petitions Committee](#)

14/02/2017

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from the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd. Lle y mae cyfranwyr wedi darparu cywiriadau i'w tystiolaeth, nodir y rheini yn y trawsgrifiad.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included. Where contributors have supplied corrections to their evidence, these are noted in the transcript.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Gareth Bennett Bywgraffiad Biography	UKIP Cymru UKIP Wales
Mike Hedges Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Neil McEvoy Bywgraffiad Biography	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

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

Kayleigh Driscoll	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Graeme Francis	Clerc Clerk
Lisa Salkeld	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Kath Thomas	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:06.
The meeting began at 09:06.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau, Dirprwyon a Datganiadau o Fuddiant
Introduction, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

[1] **Mike Hedges:** Bore da. Good morning. Can I welcome everybody to the meeting? I remind people that they can speak in either Welsh or English. Headsets are available for translation of Welsh to English. There is no need to turn off mobile phones or other electronic devices, but please ensure that any devices are in silent mode. We've received apologies from Janet Finch-Saunders, and we're ready now to start on new petitions.

Deisebau Newydd
New Petitions

[2] **Mike Hedges:** The first one is P-05-734, 'Ban Letting Agent Fees to Tenants'. I, perhaps, ought to declare an interest, because I actually put that in to be my idea for individual Member's legislation.

[3] **Gareth Bennett:** It was mine as well, actually, so I don't know, but I guess I declare an interest as well.

[4] **Mike Hedges:** Yes. We received the petition, we sent it to the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children on 7 December, and received a response on 4 January. We've had a research briefing. We've had further comments from the petitioners. Two further petitions have been submitted on the same issue, but could not be accepted. What's happened so far? Letting agents in Scotland are not able to charge fees and the UK Government announced it would consult on a similar restriction for England. The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children has informed the committee he intends to review the evidence in this area before deciding what action we should take in Wales. Rent Smart Wales, a licensing scheme for letting agents and a register of landlords, is currently being implemented following legislation in the previous Assembly. The petitioners have welcomed the commitment made by the Welsh Government, but have highlighted several risks that could arise if Wales does not introduce a ban on letting fees. They have provided the results of a recent survey of tenants and examples of poor practice.

[5] There are two things we can do, one of which is that we can write to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee, asking them if they intend to conduct any work on this issue, and we can go back to the Minister asking if there is any intention of legislation.

[6] **Gareth Bennett:** I think there's a case for doing both, because the Minister—we did a UKIP debate on this last time, and he was pretty non-committal, Carl Sargeant, and I'm on the so-called equalities committee, and I don't recall them saying specifically that they're doing anything on this.

[7] **Mike Hedges:** It falls within their remit, so at least we could write to them and ask them, and we can go back to the Minister. This really is not just a few people's issue; it's very much a live issue amongst a large number of people. Are we happy to do that?

[8] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes, definitely.

[9] **Mike Hedges:** No. 2 is P-05-735, 'Make the foundation phase more effective for our children, provide more teachers and abolish yr 2 Sats'. That came in with 14 signatures. It was first considered and sent to the Cabinet Secretary on 7 December. We received a response from the Minister for lifelong learning. A research brief has been provided. The petitioner was informed the petition would be considered by the committee but had not responded when papers for the committee were finalised. The petition's three main points: Wales should follow the Scandinavian model, more funding should be provided and testing in year 2 should be abolished. The Minister states that the foundation phase has led to improvements in attainment and attendance. He also states that the Government has demonstrated its commitment to the foundation phase. On testing, the Minister's response stresses that the national reading and numeracy tests taken by learners in years 2 to 9 are not the same as SATs tests. The Minister's letter acknowledges that there is inconsistency in delivering the foundation phase and states that the Government's got a plan to address this. Do you want to wait for the view of the petitioners on the Minister's response, and if they do not respond by the next meeting, close it? Give them two weeks. You've written to them already, haven't you?

[10] **Mr Francis:** We've written to them already.

[11] **Neil McEvoy:** Just out of interest, what's the ratio in Scandinavia? Could we find that out from research?

[12] **Mr Francis:** We can find that out.

[13] **Neil McEvoy:** Thanks.

[14] **Mike Hedges:** Education in Scandinavia is different. Teachers are held in much higher esteem in Scandinavia than they are in Britain, and that itself, speaking as one former teacher to a room with at least one other former teacher in it, has made a big difference to recruitment, retention and commitment.

[15] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[16] **Gareth Bennett:** It's not a bad idea to look at these countries. Finland

has been mentioned, hasn't it? Because when we discuss these things in the Assembly, it tends to be very partisan, and I think we need to try and get away from that. You're saying about the teachers held in high regard. We need to look at why that is, don't we? I don't know what we can do on this committee; I'm just saying—

[17] **Mike Hedges:** I don't think we can do anything. I think the reason that anybody is held in high regard is often because of how much they're paid. If you pay more, you show that you value them more.

[18] **Neil McEvoy:** It's a cultural thing as well, though, isn't it?

[19] **Mike Hedges:** Yes. 'To Make Mental Health Services More Accessible'—the first consideration was on 7 December. We received a response, had a research briefing, and had further comments from the petitioner. The petitioner's called for improved access to mental health services. The letter from the Cabinet Secretary states that GPs and other professionals should use their professional judgment to refer people for support in an appropriate manner. The additional comments from the petitioner raise issues with the personal independence payment application process, and suggests that different forms should be used for physical and mental health conditions; this is a UK Government responsibility. Should we write to charities who support people with mental health problems to seek their views on the issue?

[20] **Gareth Bennett:** That's a good idea.

[21] **Mike Hedges:** The next one is 'Save Our Bus'. The first consideration was on 7 December. A response: 10 January. We've had a research brief. The petitioner was informed that the petition would be considered by the committee, but has not responded. Stagecoach has reduced the frequency of bus services between Gilfach Goch and Porth from four to three per hour, and now it terminates at Porth. Previously, two services per hour continued to Pontypridd. Other bus services, which depart from the same bus stop, offer 11 services per hour between Porth and Pontypridd. Await the view of the petitioner? We can also raise it with Bus Users Cymru, if the petitioner wishes us to.

[22] **Mr Francis:** I think the contact or the letter we had from the Cabinet Secretary suggested that that might be a good course of action for the petitioner to take, so we could suggest that to the petitioner. I think they would need to take it forward with Bus Users Cymru.

[23] **Mike Hedges:** Couldn't we forward it to them?

[24] **Mr Francis:** We can certainly forward them the petition. I'm not sure whether they would act. They need to have contact from the petitioner to act.

[25] **Mike Hedges:** Okay. 'Save TWF Services/Achub Gwasanaethau TWF' by Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, collecting 912 signatures—it went to the Cabinet Secretary on 21 December. A response from the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Welsh Language on 11 January. We've had a research brief. The petitioner was informed that the petition would be considered by the committee, but had not responded when papers for the committee were being finalised. Still no response?

[26] **Mr Francis:** No.

[27] **Mike Hedges:** The Twf scheme sought to highlight the value of the Welsh language and bilingualism to new parents. It ran from 2002 to 2016, when it was replaced by Cymraeg i Blant. Cymraeg i Blant is run by Mudiad Meithrin. Cymraeg i Blant officers are reportedly working across 14 local authority areas, compared with 12 under Twf. The letter from the Minister states responsibility for the national element of the previous Twf scheme now lies with Welsh Government officials. We could write back to the Minister for clarification on which local authority areas Cymraeg i Blant is currently working in, and further details on how the national element of Twf is now being taken forward by the Welsh Government, and await the petitioners.

09:15

[28] 'Petition to Protect our High Street'—it was first considered on 15 December. A response was received on 5 January. A research brief has been received. The petitioner has submitted further comments, which are in our papers. The petition calls for enhanced business rates relief for high street shops to mitigate the impact of the revaluation of premises. The Welsh Government has announced two mitigation schemes for business rates affected by rates increases from April. The petitioner's comments recognise this action, but reiterate their calls for a permanent small business rate relief scheme. The petitioner has posed several questions about how the mitigation scheme will be implemented and has requested data on the number of Welsh businesses in different tax bands. The Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee undertook a one-day inquiry into business rates in October and

produced five recommendations, and there have been a large number of recent Assembly debates on business rates and rate relief.

[29] Can I suggest we write to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government to seek answers to the questions they've raised? And when we get them, we'll pass that answer back on to the petitioners directly. Yes.

[30] 'Natural Resources Wales (Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru) Needs Tighter Restriction'—this was first considered on 3 January. A response from the Cabinet Secretary: 17 January. A research briefing on the petition and related issues has been prepared for Members' information. The petitioner has submitted further comments. All of the above correspondence is included in the papers of the meeting. The petitioner says that the policies pursued by NRW are damaging to the livelihood of farmers. NRW's functions include protection of the environment and designation of sites of special scientific interest. The petitioner has submitted additional comments that outline his personal experience of dealing with NRW in relation to farming land. Shall we write to NRW asking for them to respond to the comments raised and bring it back?

[31] **Neil McEvoy:** I wish they would protect land, actually. They don't do it in my constituency—regional constituency.

[32] **Mike Hedges:** Happy to write to NRW, yes? Okay. Happy with that.

09:17

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol Updates to Previous Petitions

[33] **Mike Hedges:** Updates on previous petitions—'Save Cardiff Coal Exchange'. This started off in March 2014. So, the third anniversary is about to come up. The committee last considered it on 1 November. The petitioner has submitted further comments asking the committee to address his requests for a public inquiry. Work on redeveloping the Coal Exchange into a hotel is currently being progressed. I've also had correspondence—I don't know whether other people have—from the petitioner saying that Phil Bale's reply includes information that is incorrect.

[34] **Mr Francis:** Right. Okay.

[35] **Neil McEvoy:** That doesn't surprise me. It happens frequently, to be honest

[36] **Mike Hedges:** I think that as he's made that comment, perhaps we can go back to Phil Bale and ask him if what he said is correct.

[37] **Mr Francis:** Okay. [*Inaudible.*—element of his letter.

[38] **Mike Hedges:** I thought everybody had had it.

[39] **Mr Francis:** We have had it, but I don't think we've had the comment that it was incorrect.

[40] **Mike Hedges:** No, I believe everybody had the e-mail from the petitioner saying there were errors in it.

[41] **Mr Francis:** Okay.

[42] **Mike Hedges:** If somebody says there are errors in that letter, then we need to go back.

[43] **Neil McEvoy:** I agree. What concerns me with this is the lack of transparency. It depends who you speak to. Some people think it's a really good thing to do. Others think that it's disastrous. But I think what is pretty obvious is that there is a lack of transparency, and I think it does need looking at. So, I'm glad that we're taking that action.

[44] **Mr Francis:** In the correspondence from the petitioner that came in last week, he was drawing the committee's attention to the fact that his petition calls for us to request a public inquiry, and is, I think, seeking a 'yes' or 'no' answer on that at some point. I mean, that could be next time.

[45] **Mike Hedges:** Or we could send it on to the Cabinet Secretary saying we've had that request.

[46] **Mr Francis:** Okay. Shall we do that now or—?

[47] **Mike Hedges:** Yes. Might as well do it now.

[48] **Mr Francis:** Do it now. Okay.

[49] **Mike Hedges:** I can understand the frustration of petitioners who put a petition in almost three years ago, and it just keeps coming backwards and forwards without anything appearing to happen. That's one thing, I think, that we as a committee this year are very keen on not doing, that they're—

[50] **Neil McEvoy:** So, are we going to request that the—?

[51] **Mike Hedges:** We're going to pass on the request.

[52] **Neil McEvoy:** Okay. Are we going to take a view on it as a committee, or—?

[53] **Mike Hedges:** I think if the request is granted, then it's happened; if it's in, then we may well take a view on it. But, at the moment, we haven't got enough information to take a view on it, but it's worth showing that we are taking the petition seriously.

[54] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes. Thanks.

[55] **Mike Hedges:** 'Cilmeri Community Council Appeal for the Prince Llywelyn Monument'—last considered on 29 November and agreed to request and update from the petitioner. The petitioner has sent further comments, which are included in the papers. The petitioner has informed the committee that the design of the signs has been approved, but that he has written to the Cabinet Secretary to ask who will fund the new signage. The petitioner has also asked if the committee can agree to progress the other elements of the petition. Previous correspondence from the Welsh Government has stated that these areas are the responsibility of Powys council. Ask the petitioner for an update and write to Powys County Council to ask what progress has been made in relation to the maintenance of the Prince Llywelyn monument? Yes?

[56] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[57] **Mike Hedges:** 'The Circuit of Wales'—you've got an update on that, haven't you?

[58] **Mr Francis:** Yes. Further to publishing the papers on this petition, we had contact from the petitioner at the end of last week, stating that, given what was in the public domain last week, and the question answered by the Cabinet Secretary, the petitioner is happy for the petition to be withdrawn, if

the committee wishes to do that.

[59] **Mike Hedges:** Okay. The petitioner is happy to have it withdrawn, I think that—

[60] **Gareth Bennett:** I think it's been discussed a lot—it's all ongoing, isn't it, on this stuff?

[61] **Mike Hedges:** Yes. I don't think there's any added value we can give to it now. It is being discussed, and it's making progress. Okay. Happy with that?

[62] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[63] **Mike Hedges:** 'Include a Mynachdy and Talybont Station as part of the Cardiff Metro Proposal'—we received this and dealt with it on 13 December. We received a response from the Cabinet Secretary on 18 January. The petitioner has been informed that the petition will be considered by the committee, but has not responded. The Cabinet Secretary said they're looking to prioritise the list of potential new stations, and has offered to update the committee when that work has been completed. So, I think that—and I look to people who know Cardiff better than I do—what we want with the metro system is one that has regular but not too frequent stops. But somewhere in that greater area around there, they've got to have a stop. And I think we should just wait for the Cabinet Secretary to come back to us.

[64] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[65] **Mike Hedges:** 'Land & Access Lane Sale at Abercwmbol'—we had it for the first time on 17 January, and await the views of the petitioner before deciding what action to take. The petitioner has now submitted further comments, which are included in the papers, plus a map. It concerns land and an access lane currently used by residents to the rear of a residential street. The Welsh Government owns the land, but it is in discussions with the local authority regarding access arrangements. The Cabinet Secretary has also confirmed that the land will be offered on the open market if not required for this purpose, as a development site. The petitioner has submitted background, and copies of previous letters from the Welsh Government, and has questioned perceived inconsistency between this correspondence and that received by the Petitions Committee. Shall we write to the Cabinet Secretary, asking if he will be willing to consult with the

petitioners—

[66] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[67] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[68] **Mike Hedges:** —and other residents of Park View Terrace over the future usage of the land once current discussions with the local authority have concluded, and prior to any sale process?

[69] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[70] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[71] **Mike Hedges:** I would also have thought that they would have had a right of way by usage, if they'd been using it for any length of time. Can we ask the Welsh Government about that? Because if people have used a right of way for certain lengths of time—and it may be seven years, 10 years or 14 years—then you get a right of way, or right of access, over the land.

[72] **Mr Francis:** Yes.

[73] **Mike Hedges:** If that's the technical term.

[74] **Gareth Bennett:** There's another issue they're mentioning about inconsistencies in the correspondence that they had from the Welsh Government, and from the Petitions Committee. So, I don't know if you want to perhaps address that as well in writing to the Cabinet Secretary.

[75] **Mike Hedges:** Yes.

[76] **Mr Francis:** I think, in that sort of instance, the inconsistency referred to is an earlier letter sent by the Cabinet Secretary to Vikki Howells that suggests that the land—they are in discussions about selling the land on an open-market basis and the subsequent letter from the Cabinet Secretary to this committee stated that they're in discussions with the local authority about whether the land is needed for access to a different site that is adjacent to it and doesn't mention the discussions on the open market. So, we could seek clarification on that.

[77] **Mike Hedges:** If we do get clarification, it might be worth, if the

Minister doesn't, us sending it on to Vikki Howells as well.

[78] 'Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission'. Considered on 29 November. Written to the Cabinet Secretary for communities. Response on 7 January. The petitioners have submitted further comments. The Cabinet Secretary responded. He is unable to meet with the petitioners at this time, but their comments and the views received as part of the recent research into the park homes industry are currently being considered by the Welsh Government. The petitioners again say that they believe that the audited accounts of park home owners should have been considered as part of the research. The petitioners informed the committee of an event taking place in the Senedd on 21 March and asked if Members may be available to meet with them. We've received correspondence from Andrew R.T. Davies requesting that the committee considers seeking time for a Plenary debate on this subject.

[79] What can we do? We can await the announcement of the Cabinet Secretary's decision. Do we wish to either formally or informally discuss the petition with the petitioners on 21 March?

[80] **Neil McEvoy:** We could do, yes.

[81] **Gareth Bennett:** Does that fit in with—? I suppose we could meet with them anyway.

[82] **Mr Francis:** We need to discuss with them the logistics. They've said that they're here for an event around lunchtime and they'll be travelling down. So, we could look to use committee time if they were going to be in the Senedd in time for that. That's the discussion that we'd need to have with the petitioners. The only other thing I would highlight is that later on in the meeting we're going to be looking at a possible schedule for how we take evidence on the disabled transport petition and that would be one of the meeting dates for which it is possible to get some witnesses in for that petition.

[83] **Mike Hedges:** We could also meet with them between 1 p.m. and 1.20 p.m. as 'receiving petitions' time.

[84] **Mr Francis:** Yes, that would be a possibility.

[85] **Mike Hedges:** If Members would be happy to do that—just to let them

talk to us.

[86] **Mr Francis:** So, that would be your preference—lunchtime, just before Plenary, to have an opportunity to meet with them.

[87] **Mike Hedges:** We do keep 1 p.m. until 1.20 p.m. available, don't we, for receiving petitions. So, we could talk to them if they are available at that time and if people are happy.

[88] **Gareth Bennett:** Would that satisfy them, do you think, that sort of slot? Any discussion is better than none. Is that the kind of thing they're looking for—an informal briefing for 20 minutes? Is that what they want?

[89] **Mr Francis:** We could certainly discuss that with them. Obviously, it wouldn't be an opportunity to take formal evidence because it's outside of the committee's slot, but—

[90] **Mike Hedges:** They can come and talk to us and explain to us what the problems are and answer questions from us regarding it. We can ask them why they didn't push for it to be part of the park homes legislation that Peter Black brought in in the last term.

[91] The next one is 'Protect the future of Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales'. This was first considered on 23 September 2014. It was last considered on 16 June 2015. We agreed to await the petitioner's views. The petitioner has been contacted to ask if they have anything to report on the current situation of their petition. The petitioner had not responded when papers for the meeting were finalised.

[92] Can I suggest we close the petition? Can I also say that this is a classic example of waiting a very long time? I can say this because you weren't working here when this happened. It's waiting a very long time until—. We need to, really, unless things are happening outside of the meeting, reach some conclusion within 12 months, I would have thought. Sometimes there are things happening and we're engaging in further correspondence, but just hanging on to it for two and a half years is not in the best interest of anybody.

[93] 'It is Hard to Conceive What Life Would Have Become Without my Support Worker'. Petition received for the first time on 19 January 2016. Await the petitioner's views on the Minister's letter. The clerking team has

sought to contact the petitioner on a number of occasions to gather these views, but has been unable to secure a response. Given the protection provided for the budget for the Supporting People programme since the petition was submitted, and given the difficulty in contacting the petitioner, shall we close the petition?

09:30

[94] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[95] **Mike Hedges:** ‘Antiretroviral Medication in Cardiff’. First considered on 18 June 2015. On 1 July 2014 we last considered the petition and agreed to ask the Minister what steps he had taken to consult HIV patients on guidelines and to seek views from HIV patient groups on the issues. No responses have been received to the latest action and, given the length of time that has passed, the clerking team has contacted the petitioner on several occasions to ask if they have anything to report on the current situation of their petition. The petitioner had not responded. Close it?

[96] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[97] **Mike Hedges:** ‘Restoration of Inpatient Beds, Minor Injuries Cover and X-Ray Unit to the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital’. Last considered 13 December 2016, when we agreed to seek a copy of Healthcare Inspectorate Wales’s conclusions, and write to Betsi Cadwaladr to seek an update on the latest situation. Both responses have been received. The petitioner has also submitted substantial further comments, which are included in the papers for the meeting. We’ve had lots of correspondence on the views of the health board, and we have had the views of the action group. Have we had the views of the community health council?

[98] **Mr Francis:** We haven’t in recent times. I don’t know whether, in the long previous history of this petition, that’s been sought or not.

[99] **Mike Hedges:** But we’re in a situation where the health board is saying one thing and the petitioner’s saying something else, and one thing we’ve always been very keen on doing is getting a sort of refereeing, using a sporting analysis. Could we write to the community health council asking them for their views? Yes?

[100] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes. Can I just express—? One thing that came up on my

radar was:

[101] 'There is a clear perception that some individuals are constantly searching for examples...to generate political ammunition.'

[102] I think it's quite a poor comment to make, really, about, I think, people who have a genuine concern that they feel passionate about. And to accuse them of playing politics is—. I don't think it's accurate or fair, to be honest, because, in that area, they wouldn't need to, because it's not as if the elections are tightly fought there. So, I think that there's a real genuine issue, and I think that's quite a poor comment to make.

[103] **Gareth Bennett:** I did meet them on one occasion, and, you know, they weren't trying to make politics out of this. This was an area of concern to them, because of it being quite a remote area. They have got genuine concerns.

[104] **Mike Hedges:** Thirty miles in rural Wales and 30 miles along the M4 corridor is exactly the same number of miles, but in terms of time, it's substantially different.

[105] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[106] **Mike Hedges:** Okay, so we'll ask the community health council if they've got a view.

[107] 'Routine Screening for Type 1 Diabetes in Children and Young People'. Submitted 8 March 2016. Committee last considered it on 15 November and agreed to: obtain additional evidence from Diabetes UK Cymru; await any response that the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee received from the Children and Young People's Wales Diabetes Network; and to use these as the basis for a further letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport. Responses from Diabetes UK and the Chair of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee have now been received. The petitioner has also submitted further comments, which are included in the papers. What do you want to do? The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee have indicated that they intend to return to the issue of screening for type 1 diabetes later in 2017 when the results of a study currently under way in Germany are known. In a letter to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, the Children and Young People's Wales Diabetes Network has stated that they are unable to support any specific proposals raised by the petitioners, primarily due to a

lack of current evidence of the benefit of widespread testing of unwell children for type 1 diabetes and the risk of harm from false positives. However, they also state that work is currently under way in relation to other recommendations made by the petitioners, including training for GPs, availability of glucose meters, and for health boards to report on care pathways. Diabetes UK have also stated that a screening programme is not supported by current evidence, but have informed the committee that they are developing an awareness-raising campaign with the petitioners aimed at primary care staff, education staff and parents. The petitioners have expressed their desire for work to be undertaken in Wales before the conclusion of the German study. They have requested that the committee considers carrying out the actions discussed by the previous committee, including writing to all local health boards in Wales requesting more information on their DKA/type 1 diagnosis policies and pathways. Before we take any action, if the previous committee agreed these actions, why did nothing happen?

[108] **Mr Francis:** I think, because of the proximity to dissolution at the time—obviously, that was before my time on the committee—that wasn't undertaken.

[109] **Mike Hedges:** I think we ought to, at the first stage, do what the previous committee suggested. Yes?

[110] **Neil McEvoy:** I think it would be an idea for the Cabinet Secretary to meet with the petitioners as well. We should request that, I think.

[111] **Mike Hedges:** Yes.

[112] **Neil McEvoy:** Because it's clearly a very serious issue. People have turned up today to see us discuss this. So, I think we should—. I think, out of courtesy, the Minister should certainly meet with these campaigners. I'm sure he'd learn a lot as well, by listening to them.

[113] **Mike Hedges:** Yes.

[114] **Mr Francis:** So, we'll write to all local health boards on their diabetes referral pathways and then provide a summary of that back to the committee for you to decide what to do next. We'll also write to the Cabinet Secretary at the same time.

[115] **Mike Hedges:** Yes, okay. Everybody happy? Yes.

[116] 'The Wildlife Warriors'. First considered on 11 October and last considered on 29 November, when it was agreed to write to Keep Wales Tidy to ask for their reflections. A response from Keep Wales Tidy was received. The petitioner was informed that the petition would be considered by the committee but had not responded when papers for the committee were being finalised. Given the degree of consensus between the petitioners, Keep Wales Tidy and Welsh Government on the role that Wildlife Warriors clubs can play, I suggest we close the petition.

[117] 'Establish Statutory Public Rights of Access to Land and Water for Recreational and Other Purposes'. First considered on 15 November. Response from the Cabinet Secretary was received on 13 December. Subsequently, the Cabinet Secretary stated in Plenary on 1 February that she intended to issue a statement in the coming weeks. The petitioner has also submitted further comments, which are included in the papers. We've also had correspondence from a large number of angling clubs and other people interested in using water. The clerk is now going to tell us about that.

[118] **Mr Francis:** A statement was issued by the Cabinet Secretary yesterday, which stated—. It was the action, essentially, that we'd been waiting for on this petition. So, the Welsh Government intends to consult further on what they describe as 'proposals to reform the legislative framework' in this area. There isn't a full indication in that statement about in which direction they'll look to reform the legislation. So, it may be that the committee wants to consider whether we need to write back to the Cabinet Secretary on the back of that statement and seek clarification about what the options in that consultation will be, particularly whether they will cover the aim of the petition around the statutory right of access to land and water. I suppose we could also ask about the timescales.

[119] **Mike Hedges:** Yes, a time frame would be quite useful, and how they're going to advertise it, because there are a lot of people who are very interested in either allowing or not allowing full access to water.

[120] 'Kick Start The Welsh Language Curriculum'. Last considered on 4 February 2014. They agreed then to ask the Minister for his response to the petitioner's further views and forward the petitioner a copy of the transcript of the debate held in Plenary and a copy of the First Minister's written statement of 3 February 2014. Given the length of time that has passed, the

clerking team has attempted to contact the petitioners on a number of occasions to seek their further views on the current situation with regard to their petition and has not been able to secure a response. Close it?

[121] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[122] **Mike Hedges:** ‘Rights to Primary Health Care in Welsh’—Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg have provided it. It was first considered on 13 December, and we agreed to await the Welsh Government’s response on the recent public consultation on the issue and the draft regulations that they are bringing forward, and, in the meantime, to write to the Welsh Language Commissioner seeking her views. A response from the Welsh Language Commissioner was received on 4 January. The petitioner was informed that the petition would be considered by the committee but had not responded when the papers for the committee were being finalised.

[123] The Welsh Language Commissioner was fairly unambiguous, wasn’t she, that

[124] ‘primary care service providers must be subject to the Welsh language standards under the same statutory framework as the health bodies’

[125] and that

[126] ‘additional standards are required in order to facilitate this’.

[127] So we await the publication of the Welsh Government’s response to the consultation and the draft regulations.

[128] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[129] **Mike Hedges:** ‘Give Rate Relief to Local Authorities for Leisure and Cultural Facilities’, first considered on 13 December 2016: the committee last considered it on 13 December, and agreed to seek further details from the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government about the plans to explore improvements to non-domestic rates, and whether there will be an opportunity for the petitioner to contribute views on this. A response from the Cabinet Secretary was received on 12 January. The petitioner was informed that the petition would be considered by the committee but had not responded when the papers were finalised—still no response?

[130] **Mr Francis:** No.

[131] **Mike Hedges:** Shall we wait to give the petitioner another fortnight to respond?

[132] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

[133] **Mike Hedges:** 'Funding for the Education Workforce Council Registration (EWC) Fee for Learning Support Workers in Schools', received from UNISON on 13 December last year: we considered it on 13 December and agreed to await the view of the petitioner and request further information from the Cabinet Secretary for Education about the process of deciding individual subsidy levels for 2017–18. A response was received from the Cabinet Secretary on 6 January. The petitioner also submitted further comments, which are included in the papers for the meeting. The petitioners have raised a further response of further concerns. Shall we write to the Cabinet Secretary to ask for a response to those concerns?

[134] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

[135] **Neil McEvoy:** Yes.

09:42

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd
o'r Cyfarfod**
**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public
from the Meeting**

Cynnig:

Motion:

*bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to
gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y exclude the public from the
cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog remainder of the meeting in
17.42(vi).*

*accordance with Standing Order
17.42(vi).*

Cynigiwyd y cynnig
Motion moved

[136] **Mike Hedges:** I now move motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public for the remainder of the meeting. Are Members content?

[137] **Gareth Bennett:** Yes.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig

Motion agreed

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 09:42.

The public part of the meeting ended at 09:42.