



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru **The National Assembly for Wales**

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau **The Petitions Committee**

Dydd Mawrth, 6 Tachwedd 2012
Tuesday, 6 November 2012

Cynnwys **Contents**

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

Deisebau Newydd
New Petitions

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol
Updates to Previous Petitions

Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r Cyfarfod ar gyfer
y Wybodaeth Gefndir i Eitem 4
Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the Meeting for
the Background of Item 4

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynnddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir
trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

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.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Russell George	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Elin Jones	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
William Powell	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Liberal Democrats (Committee Chair)
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

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

Sarita Marshall	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser
Naomi Stocks	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.30 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.30 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **William Powell:** Bore da, a chroeso cynnes i bawb. Croeso cynnes iawn i Elin Jones, aelod newydd y pwyllgor, a diolch i Bethan Jenkins am ei chyfraniad enfawr i'r broses ddeisebau.

William Powell: Good morning, and a warm welcome to you all. I warmly welcome our new committee member, Elin Jones, and thank Bethan Jenkins for her huge contribution to the petitions process.

[2] We have no apologies or substitutions this morning. Hopefully, Russell George will join us shortly. Normal housekeeping arrangements apply. There are no fire drills scheduled this morning, so if we hear the alarm it is the real thing, and we are in the hands of the ushers.

9.31 a.m.

Deisebau Newydd
New Petitions

[3] **William Powell:** The first new petition is P-04-429, 'Re-opening of the Carmarthen to Aberystwyth Train Line'. This petition was submitted by Mark Worrall and has the support of 1,191 signatures. It says:

[4] 'We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to re-open the train line from Carmarthen to Aberystwyth. We believe this is vital for the local communities and the Welsh economy as a whole as it will allow the transition of people and services to areas which are otherwise isolated. This will support the local economies and create a more fluid connection between North and South Wales.'

[5] The petitioner goes on to detail the benefits that he and his supporters see in this re-opening. As yet, we have not undertaken any action on this; I received the petition the week before last. Colleagues, what do you suggest we do on this?

[6] **Joyce Watson:** Elin, would you like to go first, as you are the constituency AM?

[7] **William Powell:** Absolutely, as the immediate local Member on this issue.

[8] **Elin Jones:** I propose that we look to pursue this issue first with the Minister, to see what his intentions might be. This has been a long-standing issue of interest, ever since the railway line was closed by Beeching in the 1960s. It needs to be progressed by way of some work on feasibility before it is considered for implementation. However, the issue needs to be raised first with the Minister to see what his response would be to the principle of further investigation.

[9] **William Powell:** Indeed, I agree, and I think that colleagues share that view. There was a similar petition earlier in this session and we have written to the Minister in relation to that. So, in that context, we should write to Carl Sargeant to seek clarification, particularly on whether anything has changed in his thinking. We can bring the matter back to a future meeting when we have received his response.

[10] The next item is P-04-430, on the proposed closure of Tenby minor injuries unit. This petition was submitted by Andrew James Davies and collected 157 signatures; there was an associated petition with in excess of 580 signatures. It says:

[11] ‘We the undersigned strongly object to the proposals in the Hywel Dda Health Board Document Your Health/Your Future, referring to closure of the Minor Injuries Unit in Tenby. We call on the National Assembly of Wales to ensure the proposals set out in the Hywel Dda Health Board Document are not carried out and that the MIU in Tenby remains open.’

[12] We have not taken any action on this petition as yet, but, for the sake of consistency, we need to recall what we did in the meeting on 2 October, when a similar petition came to us on maternity services in the Cynon Valley. On that occasion, we wrote to the local health board, copying in the Minister. Is that a sensible route this time?

[13] **Joyce Watson:** I think that we have to be consistent. People feel very strongly about the proposed changes to healthcare services and the proposals that have been put forward by the various health boards, in this case Hywel Dda Local Health Board, as you will know. The best that we can do—it is something that we absolutely must do at this point—is draw this petition and other petitions to the attention of Hywel Dda health board, so that it understands the strength of feeling. To that end, I propose that we immediately write to Hywel Dda health board, not only on this petition but on others that we will come to on this agenda.

[14] **William Powell:** I strongly support that. Are colleagues happy with that approach, copying in the Minister as we did previously? I see that we are agreed.

[15] **Russell George:** On occasion, we should go beyond just copying in the Minister; we should write to the Minister. However, I think that the approach you suggest is sensible for this petition.

[16] **William Powell:** Good, we are agreed.

[17] We now move on to petition P-04-431, which is from the same sort of family of petitions and resulting from the same overall health consultation. The petition was submitted by the Save Witybush Action Team, otherwise known as SWAT. Associated petitions collected more than 14,000 signatures. It reads:

[18] ‘On behalf of SWAT I call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that the plans for Secondary Healthcare provision currently being

consulted on in the Hywel Dda Health Board area will maintain the present level of services available at Withybush Hospital. The 14000 signatories on the petitions delivered to your office by SWAT do not agree with the preferred option of the Hywel Dda health Board to centralize most inpatient services on the Glangwili site. It is quite clear to the people of Pembrokeshire and elsewhere who have signed these petitions that if centralization of services is required then Withybush should be the preferred site. This would provide an equitable, accessible, safe and sustainable Secondary Healthcare service for the whole of the Hywel Dda Health Board area whereas centralizing services on the Glangwili site would seriously disadvantage the people of Pembrokeshire.’

[19] I take it from Joyce’s resolution earlier, and given that the core issues are coming from the same consultation, that we should adopt the same approach this time round.

[20] **Joyce Watson:** Absolutely; 14,000 signatures is a large number. As the Petitions Committee, we treat every petition equally, regardless of the number of signatures, but at the same time we cannot ignore that number. We definitely have to make the local health board aware of the strength of feeling. Again, we must copy in the Minister. We have to do that, because she made it quite clear that, ultimately, the decision will rest with her. At this consultation stage, she cannot make any comments, because of her role. However, by copying her in, we will make her aware of what is going on.

[21] **William Powell:** Indeed.

[22] **Russell George:** Chair, I agree that we should write to Hywel Dda health board. I would like to write to the Minister directly as well, because, as we know, the Minister has made it clear that she does not believe that any service in Wales should be downgraded and the petition is specifically asking that the present level of service at Withybush General Hospital is maintained and not downgraded. On that basis, I would like to write directly to the Minister as well as the health board.

[23] **William Powell:** I do not quite understand the distinction between this and the previous petition when it comes to writing to the Minister rather than copying her in. However, on this matter, I would say that, immediately after this petition was presented, I had the opportunity to raise the issue in Plenary, and the Minister was kind enough to agree to meet some representatives of SWAT, and that is on the record of that particular Plenary session. So, in any event, that is currently being progressed and there is correspondence between Mr Chris Overton and others associated with SWAT. The Minister has tried to identify a date, so there is ongoing correspondence with the Minister as well, and she will meet representatives.

[24] **Joyce Watson:** We have to be consistent above everything else. So, if we are copying the Minister in, we have to copy the Minister in to all of it. We cannot have a situation where we are not writing to the Minister on one petition because it has fewer signatures and then writing to the Minister because another petition has more; they have equal weighting in this committee. That is how it was set up and that is why it was set up at a level of 10 signatures. I said that at the start. Given all that we know—and we do know it—and the fact that the Minister cannot make a comment, I think that we should write to the health board, as they are its proposals at the moment, although it will be the Minister’s final decision, and copy the Minister in, so that she is fully aware of this. She is already aware and has already met some members of SWAT and other groups. That is my proposal, only because we have to be seen to be consistent, otherwise we are saying that the MIU in Tenby is not as important to us, and I am afraid of giving out that message.

[25] **William Powell:** I share that concern. As is said, I am in ongoing correspondence with the Minister about that meeting. I am very happy to share that with the committee,

because I raised the question in the context of petitions in the first place.

[26] **Elin Jones:** I do not feel particularly strongly about whether the Minister is copied in or written to, but given that both these proposals—the closure of the minor injuries unit and the more general petition on Pembrokeshire—deal with the same consultation, that the same document is being consulted upon and that the proposals in their entirety are being commented upon, I do not think that there is much point making a differentiation. For a number of people using the health service, the minor injuries unit in Tenby is as significant as services in Withybush. I do not, therefore, see any need for differentiation; I do not feel particularly strongly which is the better way to go about it, but it should be consistent.

[27] **William Powell:** We have all had an opportunity to express views on that one and the will of the committee is clear. So, if we proceed on the agreed basis, that is the best way forward. I will keep the committee apprised of progress on the meeting between the Minister and the petitioners on this matter.

[28] We now move to P-04-432, to stop the army recruiting in Wales. This petition was submitted by the Fellowship of Reconciliation—

[29] **Joyce Watson:** It is ‘Stop the Army Recruiting in Schools’, not in Wales.

[30] **William Powell:** Apologies. That would be a very bad thing indeed. It was submitted by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, collecting approximately 1,074 signatures. It says:

[31] ‘We call on the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to recommend that the armed forces should not go into schools to recruit. Britain is the only country in the European Union that allows a military presence in its schools. Britain is the only country of the 27 European Union countries to recruit 16-year-old children to the armed forces. The armed forces target their recruitment in schools in the most deprived areas of Wales.’

[32] As yet, no action has been undertaken. I suggest that we write to Leighton Andrews, the Minister for Education and Skills, in the first instance, to seek his views. Do colleagues have a view?

[33] **Joyce Watson:** I know that we have a lot of work, but at some time in the future, I think that this is worthy of further investigation. If our research team has time to do it, we need to find out whether these are facts.

9.45 p.m.

[34] **William Powell:** Yes, particularly that last sentence.

[35] **Joyce Watson:** If it is the case that Britain is the only country of the 27 European Union member states first of all to allow a military presence in schools and then to recruit 16-year-old children, we need to know about that. I do not know about my colleagues but I would like to know more about that, and then see where that takes us.

[36] **William Powell:** It could be quite a slim, focused piece of work for the Research Service.

[37] **Joyce Watson:** I think so.

[38] **Ms Roberts:** May I come in with some general points of clarification and confirmation, more than anything?

[39] **William Powell:** Please do.

[40] **Ms Roberts:** In law, in general, and for the purposes of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, anyone under the age of 18 years is deemed to be a child. I have done some preliminary research into this, and the relevant regulations appear to be the Armed Forces (Enlistment) Regulations 2009. Regulation 4 of those regulations provides that the minimum age for enlisting in the UK armed forces is 16, so anyone who is 16 is currently eligible to join and be recruited into the armed forces, but they cannot serve in front-line operations until they are 18 years of age. Members will be aware that concerns have been raised more broadly in relation to the recruitment of people under the age of 18 from different quarters. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has raised issues, the UK Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights, the UK Parliament's Defence Select Committee and various children's charities have called for a review of the policy of recruiting people under 18 years of age.

[41] Just to pick up on Joyce's point, if further information is required, as a team, we would be more than happy to provide it.

[42] **William Powell:** In addition to that, it would be useful if we could establish any background information that is available on the particular strategy within Wales and whether there is any correlation, as the petitioner suggests, with the economic status of particular areas. That would also be highly relevant to the matter.

[43] One final thing to note is that, in the fairly small number of independent schools in Wales, as elsewhere in the UK, there are combined cadet forces, which are another vehicle for recruitment and training that we might also care to look at, to some degree. Good. So, we have a set of actions on that one, and that is agreed.

[44] We will move on to P-04-433, on CCTV in slaughterhouses. This petition was submitted by Animal Aid and has in excess of 1,000 signatures in support of it.

[45] 'We call on the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to introduce mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses to help vets with better regulation and monitoring, to provide footage for training and retraining, to deter some of the animal welfare abuses filmed by Animal Aid, and to provide evidence for prosecutions should they be necessary.'

[46] There was a short debate on this issue back in September, in which I took part, as did other colleagues. It was promoted by my colleague, Rebecca Evans. This petition was due to be presented formally today, but that has been postponed until 27 November. The Welsh Government has also been consulting on the implementation of European Union regulations on the protection of animals at the time of slaughter, and that consultation closed yesterday, on 5 November. So, I would welcome colleagues' thoughts on how to take this one forward.

[47] **Joyce Watson:** Chair, there was also a statement of opinion.

[48] **William Powell:** Indeed, that is also correct.

[49] **Joyce Watson:** I have signed that, so I think I need to put that on the table. You said that there was a consultation, which closed yesterday, so I think that the next step might be to look at when the findings of that consultation are due. Do we know when they are due?

[50] **William Powell:** No, but one would assume that that will take several weeks to evaluate at least.

[51] **Elin Jones:** Do we know whether a European directive and regulations were looked

at as part of the consultation? If so, did it include anything on CCTV in slaughterhouses?

[52] **Ms Stocks:** I do not think that it specifically included that. It looked at the implementation of the new EU regulations about the protection of animals at the time of slaughter.

[53] **Ms Roberts:** I have had a look at the consultation document, which is some 65 pages long. Pages 57 and 58 are relevant, namely paragraphs 118 to 123. That is under the title 'Monitoring procedures and CCTV'. As I say, it was part of the Welsh Government's consultation, which ended yesterday. I have some relevant extracts here, which I could quote from, and if committee members would be like to have the relevant extracts, I am more than happy to provide them. On page 58, paragraph 123 of the 'Detailed Implementation in Wales' document, the Welsh Government concludes that

[54] 'we do not plan to pursue proposals for compulsory CCTV further at this time. However, we may re-visit the matter in future should there be clear objective evidence that making CCTV compulsory would have a significant benefit to welfare monitoring beyond that of methods already available. We would welcome your views in that context.'

[55] That is the relevant quote from the end of the report.

[56] **William Powell:** That is helpful. It would also help us in our consideration if we could have a slightly fuller briefing note.

[57] **Russell George:** I think that we should write to the Minister asking for his views, but we could also perhaps ask him for the timetable of when the consultation results will be made public.

[58] **William Powell:** I think that that would be helpful. We could also, if we wished, visit the Record of Proceedings of the short debate just to refresh our memory of that, for those of us who were not present. That would also be useful. So, we will write to the Minister as agreed, but we expect that this will take some weeks because of evaluating the feedback on the consultation.

[59] **Elin Jones:** However, it is clear that, if this is to be—[*Inaudible.*]—then the regulations that will come from this consultation are an opportunity, were the Government to change its view from what it said in the consultation, for the National Assembly, if it wishes, to influence the Government.

[60] **William Powell:** Indeed. It is quite a dynamic situation, is it not?

[61] **Elin Jones:** Yes, so it is not something that could happen with a change of legislation in five years' time; this is likely to be something on which there is an opportunity to legislate in the next 12 months, if there is a wish to do so.

[62] **William Powell:** It is all coming together, really.

[63] **Ms Roberts:** Just to respond to the Member's comments, I am looking specifically at paragraph 119 of the consultation's implementation document. Again, I will quote the Welsh Government:

[64] 'However, it would be possible to make regulations requiring compulsory installation of CCTV in slaughterhouses under section 12 of the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2006, "for the purpose of securing the welfare" of the animals at or immediately before the time of slaughter.'

[65] So, there are avenues for bringing legislation forward.

[66] **William Powell:** Sure. Thank you very much indeed for that.

[67] The next petition is P-04-434, entitled 'The Welsh and Somalilanders have common love of poetry'. This petition was submitted by the Wales Somaliland Communities Link and collected 30 signatures. It says

[68] 'We call upon the National Assembly for Wales, a nation known worldwide for its love of poetry, to applaud the similar love enjoyed by its citizens of Somaliland descent whose traditional culture considers poetry to be the core form of cultural expression. Our call comes at the start of the Olympic Truce, that period which extended from one week before to one week after each Olympic Games in the ancient era enabling athletes to travel unhindered through the lands of traditional enemies to compete in the spirit of ekecheiria, the holding of hands. And as citizens of Wales, as lovers of poetry and being committed to striving for peace within and between all nations, we welcome the National Eisteddfod of Wales which we believe to unite these values and we invite all to add their names to this petition and we hope you will promote communities to communities links between our two nations.'

[69] As yet, we have not undertaken any work considering this petition. I sense that, given the nature of the petition and the themes, we should probably write to the Presiding Officer to seek her views on this one. Do colleagues agree?

[70] **Joyce Watson:** Absolutely.

[71] **William Powell:** Okay, that is what we shall do, but it is encouraging to see an approach again from this particular slice of the population, taking things forward. That is really encouraging. Good.

[72] That takes us to petition P-04-435, 'Wales & Border Railways Franchise 2018 to be Operated on a Not-for-Dividend Basis'. This petition was submitted by Merlyn Cooper and collected 35 signatures. It states:

[73] 'We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that the next the Wales & the Border franchise is operated on a not-for-dividend basis.'

[74] The petitioner then goes on to air views regarding Arriva's current 'monopoly', as he sees it, over much of the railways in Wales and the opportunity that is presented in 2018 for that to change. I propose that we write to Carl Sargeant, the Minister for local government, communities and transport, to seek his views on these proposals. Does that make sense? I see that it does. I look forward to getting feedback from him. We will now move on to the next section of our agenda.

9.56 a.m.

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol Updates to Previous Petitions

[75] **William Powell:** We will consider petition P-04-404, 'Aberporth Unmanned Aerial Vehicles'. This petition was submitted by Cymdeithas y Cymod in July 2012, and Russell George and I were present on that occasion. It has collected over 1,730 signatures.

[76] 'We call on the Welsh Government to withdraw the support given for UK unmanned aircraft to be tested at Aberporth and to fly across a large area of Wales.'

[77] We considered this for the first time in July 2012. We wrote to the First Minister, but it is actually the Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science who has responded. We see quite a forthright response from the Minister on this issue, particularly flagging up the civil dimension of the unmanned aerial vehicles, as well as making points regarding the defence remit being a reserved matter. I think that, at this stage, it would probably be sensible to forward that response from Edwina Hart to the petitioners to see what their view is in turn, and we can then consider it at a future time. Are Members happy with that? I see that you are. It is therefore agreed.

[78] We will now move on to consider petition P-04-421, ‘Oppose Trident moving to Wales’. This petition was submitted by Mabon ap Gwynfor in October 2012 and collected 1,236 signatures. We recall the incident and the exchanges that led to this back in the summer. We also have a fairly pithy response from the First Minister on this issue.

[79] **Elin Jones:** You said it. [*Laughter.*]

[80] **William Powell:** It does not seem that this one has much more mileage in it, given the clarity of that answer, but I would welcome colleagues’ views.

[81] **Joyce Watson:** I speak as someone who lives not very far from Milford Haven. The First Minister’s reply says that he was talking about a hypothetical situation and that he has had no discussions with the UK Government, nor does he intend to approach the UK Government to bring any jobs of this nature to Wales. That is what he says, ‘this nature’ being the UK’s nuclear fleet, Trident, coming to Milford Haven. However, the petition is asking for a wholesale refusal should that hypothetical situation become a reality, and a statement that we are opposed to it. So, there are two things going on here: the one that has been responded to, and the one that is being asked for. In that respect, I do not think that we quite have the clarity that we would like to have. That is my argument. So, maybe, if we write back to the First Minister and outline the difference between the question that has been answered and the question that has been asked, we might be able to get some further clarity.

10.00 a.m.

[82] **William Powell:** As I said, the letter was very pithy and possibly over condensed in light of the broader issues in the petition. Elin?

[83] **Elin Jones:** I agree with Joyce Watson. The letter has said something that is factually true—I have no doubt about that—but the petition is asking for a different statement from the Welsh Government.

[84] **William Powell:** It is a bit more emphatic, is it not?

[85] **Elin Jones:** So, it would be welcome to seek more clarification from the First Minister in light of the petitioner’s actual request.

[86] **Russell George:** I think that Joyce has done an excellent job of making the letter from the First Minister sound longer than it is. [*Laughter.*] However, I agree with what Joyce and Elin have said, and I support their comments.

[87] **William Powell:** Excellent. We will endeavour to craft a letter that gets those points across so that it gets a decent consideration by the First Minister. We look forward to considering that response at a future meeting. Thank you, colleagues.

[88] We now move on to P-04-398, the campaign for a Welsh animal offenders register. I

remind Members that this petition was submitted by Mari Roberts and Sara Roberts in June this year, and has the support of 69 signatories. The petition is seeking to set up a comprehensive animal offenders register and we have considered it previously. Great emphasis is placed on the connection between animal offences and other forms of criminality, which is of considerable interest for us to take forward. We are still awaiting a response from the Association of Chief Police Officers on this matter.

[89] When we previously considered this petition, there was certainly an appetite to undertake some work on this issue. There is a range of things that we could usefully do. Interest was previously expressed in us undertaking a consultation on the matter, which I believe that Joyce raised when we looked at it previously. I supported that view and I still support it. We also need to consider calling in the petitioners for some oral evidence. Another suggestion that has come forward is the possibility of us visiting an RSPCA facility to meet directly with some staff members and to gain some more insight into this matter.

[90] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, we could look at the RSPCA or any other rescue centre for that matter, because they will all tell you the same story. I am happy to do that so that we can see the sorts of issues that are raised. However, we have to look at both sides of this issue, because if we are going to do an inquiry, we have to be balanced. So we have to look at those people who might be opposed to such a register for various reasons. That is my only word of caution. I am still enthusiastic to look at it, as I was a fortnight ago, but having had time to reflect on this, I also think that we need to get a balance. How we find witnesses to that end I do not know, but the police seems to be the most obvious choice to give us some balance.

[91] **William Powell:** Yes, indeed, and we are still awaiting a response from ACPO on this matter. Its response will help to frame things.

[92] **Joyce Watson:** Bridgend has an RSPCA rescue centre—I am sure that I am right in saying that. That is not very far from here if there is not one in Cardiff. I am not aware of one in Cardiff.

[93] **William Powell:** We can investigate that. We could probably put that in train while the proposed consultation is being worked up. Possibly it would be appropriate to send a chaser letter to ACPO just to make sure that our correspondence has not been—

[94] **Ms Stocks:** ACPO has been in correspondence and has said that we will have a response for consideration at the meeting on 4 December.

[95] **William Powell:** That is really helpful. In that case, we know the time frame. In the meantime we can scope out a possible site visit in January or early February, according to available time.

[96] Moving on now to P-03-240, road safety on the A40 in Llanddewi Velfrey. This was submitted by Llanddewi Velfrey Community Council in September 2009 and collected 154 signatures. We have considered this important petition on a number of occasions and, colleagues, we all have the text and the specific requests that were made by the local residents in that petition. Elements of this have been put in place, but others remain unfulfilled at this time. We also have correspondence from our colleague Angela Burns, chasing up on some of these issues, and then, among our papers, we have the correspondence received from Carl Sargeant about a week later, which has some quite useful content: although he has spoken against changing the current limit to 40 mph, he is looking at a transitional limit of 50 mph to help to further influence driver behaviour and issues. Joyce, I am conscious that you have been involved in this one closely.

[97] **Joyce Watson:** It is not so much that I am involved in it, but that I drive through

there at least twice a week. That 50 mph buffer speed limit is already there. I can tell you that. As you come up Pengawse hill you come to a 50 mph buffer speed limit zone, and then you go into the 40 mph zone. That is there from the eastern side, but it is not there from the western side, which he is talking about. I do not know why. This is actually asking for pavements. The petitioners are right to say that the existing pavements are very difficult if you have a pushchair or wheelchair. There is also the sparsity of pavements, if I can put it that way, because by the very nature of the village, there are lots of breaks, because there are side roads. There would be wider issues about dropped pavements for access and things like that.

[98] **William Powell:** It is the nature of the settlement, really.

[99] **Joyce Watson:** It is to do with the nature of the settlement. What Carl has said in his letter—or, sorry, the Minister—is that they should be able to put in a bid for funding in the next financial year. What I would like to know is whether that is likely to happen. That is perhaps a way forward that we could take in terms of chasing that.

[100] **William Powell:** Indeed, and potentially we could make available some of the work that we have been involved in to support or inform that bid as it is being considered by colleagues in the department.

[101] **Joyce Watson:** I could recommend a site visit—it would be quite an easy one for me—for you to get an understanding of the layout, because it is a particularly interesting one.

[102] **William Powell:** This petition has been around for a while. It would be sensible for us to keep open the option of a site visit, but we can certainly feed into the bidding process and provide some of the information that we have gleaned from our own consideration. We should therefore write back to the Minister in the light of that, with regard to the bidding process. I think that would be sensible. We could also keep the petitioners in the picture as to the latest developments.

[103] The next petition is P-03-222, from the National Osteoporosis Society. The petition was submitted by the society in July 2009 and collected 22 signatures. It

[104] ‘calls upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh government to fully implement the Falls and Fractures Standard in the National Service Framework for Older People’.

[105] We last considered this in July and we agreed, at that time, to ask the petitioners whether they were satisfied with the response that we had previously had from the Minister. We have not heard from the petitioners, and I do not think that that situation has changed in the last few days. In the light of that and following the implementation of the national service framework for older people, I suggest that we move to close this petition. Are colleagues content with that?

[106] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, if you have written and we have not had a reply.

[107] **William Powell:** Diolch yn fawr. I think that that is the sensible way forward.

[108] P-04-334, a petition for a new renal unit at Prince Charles Hospital, was submitted by Mr Robert Kendrick in November 2011 and was supported by 56 signatures. We have also had a memorable site visit to this particular unit at Prince Charles Hospital, where the quality of the care was very much a theme. However, the circumstances and the physical environment were very short of what the patients would have wished for. Subsequently, colleagues, you also went to visit the University Hospital of Wales facility. We have the recent correspondence from Allison Williams, which refers to options coming forward for

consideration now. We should write to the Minister for Health and Social Services to find out which way she is minded to go on this issue, because Mr Kendrick and his fellow petitioners have been patient in trying to progress this, but it is a situation that needs resolution. Are you happy for us to write to Lesley Griffiths in connection with this?

[109] **Joyce Watson:** Absolutely. On a positive note, there seems to have been some movement, so let us try to keep the positive momentum going.

[110] **William Powell:** Bethan Jenkins and I were both impressed by the approach taken by Allison Williams during our visit and that has been maintained by the correspondence that we have just received.

[111] Petition P-04-408 for a child and adolescent eating disorder service was submitted by Helen Missen in July this year and collected 246 signatures. It calls

[112] ‘on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to fund the Child and Adolescent Eating Disorder Service in Wales to the same degree as the Adult Eating Disorder Service in Wales.’

[113] We have already considered this in July. We wrote to the Minister and to the cross-party group on eating disorders. We have the correspondence from the Minister in our papers. It would probably be helpful for us to seek the views of the campaign group Beat, which is active in the field of child and adolescent eating disorders, and to get its feedback on what the Minister has said in her correspondence. Do you think that that is the best way forward, colleagues?

[114] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, I agree.

[115] **Russell George:** Agreed.

[116] **William Powell:** Let us do that.

[117] We now move to P-04-335, on the establishment of a Welsh cricket team. This petition was submitted by Matthew Richard Bumford in October 2011, and it collected 187 signatures. As a committee, we last considered this in July 2012 and we wrote to the Presiding Officer requesting a Plenary debate prior to closing the petition. As you will have seen, we have had a response from the Presiding Officer declining that request, in part because of the absence of a report on the topic.

10.15 a.m.

[118] However, there was a rewarding round-table discussion on the issue, and I would like to thank you again, Joyce, for chairing that session. However, we did not move to formulating a report on the issue. There is clearly quite a lot of sentiment out there regarding this issue, and quite a lot of interest and some strong views. We are where we are in terms of the Presiding Officer’s letter, but I believe that it would be wrong for us to walk away and close this petition at this time. Would it not be sensible to write to the colleagues who participated in that round-table discussion, in order to take their further views?

[119] **Russell George:** In the light of the Presiding Officer’s response, could we, as you say, produce a short report and then ask again for a debate on this?

[120] **Ms Stocks:** That option is available to committee. The Business Committee’s decision was not made on the basis of the content of the petition, but because our proceedings do not currently enable petitions to be debated without a report. So, that is one option that is

available to committee.

[121] **Russell George:** I was not suggesting that there needs to be a great deal of work done on this. We do not have to have a lengthy report—it can be short—but at least the mechanism is then there for that to be debated.

[122] **William Powell:** A key contributor to that would be to seek the views and, maybe, any subsequent thoughts of those who took part in the round-table discussion. Again, there is concern around capacity and so on, but it need not be a lengthy report, and it can be informed by the expertise—and the divergent views, in some cases—that fed into that round-table discussion.

[123] **Joyce Watson:** Some views were extremely divergent. [*Laughter.*]

[124] **William Powell:** We can also revisit the Record of those proceedings and that round-table discussion.

[125] **Ms Stocks:** As committee members, you will need to consider what you would want the content of the report to be, what, if any, recommendations you would want to make, and who you would want those recommendations to be made to.

[126] **William Powell:** Clearly, we need clarity if we are to commission something, however condensed, because we need to give a steer. As the only one of the three of us who was present at that rewarding session, Joyce, you can have the final word on this matter.

[127] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you. Views were diverse, and diametrically opposed in many cases. Therefore, any report will have to reflect that. When we come to making recommendations and to thinking where we are going with it, that will have to be quite clearly reflected in any statement that we make and pass on. There was no overriding, unanimous support for this, and, in many cases, I am not sure that the reverse was not true. However, I am happy that we draw something up, but we need to be mindful that it is not likely to happen for quite a few months, because there are other things that we have already committed to.

[128] **William Powell:** Yes, absolutely. We would need to schedule it in.

[129] **Joyce Watson:** If we do that, that is fine.

[130] **William Powell:** There is a reasonable prospect that that piece of work will be completed before the next cricket season—I believe that that is a reasonable aspiration. However, I believe that it would be wrong, at this stage, to close the petition without going several steps further, so let us do that.

[131] The next petition is P-04-365 on protecting buildings of note on the mid Wales hospital site in Talgarth. This petition was submitted by Mr John Tushingham in February 2012 and it collected 206 signatures. It calls on the Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to list or otherwise protect buildings of note on the former mid Wales hospital site. The committee considered this in May of this year, and we agreed to write to the Minister and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. We have correspondence in our public papers today including feedback from the relevant conservation officer, Rosie Burton, of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. The relatively recent news is that the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, at its latest planning, access and rights-of-way meeting, refused the current planning application on the site, and so that is where we are at. There is a period of reflection for a number of people, including the potential developer. So, we probably now need to write to the national park authority, seeking its views on the matter and to ask in particular, in the spirit of the petition, whether it would consider placing some of the buildings

on the site on some form of local list in order to afford the protection that the petitioners are seeking. What do colleagues feel about that?

[132] **Joyce Watson:** I do not know that I would go quite as far as you have said. We cannot ask the Brecon authority to do anything; we do not have the jurisdiction behind us to do that, even if it was desirable. So, we have to do what we can do, and that is something that we cannot do. However, we could ask the authority to update us on whether it is considering, in the light of what you have just said, putting any of that on a register. We, as a Petitions Committee, cannot suggest to it that it does it. I think that I am right in saying that.

[133] **William Powell:** I would rephrase that in light of your clarification. Also, I should state that I am a county councillor for the ward that includes this particular site, and I am familiar with some of the people active in the petition. I am familiar with and have had discussions with the developer in the context of my role. Therefore, I would want to put that on the record for clarity. However, I think that that is well understood. Russell, do you have any thoughts on that?

[134] **Russell George:** No.

[135] **William Powell:** Okay.

[136] I think that we should write to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority in the spirit that you have outlined, Joyce. Thank you.

10.23 a.m.

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r
Cyfarfod ar gyfer y Wybodaeth Gefndir i Eitem 4
Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the
Meeting for the Background of Item 4**

[137] **William Powell:** I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 17.42(vi).

[138] I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10.23 a.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 10.23 a.m.*