



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

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau **The Petitions Committee**

Dydd Mawrth, 29 Tachwedd 2011
Tuesday, 29 November 2011

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cynhwysir cyfieithiad Saesneg o gyfraniadau yn y Gymraeg.

These proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee.
In addition, an English translation of Welsh speeches is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol**Committee members in attendance**

Russell George	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
William Powell	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Liberal Democrats (Committee Chair)
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru (yn dirprwyo ar ran Bethan Jenkins) The Party of Wales (substituting for Bethan Jenkins)
Joyce Watson	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol**Others in attendance**

Lisa Dunsford	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr Gofal Sylfaenol a Chymunedol, Llywodraeth Cymru Deputy Director of Primary and Community Care, Welsh Government
Lesley Griffiths	Aelod Cynulliad (Llafur), y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Assembly Member (Labour), the Minister for Health and Social Services
Andrea Nicholas-Jones	Pennaeth Strategaeth ar gyfer Pobl Hŷn, Llywodraeth Cymru Head of Older People Strategy, Welsh Government
Alison Strode	Cynghorydd Therapi Cymru Therapy Adviser for Wales
Andrew Walker	Pennaeth yr Is-adran Cyfalaf, Ystadau a Chyfleusterau, Llywodraeth Cymru Head of Capital, Estates and Facilities Division, Welsh Government

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

Rhodri Wyn Jones	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Andrew Minnis	Ymchwilydd Researcher
Abigail Phillips	Clerc Clerk
Helen Roberts	Cynghorydd Cyfreithiol Legal Adviser

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.36 a.m.

The meeting began at 9.36 a.m.

**Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon
Introduction, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **William Powell:** Bore da a chroeso **William Powell:** Good morning and a warm
cynnnes i bawb. welcome to everyone.

[2] Welcome to the Petitions Committee. The meeting is held bilingually. As you know,
we have headsets available for translation and amplification: channel 0 is for amplification
only; channel 1 is for translation. Please switch off your mobiles. I have done that on this
occasion, so I hope that you will do the same. There are no scheduled fire alarms, so if we

hear the alarm, it will be the real thing and we will be in the hands of the ushers.

[3] We have received an apology this morning from Bethan Jenkins, and it is great to welcome Rhodri Glyn Thomas as her substitute today.

9.37 a.m.

Deisebau Newydd New Petitions

[4] **William Powell:** Our first new petition is P-04-344 on the Freshwater East Public Sewer. I would like to pay tribute to the clerking team for turning this around in record time. The nature of the petition meant it had to be that way, and I appreciate that very much. The petition was submitted by Royston Thomas and has collected 106 signatures. It reads:

[5] ‘We the undersigned householders of Freshwater East, ask the Welsh Government not to take enforcement action against Dwr Cymru Welsh Water concerning the installation of a public sewer in Freshwater East.’

[6] In line with the protocols, I have already written to the Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development, seeking views on the petition. Given the Minister’s intention to take enforcement action on 7 December, the letter also requested that he consider halting such action to allow the committee to consider the petition. I would really appreciate your views on what we have already done. Are there any thoughts on the way forward? Clearly, we need to wait for a response from John Griffiths as the Minister, but are there any other observations at this moment?

[7] **Russell George:** Can we write to the water company as well?

[8] **William Powell:** It would be a sensible move for us to get in touch with it straight away. Given the timescale, it is probably best to get that sent off as soon as possible and I am happy to do that.

[9] **Joyce Watson:** Chair, I think that we have done all that we can at this stage. I am handling a few cases on this anyway.

[10] **William Powell:** Yes, it falls within your region.

[11] **Joyce Watson:** I do not think that there is anything else we can do at this stage. It is only a week until that date.

[12] **William Powell:** Exactly, the timing is incredibly tight.

[13] **Joyce Watson:** There is nothing more we can do.

[14] **William Powell:** No. Excellent. I would like our thanks to our team for turning this around so quickly to be recorded.

[15] The next new petition is P-04-345 on Rail and Bus Links between Aberystwyth and Carmarthen. The petition was submitted by Craig Owen Lewis and is backed by 556 signatories. It reads:

[16] ‘We call upon the National Assembly of Wales to urge the Welsh Government to restore and/or improve rail and bus links between Carmarthen in the county of Carmarthenshire and Aberystwyth in the county of Ceredigion.’

[17] I line with our protocols, I have written to the Minister for Local Government and Communities seeking his views on this issue. A consultation is under way and will close on 6 January 2012. So, are there any comments on what we have done so far? Clearly, we have not heard from the Minister as yet because we have only recently written to him, but it falls within our region and your patch as well, Rhodri Glyn. Do you have any comments at this time?

[18] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Nid yw'n ymddangos bod unrhyw beth arall y gallwn ei wneud nes bod y Gweinidog yn ymateb a bod yr ymgynghoriad yn dod i ben. Byddai cael y math hwnnw o gyswllt bws neu drên, neu'r ddau yn ddelfrydol, yn werthfawr iawn. **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** It does not appear that there is anything else that we can do until the Minister replies and the consultation closes. Having that kind of bus or train link, or both ideally, would be very valuable.

[19] **William Powell:** Thank you. Okay, that being agreed, we now move to the next petition, P-04-346, on Free Childcare for 3-4 Year Olds in Wales. It was submitted by Zelda Smith and collected 67 signatures.

[20] 'We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure that free childcare for 3-4 year olds is delivered more flexibly across Wales allowing parents, and in particular working parents, to choose when and where they access the free childcare.'

[21] I have written to the Minister for Education and Skills seeking his views on this. There are a couple of other actions that we could undertake. I would advocate writing to the Welsh Local Government Association on this. It seems to be a natural progression. Are there any other suggestions from Members?

[22] **Russell George:** We could write to the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Have I got that right? Is it the children's commissioner?

[23] **William Powell:** The children's commissioner, yes.

[24] **Russell George:** We could seek his views on it. That would be a good idea.

[25] **William Powell:** Yes, that would make sense. Possibly, we could have a targeted consultation with other stakeholders in this area of policy.

[26] **Joyce Watson:** Chair, that would be sensible because we need to get our heads around the extent of the issue and how prevalent it is. People are meeting obstacles in accessing a policy that the Government has shown some commitment to. So, a consultation will help us enormously.

[27] **William Powell:** Therefore, we will have a broader consultation and write to the relevant officer of the WLGA. We have not heard from the Minister as yet, as the letter has only recently been despatched. Are we agreed on that one? I see that we are. Good.

[28] The next petition is P-04-347, the Property and Asset Review. This petition was submitted by Councillor Arfon Jones and is backed by 19 signatures. It reads:

[29] 'We call upon the National Assembly and the Welsh Government to carry out an Asset and Property Review of their respective buildings and or properties to reduce the number of properties that are underutilised and to use the capital saved to fund the 21st Century School's Programme.'

[30] I have written to the Minister for Finance and Leader of the House seeking her perception on this. As a Commissioner, Rhodri Glyn, do you have any thoughts on how we should proceed? Is there a move within the Commission on this?

[31] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Gellid ysgrifennu at Peter Black, fel y Comisiynydd sydd â chyfrifoldeb dros y maes hwn. Nid wyf yn ymwybodol bod gan y Comisiwn unrhyw adeiladau segur neu rhai nad ydynt yn cael eu defnyddio'n llawn. Fy nealltwriaeth yw bod yr holl asedau sydd gennym yn cael eu defnyddio ond byddai'n werthfawr i ysgrifennu at Peter i gael cadarnhad o hynny. Buaswn yn meddwl mai'r Llywodraeth fyddai â'r rhan fwyaf i'w chwarae yn y maes hwn.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: The committee could write to Peter Black, as the Commissioner with responsibility for this area. I am not aware that the Commission has any empty buildings or ones that are not used fully. My understanding is that all the assets that we have are being used, but it would be worthwhile to write to Peter to have that confirmed. I would think that it is the Government that would have the biggest part to play in this area.

[32] **William Powell:** I agree with your perception that it is not that likely that there is going to be a lot of underused space. Nonetheless, it is useful for some sort of audit to take place. Joyce, do you have any points to make?

9.45 a.m.

[33] **Joyce Watson:** I agree.

[34] **William Powell:** Good. We will proceed on that basis and await feedback from the Minister. We move on to P-04-348, with regard to recycling targets for local health boards. This petition was also submitted by Councillor Arfon Jones, and is backed by 29 signatures. It reads:

[35] 'We call on the National Assembly for Wales to recommend to the Minister for Health that she introduce legally binding recycling targets for Health Boards in Wales at a similar level to that imposed on Local Authorities'.

[36] I have written to the Minister for Health and Social Services seeking her views on this, as she is referred to in the petition itself. Do you have any other suggestions as to how we might go forward?

[37] **Russell George:** It is probably right to write to all of the local health boards as well, because it may well be that the Minister will write back to us and tell us that we should do that anyway.

[38] **William Powell:** Yes, it would make a lot of sense to write to the health boards. In the meantime, we will be hearing from the Minister. Are there any other thoughts on that one? I see not. We will take that forward in that way.

[39] The next petition is P-04-349, which is on the provision of Welsh-medium education in Caerphilly county borough. This petition was submitted by Ben Jones, and is backed by approximately 1,200 signatures. It reads:

[40] 'We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Minister for Education and Skills at the Welsh Assembly Government to afford urgent priority to the bid submitted by Caerphilly County Borough Council for monies to finance the badly needed additional Welsh medium secondary provision by 2013'.

[41] As yet, I have not undertaken any action on this, but we should be writing to the Minister. This is, indeed, very recent, and, in fact, we will collect the petition later this morning, immediately after this meeting. It is good that we will all be able to be present for that, briefly. Are there any additional actions that you would suggest at the moment? I see that there are not. We will have the opportunity to meet the petitioner briefly and hear some perspectives on this a little later.

[42] The next petition is P-04-350, Retain the services of Sporttrain in Rhondda and Cardiff. It was submitted by Gareth Holohan and has collected approximately 2,000 signatures in support. It reads:

[43] ‘We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to retain the vital community services that Sporttrain provide in Rhondda and Grangetown. These services are:

[44] Employment training for young people;

[45] Engagement training for NEET young people;

[46] Community learning;

[47] Welfare, support and counselling services for young people;

[48] Community sports coaching and activities for young people.’

[49] In line with our procedure, I have written to the Minister for Education and Skills, and await a response. Are there any other thoughts as to how to proceed?

[50] **Joyce Watson:** It seems that they are saying that this was a partnership on the ground that was delivering all of these things. So, I think that we have to write to the partners as well and ask them exactly what their role and function was, and their commitment in terms of financial liabilities and so on. We need to go wider than just looking at the Welsh Assembly Government, because it is stated that all these partners are engaged.

[51] **William Powell:** So, you want a wider consultation with the partners involved in the scheme.

[52] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, all of the people who have said that they want to keep this facility, which seems very valuable.

[53] **William Powell:** It also seems to enjoy a lot of support, as we can see.

[54] **Joyce Watson:** That is fine, but we need to see how they are supporting it. I am assuming that ‘Community Leaders’ means the county councillors. We also need to write to Communities First and the police, and I would suggest that others will fall out of that. It seems that the local safeguarding board would have something to do with that. We cannot just write to the Government.

[55] **William Powell:** No, and maybe we should keep the local Member in the loop on this particular issue, because, by its nature, some more light might be cast on it from that quarter.

[56] **Joyce Watson:** There are two, one in Rhondda, and one in—

[57] **William Powell:** Absolutely, that is correct. Are there any other comments?

[58] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** We should bring in the regional Members as well.

[59] **William Powell:** Indeed, they are not to be forgotten.

9.50 a.m.

Y Wybodaeth Ddiweddaraf am Ddeisebau Blaenorol Updates to Previous Petitions

[60] **William Powell:** First, we have a number of petitions relating to housing, regeneration and heritage. P-03-262, List Stradey Park, which goes back to November 2009, was submitted by Mr V. Jones and is backed by in excess of 4,300 signatures. It calls upon

[61] ‘the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Minister for Heritage to grant listed status to Stradey Park, in order to protect the heritage of this world famous rugby ground and cultural icon for the people of Wales.’

[62] You will recall earlier discussions that we have had on this. We considered an update that we received from the current Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage on 11 October and we requested a short report, which is among our papers for this meeting. On line 3 of page 13 of the report, there is an item that needs some clarification—if you have access to that, colleagues. It relates to exactly what the petitioners were seeking to be designated as a village green. It reads:

[63] ‘The letter states that it’—

[64] ‘it’ being Carmarthenshire County Council—

[65] ‘had already held a public inquiry at its own expense to consider an application by residents to designate Stradey Park pitch as a village green.’

[66] The clarification that we have had, if I understand it correctly, and this is in very recent correspondence, is that, in fact, it was not the pitch, but a different area nearby within the wider Stradey Park. So, it was not the pitch that was subject to that village green application. I wanted to clarify that on public record for the avoidance of any doubt.

[67] So, we still have to await the outcome of the Cadw consultation, which is not expected until April next year. In the meantime, do colleagues have any thoughts on this?

<p>[68] Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Bwriad y datblygwyr, yn ôl yr hyn a ddeallaf, o leiaf, yw adeiladu tai ar y safle. Byddai modd i'r cyngor sir, o dan adran 106, sicrhau bod rhan o'r safle yn cael ei gadw at ddefnydd cymunedol. Tybed a oes unrhyw ffordd ymlaen o ran amodau cynllunio, felly? Nid wyf yn siŵr beth yw statws y cais cynllunio gan y datblygwyr ar hyn o bryd, ond tybed a oes modd i'r cyngor sir weithredu yn y ffordd honno?</p>	<p>Rhodri Glyn Thomas: The developers' intention, as I understand it, at least, is to build homes on the site. Under section 106, the county council could ensure that part of the site is kept for community use. I wonder whether there is a way forward related to planning conditions, therefore. I am not sure what the status of the developers' planning application is at present, but I wonder whether the county council could take action in that way.</p>
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[69] **Joyce Watson:** While I do not disagree with anything that Rhodri Glyn has said, and we all know about section 106, that is not exactly in line with what is in front of us, is it? They are asking for listed status to be granted to Stradey Park to protect the heritage. I can see

that maybe you could get something through a section 106 agreement for a particular part of the site, but we need to be specific in what we are talking about. We have a consultation going on and I think that until Cadw—

[70] **William Powell:** It is another four months for it to report.

[71] **Joyce Watson:** Until Cadw has concluded that, we can add into that consultation process the fact that we have this petition, if we have not done so already. I am sure that it is already aware of that, but, if not, we can do that. Our hands are tied beyond that.

[72] **William Powell:** In the meantime, would there be any sense in writing directly to the developers?

[73] **Joyce Watson:** We do not know who they are yet.

[74] **William Powell:** Apparently, we do have details of the developers. We could engage with them to a degree, to find out what their perspective is.

[75] **Joyce Watson:** Yes, we could, if we have their details.

[76] **William Powell:** Yes, I had not realised that either initially, but we do have their details. I think that would be helpful. Since there are still five months to go until we know the outcome of the consultation, it would be useful to get in touch with them, and also it would be a courtesy, because we are discussing things that relate to their forward planning as well.

[77] **Joyce Watson:** This is a huge issue in Llanelli, which is in my area, as well as yours, Chair. People are very passionate about it, so we must be seen to take that passion and those concerns seriously.

[78] **William Powell:** I agree entirely.

[79] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Mae'r cyngor sir yn dweud nad oes modd gweithredu yn y ffordd hon ac mai ond rhestru adeiladau y gellir ei wneud yn hytrach na darn o dir. Nid wyf yn amau'r cyngor sir o gael ei ffeithiau'n anghywir, ond byddwn yn gwerthfawrogi cael rhyw fath o dystiolaeth ynglŷn â hynny. Mae hynny'n mynd at graidd y ddeiseb: os nad oes modd ei restru, bydd rhaid i ni geisio annog y deisebwyr i weithio mewn ffordd wahanol.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: The county council says that it is not possible to operate in this way and that only buildings can be listed, not plots of land. I do not suspect the county council of getting its facts wrong, but I would appreciate having some kind of evidence about that. It goes to the heart of the petition: if it cannot be listed, we will have to try to persuade the petitioners to work in a different way.

[80] **William Powell:** Yes, I was going to ask the clerk to clarify the situation.

[81] **Mrs Phillips:** I can give some insight: when the petition was put together, the wording was 'to grant listed status to Stradey Park' purposely as people signing the petition would have a wider knowledge of listing, rather than a narrower knowledge of the register of historic parks and gardens. The council is quite right to say that it can only list buildings. The petitioners would like people to take a wider view of the petition and for the land to be included in this register of gardens, which is possible.

[82] **William Powell:** As the situation has moved on, they are keen for us to take a broader reading of their petition, rather than them re-launching the whole petition. They are happy for us to look at it in a broader context. Obviously, there is this adjacent plot that has

been subject to the village green inquiry, which involves a different piece of legislation again, which is also invoked from time to time.

[83] Okay, I think that we have an agreement to await the Cadw consultation, but also to seek to have some direct engagement with the developers to see what their perspectives are.

[84] The next petition, P-03-306, to save Barry Theatre, was submitted by Theatre Royal Arts and Cinema Trust with the backing of 142 signatures. It calls upon

[85] ‘the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to protect and preserve the Theatre Royal, Barry so that it can still be developed and used as a theatre, cinema and community arts and cultural centre.’

[86] The petitioners have contacted us to advise us that planning permission has now been granted for the demolition of the theatre and the building of an ExtraCare housing facility in the community. They wish to extend their thanks to the committee and, doubtless, to previous colleagues who were involved at an earlier stage of the petition’s consideration, for its help in this campaign, which was very much appreciated. It is kind of them to recognise the efforts that went in. I recommend that we close the petition. Are we happy with that? I see that we are. It is a conclusion, although it is not the one that the petitioners were originally seeking.

10.00 a.m.

[87] The next petition is P-04-335. This is on the establishment of a Welsh cricket team. This petition was submitted in October by Matthew Bumford and has the backing of 187 signatories. Some of the supporters have been using e-mail and other means to promote the cause. The petition reads as follows:

[88] ‘We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to support the establishment of a Welsh international cricket team.’

[89] The consultation on this has now closed and we have responses available in the public pack, which we have had an opportunity to familiarise ourselves with, and a summary of the issues was included in our briefing for today. The committee wrote to the Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage on 11 October to seek his views, but we are still awaiting his response. I welcome your input as to the best way forward on this.

[90] **Russell George:** There has been quite a bit of time since 11 October. Is it worth writing to him again to remind him?

[91] **William Powell:** Yes, a gentle reminder to chase it up. That is sensible, given that it will shortly be December. Rhodri Glyn, do you have any thoughts on this particular cause?

[92] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Credaf fod yn rhaid inni aros am ymateb oddi wrth y Gweinidog. Wedyn, byddai cael cyfarfod o bawb sy’n gysylltiedig â’r mater hwn yn werthfawr, oherwydd mae materion eithaf pwysig o ran beth fyddai’n digwydd, er enghraifft i Griced Morgannwg, pe bai hyn yn datblygu. Felly, byddai’r drafodaeth honno, fel yr awyrymir yma, yn werthfawr iawn. Fodd bynnag, yn amlwg, rhaid inni bwysu ar y Gweinidog i ymateb yn gyntaf.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I think that we need to wait for the Minister’s response. Then, having a meeting with everyone involved with this issue would be valuable, because there are quite important matters to discuss in terms of what would happen, for example to Glamorgan County Cricket Club, if this idea was developed. So, that discussion, as suggested here, would be invaluable. Clearly, we must first press the Minister to respond.

[93] **William Powell:** Indeed. I am happy to send a follow-up letter. I am attracted to the idea of us having some sort of round-table discussion on this with key stakeholders to look at the merits of the case and also the impacts that such a development would have. So, we can put together a suggested invitee list for such a round-table discussion. Joyce, do you concur with that?

[94] **Joyce Watson:** Again, you see passions expressed on both sides of this debate—one to conserve and not lose, and one to build upon and gain with regard to setting up a Welsh team. So, the only way forward is to explore further what we have gathered in this evidence by having a question-and-answer session. That is eminently the right way forward, as far as I can see.

[95] **William Powell:** Okay. So, we will write to the key stakeholders, and we have a list of the obvious ones there, which includes the England and Wales Cricket Board, Cricket Wales, Sport Wales, the Minister, who we will be writing to again with a nudge in respect of our earlier letter, and Glamorgan County Cricket Club. That is a pretty full list of the immediate relevant stakeholders, but are there any suggested additions?

[96] **Joyce Watson:** We did an inquiry in the former Communities and Culture Committee on sporting events in Wales. It would be disrespectful of us to presume that the only people who have an interest in this issue would be the cricketing bodies in Wales, because if the idea to build a Welsh cricket team was taken forward, the money would be coming from somewhere else. So, the debate about building a Welsh cricket team must be wider than simply with those involved in cricket to include those involved in sport. That is my view.

[97] **William Powell:** So, we need to give some thought to that as we construct the invitee list for any round-table discussion that follows. That discussion will have to be informed by the ministerial response as well. Okay, good.

[98] We move to P-03-313, the Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2011. This petition, as you will recall, was submitted by Colin Richardson in January 2011, and it has the backing of 825 signatories. It calls upon the National Assembly for Wales:

[99] ‘to urge the Welsh Government to undertake further consultation with hobby breeders and not to implement the proposed Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2011 until this has been completed.’

[100] The petitioners have advised us that their discussions with the Welsh Government resulted in an expectation that they will be further consulted before the Animal Welfare (Breeding of Dogs) (Wales) Regulations 2011 are issued. However, as you will have seen in the correspondence, they show some apprehension that they have the perception that, perhaps, they were being taken through the motions. I think that there has also been an additional piece of correspondence on this. Is that right, Abi?

[101] **Mrs Phillips:** Yes, they sent us a short e-mail setting out the quite impressive background to the people who were at the meeting, just to reinforce that they were quite high in their field.

[102] **William Powell:** So, there is a feeling of doubt in their minds as to how genuinely their views are being taken on board. That is their perception, and they have given further weight to that by addressing the credentials of the people who are expressing that view. It is not a complaint, it is just their perception.

[103] It seems to me that we have two broad options: we can keep the petition open until

the regulations come forward and we can then measure them against some of these concerns, or we could do the other thing, which is to close it and then review it. I am open to your suggestions on this. Joyce, have you any thoughts on this?

[104] **Joyce Watson:** It is a short time frame, so I think that we could keep it open at this stage.

[105] **William Powell:** It seems more logical to me, as well, to keep it open and then measure the regulations against their aspirations, and then to re-engage. It seems rather odd to do the other, but it is an option on the table.

[106] **Russell George:** Is it worth writing to the petitioners to say that, at this stage, we think that the petition should stay open, but, to ensure that they have the right expectations, that we could see that this cannot get any further as far the Petitions Committee is concerned?

[107] **William Powell:** That is probably right. Some of these petitioners are engaging with us on another matter, so we are in dialogue with them on other fronts, anyway. That probably makes a lot of sense. So, no action will be taken on the other perception issue. We must also acknowledge the most recent correspondence, which I had not seen until earlier this morning, and thank them for that as well, assuring them that we continue to take this matter seriously and are seeking to ensure that every consideration is given to it.

[108] The next one is P-04-333, to stop neglect and abandonment of horses and ponies by enforcement of microchipping laws. Several of us were present for this memorable petition in October. The petition was submitted by the Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies and is backed by over 2,100 signatures. The Society for the Welfare of Horses and Ponies has been inundated with calls for assistance from concerned members of the public, horse owners and, indeed, the police in respect of horses found abandoned, neglected and injured. Many have been injured from wandering onto the roads, causing not only risk to themselves but also the danger of road traffic accidents and other injuries. Some of us will recall conversations that we had with the petitioners when they gave particular examples of what had happened. None of these horses are microchipped, which has been a legal requirement for foals born after July 2009, which means that the owners cannot be traced. The petition calls upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to ensure effective enforcement of microchipping and equine passports as laid down in the 2009 legislation.

[109] The consultation period on this has come to a close and, as you will have seen, we have responses in our pack. The responses are, clearly, strongly in favour of enforcement. However, there is concern regarding the financial implications, and also issues around practicality. I sense that we need to take this further. I have one or two thoughts on this, but I am keen to hear the views of Members.

[110] **Russell George:** We could write to the Environment and Sustainability Committee and ask if it would be prepared to look at this. As you will know, Chair, as a member of the committee, it has a heavy workload, but it might be able to commit to look at that at some point in the future.

[111] **William Powell:** Yes; clearly, in view of that committee's sub-group activities—on the common agricultural policy, fisheries and so on—there is a huge workload, as we are both aware. However, it is probably worth us writing with regard to the forward work programme, because some of those groups will not continue with the same level of activity. How about setting up a limited task and finish group on this committee to look at this issue? That is something that we could do, and has been done in the past.

[112] **Russell George:** How would that work? Would that be a sub-committee of this

committee?

[113] **William Powell:** Yes, that is my understanding.

[114] **Russell George:** There are only four of us.

[115] **William Powell:** Absolutely. It is an option. I have concerns about capacity as well.

[116] **Joyce Watson:** We do not have the capacity. I am passionately in favour of this particular petition—

[117] **William Powell:** You could not really not feel that way.

[118] **Joyce Watson:** If you spoke to anybody at any time, you would get the same view back. It is about the practicalities of how we are going to take it forward. We do not have the capacity to set up a task and finish group from this committee alone. I do not know whether there is any possibility of a joint, small task and finish group between us and the other committee. That might ease that and make it possible. We could make enquiries accordingly.

[119] **William Powell:** Is there a relevant cross-party group? There is one on the horse, is there not?

[120] **Joyce Watson:** That is what this is. We could ask that group to look at this particular issue.

[121] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Angela Burns has taken over from Brynle Williams as the chair of the cross-party group on the horse.

[122] **Joyce Watson:** That is right.

[123] **William Powell:** Indeed. Brynle's heritage would have been very much—

[124] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** That cross-party group has representation from various organisations that will have an interest in this. It may well be able to take this on, in terms of looking at the practicalities, because that is the issue—the practicalities and the enforcement. As Joyce said, everyone would welcome microchipping, but there are practical issues regarding finance. So, it could be worth asking the cross-party group to look at it.

[125] **Joyce Watson:** Shall we ask the cross-party group first, before we explore other avenues?

[126] **William Powell:** Yes, that is something that I only thought of earlier on, as an option. That is in the front line of fire, because it would be a more meaningful timescale. We are aware of our own capacity and the issues within the wider committee structure. So, let us do that.

[127] **Joyce Watson:** Before you start on the next petition, I declare that my daughter works in the Heath hospital. Therefore, I do not want to comment too much.

[128] **William Powell:** I understand that.

[129] **Joyce Watson:** I will not take part in this debate at all, or influence, or be seen to influence, the proceedings.

[130] **William Powell:** I fully appreciate that. That is noted and will be on the public

record. Also, recently, at a different level of interest, you were kind enough to host a National Osteoporosis Society event, which I attended. I believe that we all attended at different times. So, that is of a different order of interest. I note that, for it to be on the record, we are broadly supportive of the society's work.

[131] **Joyce Watson:** Sorry, I was talking about parking in the Heath. Is that not the one that we are on?

[132] **William Powell:** Yes.

[133] **Joyce Watson:** It is not osteoporosis, is it?

[134] **William Powell:** Yes, indeed, it is, but that is part of a group for the ministerial session. Due to the fact that we are running slightly ahead of schedule, the Minister is not here, so I suggest that we take a break and resume at 10.30 a.m. when the Minister will be with us.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.15 a.m. a 10.32 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.15 a.m. and 10.32 a.m.*

Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth Lafar

The Minister for Health and Social Services—Oral Evidence Session

[135] **William Powell:** I thank the Minister for joining us this morning. Welcome to you and to your team; we look forward to your contribution on this issue. First, we will be considering the issue on our agenda of P-03-136 on parking in Heath and Birchgrove. It is a longstanding issue that has been considered by this committee in this Assembly as well as the committee in the previous Assembly. If you would like to introduce your team, that would be excellent.

[136] **The Minister for Health and Social Services (Lesley Griffiths):** The official for this petition is Andrew Walker.

[137] **William Powell:** Thank you. Over to you, Minister.

[138] **Lesley Griffiths:** I have had correspondence with residents as well, but onsite parking is an operational matter for the Cardiff and Vale University Local Health Board, not the Welsh Government, and the offsite parking is a matter for the local authority. I understand that the sustainable travel action plan for the University Hospital of Wales has recently been updated and residents have had an opportunity to raise their concerns about car parking with Cardiff Council, as their local planning authority, and that is absolutely the right thing for them to have done.

[139] **William Powell:** Thank you very much, Minister. We have a number of questions we want to explore with you further. Rhodri Glyn, you had indicated that you wanted to kick off on this one.

[140] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn fawr, Gadeirydd. Weinidog, cyfeirioch at y cynllun teithio cynaliadwy. A ydych yn credu mai'r cynllun hwnnw yw'r dull mwyaf priodol o asesu yr effaith ar y gymuned sy'n deillio o'r math hwn o brosiect? Y consyrn y
Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Thank you very much, Chair. Minister, you referred to the sustainable travel plan. Do you think that that plan is the most appropriate means of assessing the community impact that arises from this kind of project? The concern

tu ôl i'r ddeiseb hon yw ei fod yn cael effaith andwyol ar y gymuned sy'n amgylchynu'r maes parcio. behind this petition is that it has a detrimental impact on the community that surrounds the car park.

[141] **Lesley Griffiths:** Yes, I do. My officials monitor the plan and the LHB has to submit it to us on an annual basis. That is the most appropriate way forward for LHBs to address those concerns.

[142] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Pa gamau ychwanegol a ydych yn disgwyl i'r bwrdd iechyd eu cymryd, yn wyneb y ffaith bod consyrn gwirioneddol gan bobl yn y gymuned? Mae'n amlwg bod pobl yn teimlo'n gryf iawn am y mater hwn, ac yn teimlo ei fod yn cael effaith andwyol arnynt. Pa gamau ychwanegol yr ydych yn disgwyl i'r bwrdd iechyd eu cymryd i fynd i'r afael â'r problemau ymarferol sy'n codi? **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** What additional steps do you expect the health board to take, in light of the fact that people in the community have real concerns? It is clear that people feel very strongly about this matter, and they feel that it is having a detrimental effect on their lives. What additional steps do you expect the health board to take to tackle the practical problems that arise?

[143] **Lesley Griffiths:** One thing that I would expect it to do is to meet regularly with residents, and I understand that meetings have been set up between the local health board and residents. It is really important that they have that communication. It is obviously a very difficult issue. While you cannot please everybody, and there will always be concerns about parking, we cannot just keep building multistorey car parks—I do not think that we would even get planning permission at some hospitals. It is, obviously, a very difficult issue.

[144] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Are you suggesting that the local health board has not held meetings in the past with the community and has not interacted with it, and that it is perhaps that lack of engagement that has created this feeling among people in the community that their views are not being taken on board?

[145] **Lesley Griffiths:** Certainly, in the correspondence that I have received since I took over the portfolio in May, that is an issue that residents felt had not been addressed. However, I understand that regular liaison meetings have now been set up.

[146] **William Powell:** Minister, if I could just pick up on that point, what action has been taken to ensure that the sustainable travel plan is effective? There is a particular—

[147] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Sorry, Chair—

[148] **William Powell:** Sorry.

[149] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I seem to be getting a message from the public gallery that these meetings are not happening. Can you check that those meetings are happening, Minister? Obviously, I cannot confirm that; I am just getting a message from the public gallery that some people feel that those meetings have not been happening, or at least that not everybody has participated in them. I would be grateful if you could check that.

[150] **Lesley Griffiths:** Okay. All I can say is that the information that I have is that representatives from Cardiff and Vale University Local Health Board met residents on 2 November—this month—and gave a commitment to have regular liaison meetings. I will certainly check that, however, and send a note to the committee on that.

[151] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Thank you, and my apologies, Chair.

[152] **William Powell:** Not at all. Thank you, Minister. I am aware of the meeting that was referred to; I think that it was also attended by our colleague Julie Morgan, who is the local constituency Member.

[153] The issue that I wanted to raise concerns the ongoing monitoring of the sustainable travel plan. I wanted also to flag up something that has been brought to my attention just this morning in an e-mail, which is that there are some development building works going on that will potentially put considerable additional pressure on parking overall. I understand that something in the order of 250 to 300 car parking units are being displaced as a result of some building work. Issues of this kind bring significant further pressure to bear, and that creates secondary impacts. I would suggest that we need to take account of that in monitoring the overall situation.

[154] **Lesley Griffiths:** It is an operational matter for the health board. I am aware of the building work that is going on at the hospital. If car parking spaces are being displaced, the health board needs to ensure that the space that is available for car parking is very well used—perhaps it will need somebody to monitor that as well.

[155] In relation to the travel plan, as I have said, officials do monitor it very carefully, and it has to be sent to me on an annual basis. So, obviously, there is that check.

[156] **William Powell:** I am grateful for that answer. Russell, you have indicated that you have an issue to raise on this point.

[157] **Russell George:** Thank you, Minister, for coming to this meeting. Guidance on sustainable travel planning requires local health boards to demonstrate continuous monitoring through annual monitoring. What action will you take should performance be unsatisfactory?

[158] **Lesley Griffiths:** I will hand over to Andrew for this, because he does the monitoring. Andrew, could you tell us what action we could take?

[159] **Mr Walker:** We monitor the plans annually with the local health boards. They update our action plans annually. We also involve Sustrans in that work—Sustrans is a charity that promotes non-car-related transport.

[160] In terms of achievement against the action plan, there are a number of actions that require input from the local authority. It is not all down to the local health board, which is only responsible for its own site. There is only so much a health board can do with its own staff; it cannot dictate to its staff that they have to travel to work on a bike or a bus and so on. The evidence that we have had via the local health board and its plan is that it is doing what it can in a difficult situation. It would be quite hard to penalise the health board for issues that are beyond its control a large amount of the time. However, if there was evidence of nothing happening, we would need to take some action.

[161] **William Powell:** We are grateful to you all for your responses in terms of that petition, which, as we have indicated, is a matter of widespread local concern.

[162] We will move on to P-03-222 submitted by the National Osteoporosis Society. The society held an event in the Senedd last week that flagged up its important work. Minister, would you like to speak briefly to this item?

[163] **Lesley Griffiths:** Lisa Dunsford is the official supporting me in relation to this petition. The Welsh Government supports the development of fracture liaison services in Wales, and we recognise that the national service framework for older people is a key driver to achieving this goal. A recent audit on the provision of fracture liaison services has been

undertaken by the Welsh osteoporosis advisory group. This report will be available in the new year. Once I have received and considered the report, recommendations will be put forward.

[164] Members may be aware of the 1000 Lives Plus programme, part of which focuses on falls in the community setting. The programme has established a multi-agency project to reduce mortality and harm among adults who have fallen and are at risk of falls.

[165] Members will also be aware that my predecessor announced additional funding in March towards orthopaedic services, because we have an issue around orthopaedic services. Since I took up the portfolio, I have made it clear that I do not want this money just to be used as a waiting list reduction initiative, although a great deal of the money will focus on that. However, I also want to look at musculoskeletal issues and to set up clinics to help in the work of reducing falls.

[166] **William Powell:** In relation to the last answer, how are you monitoring the implementation of the national service framework for older people, and the service development and commissioning directives for arthritis and chronic musculoskeletal conditions to ensure that there is full compliance and consistency across Wales?

[167] **Lesley Griffiths:** I have discussions with health boards on this, and they need to ensure that they have a comprehensive falls and fractures service available to respond to the findings of the clinical audit that took place in 2010, namely the national audit of falls and bone health in older people. We have a chronic disease management framework, which provides a clear approach to the management of long-term conditions such as osteoporosis. It also places an important emphasis on patient education and the self-management of chronic conditions.

[168] **Russell George:** When will the position statement paper addressing the lack of fracture liaison services be issued, what actions will be included in it and when is it expected that they will be completed?

[169] **Lesley Griffiths:** As I said, once I have received the report in the new year we will look at making recommendations, and we will then issue a report with recommendations to the LHBs to make sure that that is done.

[170] **Russell George:** How will you ensure consistency in the delivery across Wales?

[171] **Lesley Griffiths:** We will use the self-assessment toolkit to ensure that LHBs are providing the services that we need. Consistency is an issue that I am focusing on, because I have been concerned about the variation that we have seen in the delivery of many services across Wales. As you say, it is important that we have that consistency.

[172] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yr wyf yn derbyn y pwynt nad ydych yn gallu gwneud unrhyw argymhellion penodol hyd nes eich bod wedi cael cyfle i ystyried yr adroddiad yn llawn. Fodd bynnag, mae'r adroddiad yn awgrymu'n gryf fod modd gwneud arbedion sylweddol ar gostau. A ydych yn cytuno â'r farn honno?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I accept the point that you cannot make any specific recommendations until you have had an opportunity to consider the report in full. However, the report strongly suggests that substantial cost savings could be made. Do you agree with that view?

[173] **Lesley Griffiths:** As I said, until I receive the report, I do not think that I can comment. However, if there are cost saving that we can make, and if we can prevent someone from falling and going into hospital and creating the dependency that they would have following that, we need to look at those areas.

10.45 a.m.

[174] **Joyce Watson:** Good morning, Minister. I visited Bronglais General Hospital in Aberystwyth, which is at the forefront of driving this service forward. The work that is being done there is pretty impressive, and I am sure that you have appraised yourself of that or visited it, Minister. They talk about savings, and an investment of £2.8 million before those savings are made. So, when you have the report and look at the cost of the savings, if you agree that, how will you implement, gradually perhaps, spending-to-save money? Leading on from that, the second part is the need to create and develop a specialist workforce that will see individuals journey on the pathway from prevention to rehabilitation and recovery.

[175] **Lesley Griffiths:** The NHS has led the way on invest-to-save. If we believed that that was the case with this project, we would look at it carefully. We set out clear directives to LHBs to ensure that they address the management of arthritis, musculoskeletal conditions and chronic non-malignant pain, and take any actions that are needed to improve services. However, it is up to the LHBs to ensure that they have the specialist workforce that they need to take this programme forward.

[176] **William Powell:** Thank you, Minister, for your full answers on this important petition. I am sure that the petitioners will be pleased to hear the thoroughness of those responses.

[177] We would now like to move straight on to the final petition that we wish to speak with you about today, which is P-03-221, Improved NHS Chiropody Treatment. Would you care to introduce your officials?

[178] **Lesley Griffiths:** The two officials supporting me on this petition are Alison Strode and Andrea Nicholas-Jones. Quite a lot of work had been ongoing in the previous Assembly term in relation to basic foot care, and Members may be aware that, in 2008, Age Concern Cymru published an analysis of basic foot care provision in Wales. The findings were published as a report entitled 'Little steps can make a big difference'. The following year, Age Cymru undertook further research in relation to this issue. My predecessor, Edwina Hart, then commissioned a scoping study to identify how basic foot care was being delivered across Wales. That was followed by a mapping exercise. We then had a consultation paper produced by the stakeholder group that was set up by the Government, working with officials and the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists, Age Cymru and other stakeholders. That consultation took place last year, and 12 recommendations were developed as a result. Those recommendations have gone out to local health boards for comment. Currently, we have had six responses and are still waiting for one response from Aneurin Bevan LHB, I think. That should be with me by tomorrow, by the end of the month. Once we have had all the recommendations, a report will be done for me and, hopefully, in the new year, I will be able to look at issuing guidance to the LHBs following that report.

[179] **William Powell:** Joyce, you indicated that you wanted to kick off on this.

[180] **Joyce Watson:** Thank you for that update, Minister. However, we have received evidence from individuals saying that the consultation process for that draft report that you just talked about on social foot care in Wales did not allow adequate time for relevant interested parties to respond effectively. Do you feel that the consultation process was adequate and inclusive of all interested parties, Minister?

[181] **Lesley Griffiths:** It was before my time, so I will hand over to officials to ask about the consultation.

[182] **Ms Nicholas-Jones:** The consultation method and consultation group were agreed at the stakeholder group. In addition to the organisations that we would normally correspond with in the third sector around issues such as foot care—such as Age Cymru, and Age Alliance Wales, which represents 20 different organisations working in the care sector—we went out through the social care improvement partnerships that support the national partnership forum. We also went out via the 22 local authority strategy co-ordinators. The edict that we gave to each of those consultees was, ‘If we have missed someone that has an interest in this, please would you forward the consultation?’ So, in terms of the organisations that it went to, we were as comprehensive and inclusive as we could have been within the constraints of not knowing where all the other interested parties might be, other than our usual consultation groups. It was a 16-week consultation process, which started and concluded with a stakeholder meeting. The second consultation, which is the one the Minister referred to, was devised by the stakeholder group and went out to the organisations that we perceived would be looking to deliver the service, as well as the local health boards in Wales. So, it was more targeted, but on the basis of the recommendations from the first consultation and the stakeholder group.

[183] **Lesley Griffiths:** It does seem a comprehensive consultation. Sixteen weeks is longer than the statutory requirement. However, if you have any examples of anyone else who feels that they are left out, if you let me know, we can take their information. We have not written the report yet, so if they want to write to me direct, I would be happy to consider any comments.

[184] **Joyce Watson:** That is helpful; thank you.

[185] **William Powell:** What options for the future provision of social foot care have been considered? Has a decision been made on the future model of service?

[186] **Lesley Griffiths:** No, because I have not seen the report yet. Once I have had the final response from the Aneurin Bevan LHB, I will get the recommendations.

[187] **William Powell:** Once that is in place, we will be in a position to move on it.

[188] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yr wyf am ddilyn ymlaen o'r cwestiwn y mae'r Cadeirydd newydd ei ofyn ichi. Yr wyf yn derbyn eich bod eto i wneud penderfyniadau yn y maes hwn, ond yr wyf yn erfyn arnoch i sicrhau bod y ddarpariaeth hon ar gael i bawb, cyhyd â'i bod yn ymarferol. Mae nifer o bobl yn fy etholaeth yn teimlo nad yw'r gwasanaeth ar gael iddynt gan y gwasanaeth iechyd gwladol a'u bod yn gorfod cael y gwasanaeth yn breifat. Yr wyf yn siŵr ein bod ni i gyd yn cytuno bod hynny'n annerbyniol. Y cwestiwn cyffredinol sydd gennyf i chi, Weinidog, yw: a ydych yn hapus bod yr hyn y mae'r Llywodraeth eisoes wedi'i gyflawni ar y mater hwn—yr wyf yn derbyn eich bod newydd dderbyn y cyfrifoldebau hyn—yn gyson â'r strategaeth gyffredinol i sicrhau gofal iechyd ar gyfer pobl hŷn yn y gymdeithas? Mae'r Llywodraeth yn gosod cryn bwyslais ar y strategaeth honno.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I want to follow on from the question that the Chair just asked. I accept that you have yet to make decisions in this area, but I urge you to ensure that this provision is available to everyone, as far as it is practicable. Many people in my constituency feel that the service is not available to them on the national health service and that they have to go private. I am sure that we would all agree that that is unacceptable. The general question that I have for you, Minister, is: are you satisfied that the work that the Government has already undertaken in this area—I accept that you only just taken on these responsibilities—is consistent with the overall strategy to ensure healthcare for older people in society? The Government places great emphasis on that strategy.

[189] **Lesley Griffiths:** In relation to older people generally, there are certainly things we can look at. Hopefully, this report will help me make decisions on that. In relation to specific conditions—they do not just affect older people, but we are just talking about older people—I believe that diabetics, for example, get good foot care provision. It is something that we need to look at as a whole. As I said, I will do that when we get the report in the new year. Obviously, there are differences between chiropody, podiatry and basic foot care. That is the thing: what is the definition of ‘basic foot care’? It is something that we need to look at closely. Are we just talking about toenail clipping or are we talking about something much bigger?

[190] **Russell George:** Will you expand on how you will evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the Government’s approach?

[191] **Lesley Griffiths:** Do you mean at the present time?

[192] **Russell George:** How will you evaluate and monitor your effectiveness on an ongoing basis? Do you have anything in place to do that?

[193] **Lesley Griffiths:** There are national standards that LHBs are measured by. Perhaps Andrea could say a bit more about those.

[194] **Ms Nicholas-Jones:** In terms of the proposals for taking forward basic foot care, we will be seeking for the organisations that deliver it to sign up to a common set of standards regarding the services they provide, how they provide those services and how they charge for them. That will also relate to basic things such as the use of approved packs. Alison may be able to expand more on that. However, we are aware that there is some discrepancy among the organisations that are currently providing foot care in relation to cost and what services are provided. The whole point of the consultation and the paper that will follow will be to standardise that to the best of our ability so that, wherever you live in Wales, you will get the same consistent service. It might be delivered by different agencies, but you would know what your expectations were regarding delivery.

[195] **William Powell:** Thank you very much indeed, Minister, for your responses and for bringing in your team this morning, and for allocating time in your busy schedule to join us as we consider these important issues. Thank you very much indeed.

[196] In light of the time constraints, and because we obviously need to give full consideration to all three of these petitions, I propose that we adjourn this session now and come back to consider those three petitions in the light of the Minister’s comments at the earliest possible time in a future meeting. I am aware that we all need to be away very shortly. We also have to pick up a petition. It is not an ideal situation, but given the way that the timings have worked out and the slight delay that we experienced earlier, do colleagues agree that that is the best way forward? I see that you do. Excellent. Thank you very much for your attendance this morning and for your full contributions. Although it may seem a little premature, I would like to wish you *nadolig llawen* and *blwyddyn newydd dda*. I hope that you stay safe over the festive period. I also hope that you will be able to join me briefly on the steps of the Senedd to receive a petition. *Diolch yn fawr*.

*Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 10.57 a.m.
The meeting ended at 10.57 a.m.*