

Concise Minutes – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date: Tuesday, 13 March 2018

Meeting time: 09.06 – 10.47

This meeting can be viewed
on [Senedd TV](#) at:

<http://senedd.tv/en/4525>

Attendance

Category	Names
Assembly Members:	David J Rowlands AM (Chair) Rhun ap Iorwerth AM Janet Finch–Saunders AM Mike Hedges AM
Witnesses:	Gill Bell, Marine Conservation Society
Committee Staff:	Graeme Francis (Clerk) Kayleigh Imperato (Deputy Clerk) Kath Thomas (Deputy Clerk) Lisa Salkeld (Legal Adviser)

1 Introduction, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Neil McEvoy.



Cynulliad
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Wales

2 New petitions

2.1 P-05-802 Protecting Class Sizes in Design and Technology Classrooms and Workshops

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to write back to the Cabinet Secretary for Education to share the further information provided by the petitioner and ask:

- for her views in light of the fact that a limit appears to be in place in some other parts of the UK;
- whether the Welsh Government will give consideration to reviewing the suitability of existing guidelines and the extent to which it is followed by schools in Wales; and
- whether she will consider options other than legislation for realising the aims of the petition.

2.2 P-05-803 Our natural world is being poisoned by single use plastics...it's time to introduce a tax!

The Committee considered the petition for the first time and agreed to consider the petition further following the evidence session on [P-05-750 For single use items: introduce a Deposit Return System for drink containers and make fast food containers and utensils compostable](#), with a view to considering both petitions together in future.

2.3 P-05-804 We need Welsh Government funding for play!!

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

- the Minister for Children and Social Care to share the concerns of the petitioners and ask:
 - what assessment the Welsh Government has made of the sufficiency of steps taken by local authorities to fulfil the duties under Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010;
 - what steps have been taken to ensure that an adequate level of expenditure is being made at a local level throughout Wales;

- what consideration has been given to play provision in the development of the Welsh Government's obesity strategy; and
- the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to make them aware of the petition in the context of their current inquiry into the physical activity of children and young people.

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-05-736 To Make Mental Health Services More Accessible

The Committee considered further comments from the petitioner following the recent evidence session with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services and requested a summary of the evidence received to date, before considering what further action to take.

3.2 P-05-797 Ensure access to the cystic fibrosis medicine, Orkambi, as a matter of urgency

The Committee considered correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Services together with further comments from the petitioner and agreed to write to:

- the Cabinet Secretary to ask whether the All-Wales Medicines Strategy Group has now contacted Vertex to ask them to submit their evidence and to request an update when any response is received; and
- Vertex, to ask them for information about discussions they have held with the Welsh Government in relation to making Orkambi available to Welsh patients.

3.3 P-05-757 Remove the Obligation on Schools to Hold Acts of Religious Worship

The Committee considered the petition alongside [P-05-765 Keeping Current Guidelines for Religious Assemblies](#) and agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education to request further details about the ongoing consideration of issues around Human Rights, the UNCRC and discrimination, and to ask if she can provide a more precise timescale for providing a substantive response to the Committee.

3.4 P-05-765 Keeping Current Guidelines for Religious Assemblies

The Committee considered the petition alongside [P-05-757 Remove the Obligation on Schools to Hold Acts of Religious Worship](#) and agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education to request further details about the ongoing consideration of issues around Human Rights, the UNCRC and discrimination, and to ask if she can provide a more precise timescale for providing a substantive response to the Committee.

3.5 P-05-788 Remove the compulsory aspect of Welsh Bacalaureate

The Committee considered correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Education to the Chair of Children, Young People and Education Committee together with further comments from the petitioner and agreed to:

- write to the WJEC to seek their assessment of the exercise in relation to a scratch card win and, in particular, whether this is an appropriate task for learners at Key Stage 4; and
- await the publication of the Qualifications Wales review into the Skills Challenge Certificate.

3.6 P-05-789 Review support for asylum seekers accessing further education

The Committee considered correspondence from the Welsh Refugee Council and agreed to write to the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning to request an update in light of the suggestion that the Welsh Government has agreed to consider the eligibility criteria for EMA, following a recent meeting between the Leader of the House and the Welsh Refugee Council.

3.7 P-05-724 Rights to Primary Health Care in Welsh

The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning and agreed to await the views of the petitioners and to consider the petition again following work being undertaken by the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee on the Welsh Language Standards (Health Sector) regulations.

3.8 P-04-688 TATA Steel Port Talbot Power Plant

The Committee considered further comments from the petitioner and agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport to ask for an update on

discussions with Tata Steel about a package of support in relation to the power plant at the steel works.

3.9 P-05-690 Resurfacing of the A40 Raglan–Abergavenny Road

The Committee considered a number of items of correspondence on the petition and agreed to:

- seek a copy of the South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA) study commissioned in 2015; and
- produce a short summary of the evidence received on the petition to date.

3.10 P-05-701 Road Safety Improvements Along the A487 Trunk Road between Cardigan and Aberystwyth, to Include Passing Places

The Committee considered further comments from the petitioner and agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport to seek an update on the sites being taken forward in this area following the first phase of the Pinch Points programme, and for his views in relation to the new freight strategy shared by the petitioner.

3.11 P-05-721 Penegoes Speed Limit Petition

The Committee had previously agreed to group this petition together for consideration with [P-05-767 A487 Trunk Road Through Tre–Taliesin: Urgent Need for Effective Speed–Calming Measures](#) and [P-05-792 Petition to extend the 40mph speed limit in Blaenporth](#).

Members considered correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport together with further comments from the petitioner for P-05-767 and agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary to ask whether he will consider developing a programme for the Speed Limit Review and make it publicly available, in order to respond to concerns over a lack of openness with the process.

3.12 P-05-767 A487 Trunk Road Through Tre–Taliesin: Urgent Need for Effective Speed–Calming Measures

The Committee had previously agreed to group this petition together for consideration with [P-05-721 Penegoes Speed Limit Petition](#) and [P-05-792 Petition to extend the 40mph speed limit in Blaenporth](#).

Members considered correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport together with further comments from the petitioner and agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary to ask whether he will consider developing a programme for the Speed Limit Review and make it publicly available, in order to respond to concerns over a lack of openness with the process.

3.13 P-05-792 Petition to extend the 40mph speed limit in Blaenporth.

The Committee had previously agreed to group this petition together for consideration with [P-05-767 A487 Trunk Road Through Tre-Taliesin: Urgent Need for Effective Speed-Calming Measures](#) and [P-05-767 A487 Trunk Road Through Tre-Taliesin: Urgent Need for Effective Speed-Calming Measures](#).

Members considered correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport together with further comments from the petitioner for P-05-767 and agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary to ask whether he will consider developing a programme for the Speed Limit Review and make it publicly available, in order to respond to concerns over a lack of openness with the process.

3.14 P-05-770 Reopen Crumlin Railway Station

- The Committee considered further comments from the petitioner and agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport to ask if he is in a position to provide an update on the assessment process in relation to the case for a new station in Crumlin, and for further information on the likely timescales for this work.

3.15 P-05-781 Port Talbot Community Against the Super Prison

The Committee considered correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services and agreed to await the views of the petitioner and, at that point, to consider writing to the Ministry of Justice.

3.16 P-05-793 Hi speed broadband to Llangenny village

The Committee considered correspondence from The Leader of the House and Openreach together with additional comments from the petitioner and agreed to seek

an update on the latest position from the petitioner before considering the petition again, given that it is currently unclear whether Llangenny has been connected to superfast broadband based upon the information received.

3.17 P-05-798 Male domestic violence victim support services to be independently run & funded

The Committee considered comments from the petitioner and agreed to write to the Leader of the House to ask what consideration the Welsh Government has given to funding specific support for male victims of domestic violence, and whether there have previously been opportunities for organisations to apply for funding.

4 Paper to note

4.1 P-04-479 Tywyn Memorial Hospital X-ray & Minor Injuries Unit Petition

The Committee noted the letter from South Meirionnydd Older People's Forum and correspondence dated February 2017 from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and agreed to write to the Health Board to ask:

- why the opening hours for the Minor Injuries Unit at Tywyn Memorial Hospital appear not to have been extended in summer 2017 despite the commitment to do so; and
- why the South Meirionnydd Older People's Forum have apparently not received a response from the Health Board to a number of requests for information.

5 Evidence Session – P-05-750 For single use items: introduce a Deposit Return System for drink containers and make fast food containers and utensils compostable

The Committee heard evidence from Gill Bell, Head of Conservation Wales, Marine Conservation Society.

6 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting

The motion was agreed.

7 Discussion of previous evidence sessions

The Committee considered the evidence received on P-05-750 For single use items: introduce a Deposit Return System for drink containers and make fast food containers and utensils compostable and agreed to:

- write to the Minister for Environment to ask when the Extended Producer responsibility research study will be published and for her to notify the Committee once it is available; and
- forward details of the petition to the Chair of the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee and ask if the Committee intends to do any work on issues relating to single use plastics.