

Agenda – Petitions Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date: 13 March 2023

Meeting time: 14.00

For further information contact:

Gareth Price – Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

Petitions@senedd.wales

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of Interest

(Pages 1 – 14)

2 New Petitions

2.1 P-06-1318 Exempt A and B roads in Wales from the proposed blanket 20mph speed limit

(Pages 15 – 22)

2.2 P-06-1319 Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 at Goytre Arms crossroads and reduce the speed limit to 20mph

(Pages 23 – 29)

2.3 P-06-1322 Reallocate the £30m being used for 20mph limits, to the NHS which is in crisis, especially BCUHB!

(Pages 30 – 35)

2.4 P-06-1326 The Senedd should scrutinise the prepayment meter scandal in Wales

(Pages 36 – 42)

3 Updates to previous petitions

3.1 P-06-1312 To help improve water quality in the River Usk by upgrading sewage systems in the Usk valley

(Pages 43 – 49)

3.2 P-06-1253 Ban greyhound racing in Wales

(Pages 50 – 53)



- 3.3 P-06-1323 We request that the Welsh Government purchase St David's Hall as a national resource for Wales
(Pages 54 – 59)
- 3.4 P-06-1247 We call on the Welsh Government to lead the way by supporting trials of a four-day week in Wales
(Pages 60 – 66)
- 4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting**
- 5 Terms of reference – P-06-1307 The Welsh Government should commit to the adoption of the maintenance of new housing estates by local authorities**
(Page 67)
- 6 P-06-1326 The Senedd should scrutinise the prepayment meter scandal in Wales**
(Pages 68 – 69)

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P-06-1318 Exempt A and B roads in Wales from the proposed blanket 20mph speed limit.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mawrth 2023
Petitions Committee | 13 March 2023

Reference: SR23/4917-4

Petition Number: P-06-1318

Petition title: Exempt A and B roads in Wales from the proposed blanket 20mph speed limit.

Text of petition:

A 20mph speed limit on A and B roads will increase congestion thus increasing pollution. Vehicles will also need to engage lower gears to comply with the limit, again increasing congestion. A and B roads should be exempt.



1. Background

In 2019 the Welsh Government set up a task and finish group to consider whether 20mph should become the default speed limit in residential areas. The Welsh Government accepted the group's recommendations, including that the default speed limit on restricted roads should be reduced from 30mph to 20mph.

Following public consultation and a pilot scheme across 8 communities, the Welsh Government laid the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Wales) Order 2022 in June. The draft Order was passed by the Senedd in July and is due to come into force in September 2023.

1.1. Classification of roads

Roads in the UK (aside from motorways) are classified as follows:

- A roads – major roads intended to provide large-scale transport links within or between areas;
- B roads – roads intended to connect different areas, and to feed traffic between A roads and smaller roads on the network;
- Classified unnumbered – smaller roads intended to connect together unclassified roads with A and B roads; and
- Unclassified – local roads intended for local traffic. 60% of roads in the UK fall within this category.

Some A and B roads, or parts of them, will also be restricted roads - those in residential areas with a system of street lighting placed no more than 200 yards apart - and therefore covered by the 20mph default limit.

The legislation due to come into force in September 2023 changes the default limit on restricted roads from 30mph to 20mph. It will only apply to restricted roads and will not apply to the whole network of A and B roads.

1.2. Exceptions to the 20mph limit

It will also be possible for highway authorities (local authorities for local roads and the Welsh Ministers for trunk roads/motorways) to use Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to change the limit from the default of 20mph where appropriate.

These will be known as exceptions. In November 2022 the Welsh Government issued [guidance to highway authorities](#) on the process for setting exceptions. This sets out two principal questions which should be considered by highway authorities when deciding whether an exception should be made:

Question A: Are there significant numbers (or potential numbers, if speeds were lower) of pedestrians and cyclists travelling along or across the road?

If the answer to A is 'no' then an exception for a 30mph speed limit may be appropriate.

Question B: If the answer to A is 'yes', are the pedestrians and cyclists mixing with motor traffic?

If the answer to B is 'no' then a 30mph speed limit exception may be appropriate.

If the answer to B is 'yes' then a 20mph speed limit will be appropriate unless the robust and evidenced application of local factors indicates otherwise.

The Welsh Government has launched [an interactive map](#) which shows where draft Orders are being prepared to exempt roads.

Senedd Research has [published an article](#) that explores the introduction of 20mph limits in Wales in more detail.

2. Welsh Government action

In his letter to the Chair dated 1 February, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change suggests the change in default speed limit will play an “integral part” in meeting the aims of the [Wales Transport Strategy](#).

The petitioner suggests the change in speed limit would lead to increased congestion and pollution. The Deputy Minister’s letter addresses these points.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In July 2020 the Senedd [debated the introduction of default 20mph speed limits](#) with 45 of 53 Members [voting in favour of the motion](#).

As outlined, the Welsh Government laid the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Wales) Order 2022 in June 2022. The draft Order was passed by the Senedd in July 2022 and is due to come into force in September 2023.

In April 2022 you considered a petition calling on the Welsh Government to stop the introduction of the 20mph limit. At that time you agreed to close the petition due to the ability of local authorities to change the limit on roads where 20mph would not be appropriate.

You also considered a petition calling on the Welsh Government to hold a public poll on the speed limit reduction in October 2022. Again you agreed to close the petition.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1318
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00034/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee

1 February 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 10 January in reference to a petition which seeks to Exempt A and B roads in Wales from the proposed blanket 20mph speed limit.

Whilst we appreciate the issues raised in the petition, the Welsh Government believes decreasing speeds reduces accidents and saves lives, and alongside this quality of life will improve, making room on our streets for safer active travel. This helps reduce our environmental impact and has a positive outcome for our physical and mental wellbeing.

On 12 July the Welsh Senedd approved the legislation to lower the default national speed limit on residential roads and busy pedestrian streets from 30mph to 20mph.

The new legislation will not apply a blanket speed limit on all roads, it will simply make the default limit 20mph on restricted roads (generally those roads with street lighting). Local highway authorities, who know their area best, can then apply the criteria in the [Exceptions Guidance](#) and engage with the local community to decide which roads should remain at 30mph.

The Exceptions guidance is intended for local interpretation by highway authorities to make evidence-based decisions on setting exceptions to the default speed limit of 20mph. It provides a methodology to ensure a consistent approach to exceptions across Wales is taken; yet allowing for local factors and circumstances to be taken into account.

Most exceptions are expected to be made on A and B classified roads these generally form the main routes carrying traffic through urban areas. Other roads typically carry mostly local traffic and serve only residential properties so it is expected that exceptions would therefore not normally be made for such roads.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The following 'Place' criteria have been developed to guide highway authorities to determine, in a consistent way across Wales, which sections of roads may have significant demands for people walking and cycling:

1. Within a 100m walk of any educational setting (e.g. primary, secondary, further education and higher education)
2. Within 100m walk of any community centre
3. Within 100m walk of any hospital
4. Where the number of residential and/or retail premises fronting a road exceeds 20 properties per km.

Sections of road which meet any of these Place criteria should not be considered for exceptions. Highway authorities retain the flexibility to set local speed limits that are right for individual roads, reflecting local needs and considerations however, they should have a clear and reasoned case if they chose to not apply these criteria.

The Welsh Government is under no illusions that this is a huge behavioural change. This is why we are not rushing anything. Seven local authorities are currently taking part in the initial rollout of the 20mph settlement areas. The purpose of the phase 1 settlements is to use this as opportunity to learn lessons to shape the national rollout and to gather long term data.

Focussing on the issue raised in the petition regarding an increase in pollution as a result of the lower speed limit, there is a strong evidence base that 20mph will have no negative impacts on air quality, with small improvements observed in various studies across the UK. For example, the Petitions Committee may wish to view a recent assessment of [air pollution levels in Richmond upon Thames](#), following the implementation of a 20mph scheme in late 2019 and early 2020. This showed encouraging early signs that lower speed limits may contribute to lower pollution levels. An [explanatory memorandum](#) was also published in June 2022, when the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Wales) Order 2022 was laid. Public health Advisors have similarly informed Welsh Government that 'scientific research has shown that lower speed limits can reduce pollution where there is smoother driving behaviour. Emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) are 2 to 4 times higher under hard acceleration than under constant speed; therefore, underlying that more acceleration, so to 30mph, will pollute more than accelerating to 20mph and then driving more steadily'. Finally, while not all of the available evidence suggests that 20mph limits decrease all forms of air pollution, it is generally accepted that they do not increase air pollution relative to 30mph limits (Archer et al, 2008; Journard et al, 1995; TEAG, 2013).

Turning to the issue raised regarding an increase in congestion as a result of the 20mph speed limit, journey times on roads in urban areas tend to be determined by junctions and signals, rather than the speed limit. In many cases lowering the speed limit to 20mph will have little or no impact on journey times. Where there is an impact, our analysis has showed us that most journeys would only be around one minute longer but this would make the roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists. You can find further information on our website at:

[Seven things you may not know about Wales' new 20mph default speed limit | GOV.WALES](#)

[Introducing 20mph speed limits | GOV.WALES](#)

[Introducing 20mph speed limits: frequently asked questions | GOV.WALES](#)

May I also refer Members of the Petitions Committee to our [Wales Transport Strategy](#). Climate Change is the greatest challenge we face and the Welsh Government and Senedd have committed to taking it seriously - making decisions that will not always be comfortable or easy, but are required for the future generations of Wales. The strategy has modal shift at its heart and changing the default speed limit from 30mph to 20mph will play an integral part. We are investing in active travel and are targeting 45 percent of all trips to occur by public transport, cycling or walking by 2040. This modal shift will in turn help reduce emissions by reducing the number of vehicles on the road especially those making shorter trips which could be made on foot or bike. As with any cultural change we know it takes time to win hearts and minds and inevitably we will face some challenge, but I am confident that if we all work together we can make the necessary changes that will benefit us now and in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', written in a cursive style.

Lee Waters AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

P-06-1318 Exempt A and B roads in Wales from the proposed blanket 20mph speed limit, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 07.02.23

Whereas Mr. Waters has indicated that A and B roads are likely to be the subject of exceptions by local authorities, this is unlikely to happen as local authorities will likely be fully engaged in other issues relating to their areas. They will be accountable though to the local electorate. However, time will tell.

I find it interesting that another petition against the implementation of a blanket 20mph speed limit raised in Change.org by Adie Drury, councilor for Buckley in North Wales, has attracted over 40000 signatures, whilst my petition has only attracted a little over 270 signatures, despite it enjoying UK wide publicity in the motoring press.

I am aware that individuals not domiciled in Wales have signed the petition. So under the Freedom of Information provisions I now require you to advise how many signatures were received for this petition from individuals who were not domiciled in Wales. I remind you that you have a limited time to respond to this request.

P-06-1319 Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 at Goytre Arms crossroads and reduce the speed limit to 20mph

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mawrth 2023
Petitions Committee | 13 March 2023

Reference: SR23/4917-5

Petition Number: P-06-1319

Petition title: Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 at Goytre Arms crossroads and reduce the speed limit to 20mph

Text of petition: Make it safe for residents of Penperlleni to cross the A4042 at the Goytre Arms crossroads by providing a pedestrian crossing and extending the existing 20mph speed limit in the village to include this section of the A4042.

1. Background

The Welsh Government is the highway authority and traffic authority responsible for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network. Local authorities are responsible for local roads. The A4042 forms part of the Welsh trunk road network.



The Welsh Government works with two trunk road agents, the South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA) and the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent (NMWTRA), to manage, maintain and improve the network.

The Welsh Government is responsible for setting speed limits on trunk roads in line with its current guidance. This was issued in 2009 and states that “20mph speed limits may be used on trunk roads in exceptional circumstances, generally over short lengths and for limited times of the day”.

The Welsh Government is in the process of updating its guidance on setting speed limits ahead of legislation to reduce the default limit on restricted roads to 20mph coming into force.

2. Welsh Government action

In a letter to the Chair dated 27 January 2023, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change outlines that speed limits across the trunk road network are regularly reviewed in line with the current guidance (see above).

There are no current plans to reduce the limit on the stretch of road in question. However the Deputy Minister suggests that as the guidance is being updated, this may result in “a change in the criteria for lower speed limits in Wales”. He says the Welsh Government will review speed limits across the trunk road network following publication of the updated guidance.

In relation to the Petitioner’s call for a pedestrian crossing, the letter sets out that an assessment has already commenced and the threshold for putting a crossing in place has been met.

In 2022, as reported in the media, the Welsh Government suggested that while the criteria had been met there was no funding available. The Deputy Minister’s letter states that “funding for this project [has now been secured] and...stage 2 of the assessment will take place this financial year”.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Lee Waters AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1319
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00040/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

27 January 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 10 January regarding Petition P-06-1319 - Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 at Goytre Arms crossroads and reduce the speed limit to 20mph.

The Welsh Government routinely reviews speed limits on the Trunk Road Network in line with the current [guidance](#) with the aim of identifying the need for safety improvements and there are no plans to reduce the speed limit on this section of the A4042 at present. We are however updating the Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales guidance to reflect current Welsh Government policy including the national roll-out of [20mph speed limits](#) and to meet the ambitions highlighted in [Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021](#). The new guidance will be published later this year and the work may see a change in the criteria for lower speed limits in Wales. The Welsh Government will review the speed limits across the Trunk Road Network following publication of the guidance.

A pedestrian crossing assessment has already commenced at Penperlleni. The threshold for a crossing has been met and this work will establish the most appropriate form of crossing provision based on constraints at the site, such as junctions.

Given current capital budget allocations for Trunk Road Network operations in 2022 / 2023, all projects must be prioritised and I am pleased to say that we have managed to secure additional funding for this project and are able to undertake stage 2 of the pedestrian crossing assessment this financial year.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Waters AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

P-06-1319 Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 at Goytre Arms crossroads and reduce the speed limit to 20mph, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 09.02.23

Many thanks for your response which brings encouraging news for the residents of Goytre Fawr Ward including the village of Penperlleni.

As regards the attached letter from Lee Waters AS/MS, I am pleased to note that we have moved forward from 'meeting the threshold' to securing 'additional funding for this project and are able to undertake stage 2 of the pedestrian crossing assessment this financial year.' I can also confirm that villagers noted the monitoring cameras and wire speed detectors employed recently around the location of the bus stops. Earlier this week members of the recently formed GoSafe Speedwatch group spoke with SWTRA staff who were taking measurements around the area of the bus stops. This is all very encouraging news.

The 64 million dollar question is of course: When will we get our crossing?

Realistically, may there be some money found as we come to the end of the budget setting period to bring the conclusion of this project further forward into the coming financial year?

As already mentioned we now have a Speedwatch group that came into action this week. With 24 volunteers coming forward and vetted I am reliably informed that this is one of the largest groups ever formed and reflects the depth of feeling (and raw grief) felt by our villagers. They have already forwarded data to the Police computer and offenders will receive letters. The group is also looking for other hot spot locations to monitor within the ward of Goytre Fawr and are able to provide useful data.

I note that following the Wales Transport Strategy 2021 report that new guidance will be published later this year and may see a change in the criteria for lower speed limits in Wales.

Our petition asked that you consider lowering the speed limit to 20 mph for a number of reasons. Primarily Parc y brain Road meets the Goytre arms crossroads from the west and is a lane where national speed limit applies. Unfortunately cars coming out from this junction find the sight line completely obscured to the south as there is a house and driveway. Probably ok in the days of the horse and cart. Sadly we are inheritors of a not fit for purpose road network.

In addition to this our Primary School, Community Centre, Village Hall and Aderyn Hospital are all within 100 Metres of the crossroads. I do ask that you consider us as a special case for 20 mph on a Trunk Road. Precedent already exists on the A40 in Abergavenny.

The A4042 runs through the entire length of my ward of Goytre Fawr. There are other sections of it that raise concerns among our residents. I ask that in the coming review you take a close look at the entrance to The Secret Garden (garden centre) where I believe Atkins have produced plans for a revised layout. This should be a priority as it is close to the boundary of Monmouthshire/Torfaen and the new development of 800 homes, the commencement of construction of which is imminent. Doubtless the already very popular Secret Garden will become more so. A welcome boost to our local economy but increased potential for incidents.

To the north of Penperlleni as you leave the village (national speed limit section) the business units at The Cedars are thriving. In particular The Bafflehouse Café attracts hundreds of visitors particularly bikers at the weekends. There is an increased potential for incidents here.

I would also like to add that the Villagers of Llanover have exactly the same problem as those in Penperlleni in not being able to use the bus stops. Elderly residents just won't use the buses as they can't cross the road. This is counter to Active Travel objectives and impacts on pollution reduction targets as they rely on relatives for lifts in their cars. I would also like Welsh Government to consider a crossing to connect the bus stops in Llanover.

As a frequent user of the A4042 my observation is that the variable speed limits along it lead to speeding up/slowing down which causes bunching and bad tempers! I think during the upcoming review that changing the limit to 40 mph for the entirety of the road from the Little Mill, Berthon Road traffic lights(where 2 lanes become 1) to the Hardwick Roundabout, Abergavenny should be considered. This would smooth the flow of traffic and reduce pollution thus making it safer for us all.

This may sound like a bit of a wish list with some big asks. I therefore thank you for taking your time to consider my response in your committee meeting.

Best regards,

Jan Butler

P-06-1319 Provide a pedestrian crossing on A4042 at Goytre Arms crossroads and reduce the speed limit to 20mph, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 03.03.23

I would like to add to my earlier email. I hope it is relevant to include it. I understand that Stagecoach has been receiving WG support funding to help through the post-covid period. This has resulted in restructuring the X3 service through Goytre Fawr and is the service residents catch at the Goytre Arms bus stops, the site of the proposed crossing. I understand that this funding is being withdrawn. I am concerned that any further reduction in service will have detrimental effect to our community

I have received a number of complaints from residents; in particular concerning the very early 'last chance to get back home' bus from Cardiff which now leaves at 16:10 passes through Pontypool at 17:50 arriving at Abergavenny 18:13 where it terminates. **Stagecoach have dropped the 17:10 and 18:10 services out of Cardiff** which now terminate at Pontypool.

I have a group of really upset residents who had been enjoying the Matinee performances at Cardiff New Theatre who are no longer able to do so. This is affecting those residents who for health reasons are no longer able to drive the hardest. They have lost a really important opportunity to stay active, socialise and generally improve their well-being. I also feel personally affected by this as it is a rush to get out from Cardiff to make the 16:10.

Is Lee Waters able to do anything about restoring the 17:10 and 18:10 X3 Stagecoach service out of Cardiff?

On a separate matter I have been given information that WG are looking to put an Active Travel route from Penperlleni to Little Mill (which was raised by Goytre Community Council with SWTRA pre-covid). I ask whether this is the case? It makes a lot of sense to help connect us with the improved railway station under construction at New Inn. At the same time we would also welcome an Active Travel route to Llanover our new sister village (post the boundary changes) to the North.

My last question relates to rail connections. The main line runs through the entirety of Goytre Fawr ward. Our station at Nant-y-derry was closed in 1958. At that time the rising use of the car was used as the reason for closure. I ask whether as times are changing in the opposite direction whether now might be the time to revisit that decision. Could a walk-in station be considered? I realise this is a big ask as it's not just about infrastructure but timetabling too. It is an idea that is gaining traction in my village.

Kind regards,

Jan

P-06-1322: Reallocate the £30m being used for 20mph limits, to the NHS which is in crisis, especially BCUHB!

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mawrth 2023
Petitions Committee | 13 March 2023

Reference: SR23/5378

Petition Number: P-06-1322

Petition title: Reallocate the £30m being used for 20mph limits, to the NHS which is in crisis, especially BCUHB!

Text of petition: The Welsh Government are currently planning on wasting over £30m to reduce 30mph speed limits to 20mph, when the Wrexham A&E department has just announced the worst waiting times in Wales. The NHS is in crisis across the country but the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is in an utter state. GP's are sitting in offices in Manchester to deal with problems at Hilcrest surgery for example. The Welsh Government don't have their priorities in order. Reducing speed limits from 30 to 20 will not save as many lives as having a functioning NHS!



1. Background

In 2019 the Welsh Government set up a task and finish group to consider whether 20mph should become the default speed limit in residential areas. The Welsh Government accepted the group's recommendations, including that the default speed limit on restricted roads should be reduced from 30mph to 20mph.

Following public consultation and a pilot scheme across 8 communities, the Welsh Government laid the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Wales) Order 2022 in June. The draft Order was passed by the Senedd in July and is due to come into force in September 2023.

The Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee's February report on the Welsh Government's 2023-24 draft budget found that in aggregate, Welsh health boards were "reporting an in-year deficit to date of £98.6m and a forecast end of year deficit of £159.9m for 2022-23". This is an increase from end of year overspends in NHS Wales of £48.4m (2021-22), £48.2m (2020-21), and £88.8m (2019-20).

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (UHB) reported an overspend of £3.2m in month 6 of 2022-23, with an end of year projected overspend of £10m.

2. Welsh Government action

During scrutiny of the 2023-24 draft budget in January 2023, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS, told the Climate Change Committee: how the transition to 20mph would be funded:

... we have taken money from the local transport fund to fully fund this—some £30 million this year and we had some money last year. There will be a little bit of money next year, but much less.

He also outlined what he sees as the benefits of the policy:

This is a key measure for our road safety strategy for reducing deaths and casualties on the road, which cost us, public services, a significant amount of money. We've published some research sponsored by Public Health Wales showing that, in the first year alone, they estimate—obviously, it's modelled, but it's an estimate—it'll save public services £100 million per year—three times the cost of introducing it, in the first year. We'll save that in the first year alone from reduced pressures on the

NHS. Every time somebody dies on the road, it costs more than £1 million to the system. With more than 200 casualties turning up seriously injured at accident and emergency units, that puts significant pressure on the system. So, this idea that this is an additional extra cost and 'How can we afford it in a time of austerity?' needs to be directly challenged.

The research referred to is published on the Welsh Government website.

The 2023-24 Welsh Government draft budget allocated £9.6bn in revenue funding for the delivery of core NHS services. The Welsh Government's evidence to the Committee on the draft budget stated that [emphasis added]:

During the course of the financial year, three more health boards (Aneurin Bevan, Betsi Cadwaladr and Powys) have reported a significant variation from their plans with in-year forecast deficits. The reasons for these deficits are largely due to the inability of organisations to deliver against their initial savings plans; high levels of variable pay particularly agency costs; the need to maintain unfunded bed capacity; and significant increases in the cost and demand for continuing healthcare.

[...]this deterioration in the NHS financial position was **“not a position that Welsh Government is prepared to support or underwrite”**.

The Director of Finance at Betsi Cadwaladr UHB told the Senedd's Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee in March 2022 that major service transformation is needed to move towards financial balance.

The letter from the Deputy Minister for Climate Change to the Chair on this petition reiterates the benefits of 20mph speed limits, referenced above. He also refers to “unprecedented demand” for NHS services, and outlines action being taken to address challenges in the NHS.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In July 2020 the Senedd debated the introduction of default 20mph speed limits with 45 of 53 Members voting in favour of the motion.

As outlined above, the draft Order implementing the change was passed by the Senedd in July 2022 and is due to come into force in September 2023.

In April 2022 you considered a petition calling on the Welsh Government to stop the introduction of the 20mph limit. At that time you agreed to close the petition due to the ability of local authorities to change the limit on roads where 20mph would not be appropriate.

You also considered a petition calling on the Welsh Government to hold a public poll on the speed limit reduction in October 2022. Again you agreed to close the petition.

You are currently considering a petition calling for A and B roads to be exempt from the plan.

The Senedd has discussed the financial position of the Welsh NHS extensively.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1322
Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00067/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee

14 February 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter of 13 January regarding Petition P-06-1322 Reallocate the £30m being used for 20mph limits, to the NHS which is in crisis, especially BCUHB.

We appreciate the comments raised in the petition, however, the latest research conducted by the [Transport Research Institute \(TRI\) at Edinburgh Napier University](#) estimates the casualty savings of 20mph, in the first year alone, to be just over £92M; nearly three times higher than the implementation costs.

As well as making collisions less severe when they do happen, the slower speed also increases the chances of avoiding a collision in the first place, in turn reducing the burden on the NHS.

Unfortunately, it has become the norm to accept road casualties and deaths on our roads from cars as commonplace, as something we just accept as a price of doing business. This is simply unacceptable and nobody should lose their life when travelling on or near our roads.

Following the Welsh Senedd agreement to approve legislation to lower the default national speed limit on residential roads from 30mph to 20mph, Wales is now at the forefront on safe speeds. We are also in a unique position in the world having adopted well-being and active travel legislation that supports the Vision Zero approach to road safety.

A year ago we published Llwybr Newydd, the [Wales Transport Strategy](#). It sets out our ambitions for the next 20 years, our priorities for the next 5 years, and puts modal shift at the heart of our policies for the first time.

The 20mph default speed limit forms an essential part of the strategy by encouraging people to use more sustainable and active modes of travel. Thereby, it helps to address issues such as the climate emergency, decarbonisation, public health and social cohesion.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Back Page 34
We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Welsh Government is under no illusions this is a huge behavioural change and inevitably we will face some challenge, but we are confident that if we all work together we can make the necessary changes that will benefit us now and in the future. Further information on 20mph can be found on our website at [20mph speed limits | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#)

With regards to health, a winter planning framework has been issued to NHS Wales organisations and Regional Partnership Boards to support them to plan and deliver resilient urgent and emergency care services this winter. Our NHS continues to face unprecedented demand and is seeing thousands of people every day in hospitals alone.

To support consistency and harness momentum, the winter planning framework sets out expectations for Health Boards to work with partners to build on these priorities and develop enhanced interventions for the winter period.

Our [planned care recovery plan](#), backed by a £1bn investment this Senedd term, sets out how we are investing in new solutions, more equipment, new facilities and more staff to help transform planned care.

We have also made significant investments in urgent and emergency care this year, with £3m funding made available to enable the Welsh ambulance service to recruit 100 additional frontline staff this year, all of whom will be operational by the end of January 2023. This is in addition to 263 frontline staff recruited over the previous two years. We are also investing £25m annually to support local, regional and national delivery against the Six Goals for Urgent and Emergency Care, our five-year strategy published earlier this year to drive a whole-system transformation of access to urgent and emergency care.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', written in a cursive style.

Lee Waters AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change

The Senedd should scrutinise the prepayment meter scandal in Wales

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Mawrth 2023
Petitions Committee | 13 March 2023

Reference: SR23/5378/2

Petition Number: P-06-1326

Petition title: The Senedd should scrutinise the prepayment meter scandal in Wales

Text of petition:

We call on the Senedd to undertake an inquiry into the prepayment meter scandal.

Over the last two months evidence has emerged that thousands of people have been switched to prepay meters without the required checks as to whether they are vulnerable.

We at Climate Cymru and other campaigners have been exposing this scandal.

Please see links to stories by campaigning journalists like Dean Kirby at the i Newspaper [all behind a paywall].

- [Forced installations of prepayment meters to stop as courts ordered to end issuing warrants](#)

- [Prepayment meters must be removed for vulnerable families as compensation is not enough, Grant Schapps told](#)

- [i morning briefing: How the prepayment meter scandal was uncovered, and forced change](#)



- [Prepayment meters: Grant Schappys gives energy firms until Tuesday to consider compensation](#)
- [Prepayment meter investigation](#)

1. Background

1.1. The rising cost of energy

[Rocketing energy prices have been dominating the news](#), both in the UK and globally. The price of gas jumped to an all-time high, taking electricity prices with it, and causing the UK Government to step in to [support people and businesses](#).

The [wholesale price of energy has increased](#) due to a [combination of events](#), resulting in a reduced supply coupled with an increasing demand.

Ofgem, the energy regulator, has been able to limit the rates a supplier can charge to domestic customers by putting a [‘price cap’](#) on the cost per unit of electricity and gas, as well as limits on the standing charge for each, and re-evaluate every three months. As wholesale prices increased, Ofgem increased the level of the price cap.

In response to the rising [price cap](#), the [UK Government announced the Energy Price Guarantee as a temporary additional measure](#), which means consumers will pay less for their energy than under the price cap. It means that currently from April 2023 a typical household will pay £3,000 per year to end of March 2024 (although it is [expected to be kept at the current level of £2,500](#) per year).

The [Welsh Government says](#):

Current estimates suggest up to 45% of all households in Wales could be in fuel poverty following increases to the energy price cap.

1.2. Payment up front

Prepayment meters (‘PPM’) are a [type of domestic energy meter](#) that require users to pay for energy before using it.

A recent Welsh Government Statement says:

...approximately 200,000 households in Wales use pre-payment meters for their mains gas and electricity. This represents approximately 15% of all households and 24% of tenants in the private rented sector. Almost half of social housing tenants (45%) also use pre-payment meters.

Energy is more expensive with a PPM compared to the best direct debit deals. There are also fewer tariffs and suppliers to choose from, and customers have more limited credit options as they are unable to go into arrears. The gap between unit prices available to PPM and other customers was reduced through the price cap, and more recently the Energy Price Guarantee.

Under the Energy Price Guarantee PPM customers pay a lower unit price for electricity than other customers. However they pay a higher unit price for gas than customers paying by direct debit, and pay higher standing charges than all other customers for both electricity and gas.

A recent comparison by Which? reported in December 2022, found a £60 difference per year between a dual-fuel deal for a 'typical household' paying by direct debit, and the same household with a PPM.

A recent survey undertaken by Citizens Advice Cymru found that over 70% of PPM users in Wales are worried about keeping their PPM topped up until April, and that:

32% of PPM users in Wales have been disconnected from their energy supply over the last year because they can't afford to top-up.

If a consumer with a PPM does not have enough money to top-up their meter, or when they do not realise that credit on the meter is running out, their meter cuts out. This is known as 'self-disconnection'.

1.3. Those on prepayment meters are disproportionately on the lowest incomes

Research by the independent think tank Resolution Foundation shows almost half (48%) of British families using a PPM are in the lowest income quintile.

Barnardo's Cymru says families on PPM need to be prioritised to be switched wherever possible to non-prepayment, as this perpetuates a very real poverty tax. Further, young people often face some of the worst consequences of financial

crises, and are likely to be the hardest hit by energy price hikes. Younger households are up to four times more likely to be on PPM, preventing them from spreading energy costs out evenly throughout the year, with fewer savings to fall back on compared to older age groups.

1.4. Customers being forced on to prepayment meters

A consumer and supplier may agree that a PPM is the best option to help manage any debt payments. However, energy firms can also apply to a magistrate to force (under warrant) a customer on to a PPM without their agreement if they have racked up debts.

Ofgem's good practice guidance for supporting customers in payment difficulty requires energy suppliers to identify vulnerable customers and offer them support if debts are building.

Following reports that energy companies were not doing enough to support vulnerable customers, on 22 January the then UK Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Grant Shapps MP, wrote to energy suppliers calling on them to stop forcibly moving consumers over to PPM, without taking every step to support consumers in difficulty.

Following this, Ofgem CEO Jonathan Brearley wrote to the Secretary of State detailing previous Market Compliance Reviews (MCRs) into suppliers' governance and processes on how they treat customers in payment difficulty. Three suppliers were found to have "severe weaknesses" in how they support these customers.

In his letter, Jonathan Bearley set out Ofgem's intended actions, including to conduct a further MCR focused on suppliers' practices on PPM.

Since then, it's been reported that 32,790 warrants were issued in January to forcibly install PPM. Ofgem asked suppliers to pause forcible installation and to conduct a thorough review of processes. Magistrates have since been ordered to stop issuing warrants for this practice in England and Wales.

Ofgem has also called on all suppliers to use the pause in installations (lasting until 31 March 2023) to review all of their recent forced and remotely switched PPM installations, and consider if any need to be reversed, and compensation offered where the strict rules have not been followed.

Following intervention from MPs and the (now) Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Grant Shapps MP, energy suppliers

have committed to ending the forced installation of PPM in vulnerable customers' homes.

Ofgem will also be taking an urgent investigation into British Gas, following undercover reporting from The Times into the company's treatment of customers when forced PPM were being installed.

2. Welsh Government action

The distribution and supply of electricity, and the supply of gas are both reserved to Westminster under the Government of Wales Act 2006. Consumer Protection is also a reserved matter. It is therefore unlikely that the Welsh Government could restrict or ban the installation of PPMs.

In terms of the energy price cap/guarantee, this is also a reserved matter, and Ofgem is accountable to the UK Parliament. However the Welsh Government can implement schemes to support people in Wales. For example in June 2022 the Welsh Government announced a Fuel Voucher Scheme for those who are pre-paying for energy, either on PPM or where they are reliant on heating oil.

Following a meeting with Energy Suppliers in January 2023, the Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt MS said:

I was told by the suppliers that moving householders onto pre-payments meters was seen as a last resort, and whilst there was a perception pre-payment meters are linked to debt, some suppliers stated the majority of their pre-payment customers used the meters as a tool to control usage.

Suppliers confirmed to me they try to actively engage with their customers before a pre-payment meter is considered and, in most cases, there is a lengthy process to follow before one is installed, in agreement with the householder. There are measures in place to determine who is considered to be appropriate for a pre-payment meter

The Minister said that energy suppliers have agreed to share data on the number of households being supported with their energy bills and/or being transferred onto PPM, and the reason for doing so. They also agreed to provide information on 'self-disconnection'.

The Minister also said **the Welsh Government has consistently** called on the UK Government and Ofgem to **introduce a social tariff** to protect the most vulnerable householders and there was broad support for this from energy suppliers.

The **Minister met with energy companies again on the 23 January**, and expressed that she was “appalled” about the number of forced installations of PPM.

3. Welsh Parliament action

A **topical question was asked in Plenary on 25 January**, by Jack Sargeant MS, where he called for an immediate ban on the forced installation of PPM. This topic was **raised again in Plenary by Jack Sargeant on 1 March**.

The Senedd’s Equality and Social Justice Committee has been undertaking an enquiry into **debt and the impact of the rising cost of living**. PPM and recent revelations around forced installations have been raised during this inquiry on **30 January** and **13 February**. The Committee is yet to report its findings.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Agenda Item 3.1

P-06-1312 To help improve water quality in the River Usk by upgrading sewage systems in the Usk valley

This petition was submitted by Michael George Cowburn, having collected a total of 1,612 signatures.

Text of Petition:

The River Usk is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Area of Conservation. Yet water quality in the River Usk is such that 88% of its water bodies are failing to meet their targets. Improvement targets could be set. (For example: 50% by the end of 2023, 25% by 2024 & so on). Salmon, sea trout and eels are all seriously on the decline. Ranunculus weed growth in the river has virtually disappeared. People who wild swim in the river are at risk of picking up infections.

Additional Information:

Yet what is happening to help prevent this decline? Welsh Water is a not for profit organization and has been for 20 years. Without the need to pay dividends to shareholders, such funds could have been invested into upgrading sewage systems throughout Wales. It is ironic that water from the River Usk is pumped from Prioress Mill to Llandegfedd Reservoir for consumption in South Wales. Natural Resources Wales is meant to enforce water quality standards, but it is widely perceived as ineffective. Agricultural pollution and soil run off are also significant parts of the problem. Climate change with increased droughts and flooding also causes complications. The Well-being of Future Generations Wales Act 2015 is meant to help the natural environment for future generations, but this is clearly not happening. We call on the Senedd to ensure that Welsh Water invests sufficient funds to upgrade sewage treatment systems in the Usk valley to help the River Usk to return to its former glory.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Monmouth
- South Wales East

By email

21st February 2023

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your letter and for sharing Petition P-06-131.

For your information, Derek Walker will begin his term as Future Generations Commissioner for Wales on the 1st of March 2023. Once in post, we will ensure the new Commissioner is made aware of your letter and this petition, as requested by the petitioner.

We have received other correspondence and letters on this topic and water quality has proven to be a concern for people across Wales. This is timely as the new Commissioner will enter into a listening exercise during the first months of his tenure, in order to set out the new priorities for his Office. We will ensure that the topics raised in this petition are included in the exercise.

Looking at the specificity of this case, unfortunately, unlike other Commissioners, we do not have a case-work function to provide support to individual cases. The Commissioner's office is not established in law as an extra layer of appeal on specific issues or decisions like these ones.

The new Commissioner will select new areas of focus when in post but to date, we have not carried out any specific research relating to pollution or water quality and are unable to provide detailed advice on this matter.

The Act contains a national well-being goal of A Resilient Wales for its ecosystems and Wales has declared a nature emergency. We are concerned that [nearly one in five rivers](#) in Wales are polluted with sewage and are negatively affecting wildlife and people's health.

A biodiverse natural environment is not only good for wildlife, it also provides our most basic needs, including clean air and water, food, energy and security. Managed effectively, it can also help us adapt to change and reduce the impact of incidents such as flooding. Our natural environment is vital for our well-being and its health is intrinsically linked to our own. Future generations depend on it.

Our rivers, lakes, ponds and floodplains harbour rich biodiversity including some of the most threatened wildlife in Wales. As the Act requires, we need to improve the resilience of our ecosystems; enhancing the benefits they provide and reversing the loss of biodiversity. When natural resources flourish, society and the economy thrive as well. The nature emergency should heighten the urgency of tackling these issues.

In our Future Generations Report 2020 we recommended that *“Welsh Government and public bodies should maintain and enhance the natural environment through managing land and sea appropriately to create healthy functioning ecosystems”*. This includes our rivers.

In Wales, we have the legislation and policies in place to protect and restore nature and take a more integrated approach. However, we must understand that reversing biodiversity loss and protecting our natural environment is not a ‘nice to have’. It is essential if we are to survive as a species ourselves. It is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start taking action now, at every level.

You can find more detailed information and our full recommendations around ‘A Resilient Wales’ in the [Resilient section of our Future Generations Report 2020](#).

While we have not carried out work into pollution or water quality, like any other area, we would expect to see the Act being fully applied by public bodies (and other organisations) to help inform decision making and improve well-being in Wales.

A number of public bodies and Public Services Boards (PSB) who have duties under the Act to carry out sustainable development and improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales should be considering this petition including:

- Natural Resources Wales
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- Carmarthenshire County Council
- Carmarthenshire PSB
- Gwent PSB
- Monmouthshire County Council
- Natural Resources Wales
- Newport City Council
- Powys County Council
- Powys PSB

While the Act does not place any statutory duties on Welsh Water, we understand they consider the framework it provides when developing their own business plans.

Finally, we are keen for people to engage with the Act directly and we have produced a number of tools to help with this. For example, our [Future Generations Framework for projects](#) and [Future Generations Framework for scrutiny](#) can be used to ask how the long-term impacts of decisions are being considered and how decisions are considering the well-being goals, including ‘A Resilient Wales’. Questions and challenges to the decision makers can include for example:

- *What consideration have you given to the long-term trends that could affect your proposal or how could your proposal impact these trends?*

- *Is this proposal trying to prevent problems from occurring - if so, what are they and how will you know you're preventing them through this proposal?*
- *Who have you collaborated with in finding out more about this problem and potential solutions?*
- *How does this proposal contribute to a more resilient Wales – now; and what more can you do as the proposal is delivered to maximise your contribution to this goal? How can it help contribute even further for the future?*
- *How will you develop innovative solutions for building works which prioritises environmental resilience and green infrastructure?*
- *How can you enhance biodiversity (a duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016) with this proposal?*

There is a plethora of other questions and prompts in relation to all elements of the Act (goals, objectives and ways of working) included in the frameworks.

While I am not able to intervene in this case, I would be grateful for the Committee to consider the needs of future generations in the response and report and the need for us as a nation to achieve the goals set out in the Well-Being of Future Generations Act and in particular in this case, A Resilient Wales.

Thank you again for sharing this petition and we hope you will find this response useful.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Brousseau-Navarro
Interim Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

P-06-1312 To help improve water quality in the River Usk by upgrading sewage systems in the Usk valley, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 05.03.23

Dear Committee,

.

As I have stated previously, I am pleased that Welsh Water plan to upgrade the sewage systems at Brecon, Llanfoist and Usk.

This should lead to a considerable improvement in water quality when they are completed.

.

I am also pleased that Natural Resources Wales has just issued a licence which greatly restricts the quantity of water that can be abstracted at Brecon for the Brecon to Newport Canal. With more water flowing down the river, this should improve water quality.

.

On the negative side, I remain concerned about the poor performance of Natural Resources Wales.

NRW have provided a 24 hour service line 03000 653000.

Yet this number is notoriously unreliable.

For example:

On 27/1/23 I rang this number. After several recorded messages in Welsh & English, the number rang for 2 minutes and then went dead.

I then sent e mails to several members of staff. Holly Sisley responded promptly.

On 31/1/23 I tried to phone this number at around 2.30 pm.

After several recorded messages in Welsh & English I was informed that all operators were busy, to leave my name & telephone number and they would get back to me. I did as advised - but no-one got back to me.

Perhaps NRW could afford another telephone line with someone actually answering the phone?

.

Despite the good intentions of The Future Generations Act, it appears that that there is little concern in the Senedd about the poor quality of Welsh rivers.

.

I hope that you can address these points.

.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Cowburn

Agenda Item 3.2

P-06-1253 Ban greyhound racing in Wales

This petition was submitted by Hope Rescue, having collected a total of 35,101 signatures.

Text of Petition:

In Wales we have one independent greyhound track racing once a week. Since April 2018, Hope Rescue & their rescue partners have taken in almost 200 surplus greyhounds from this track, 40 of which sustained injuries. There are plans for the track to become a Greyhound Board of Great Britain track, racing four times a week, greatly increasing the number of surplus dogs & injuries. Greyhound racing is inherently cruel & greyhounds have little legal protection. It is already banned in 41 US states.

Additional Information:

Campaign groups have collated data and evidence of poor welfare within greyhound racing in the U.K.

Alliance Against Greyhound Racing: <https://www.aagr.org.uk/category/why-is-greyhound-racing-cruel/>

League Against Cruel Sports: <https://www.league.org.uk/greyhound-racing>

There have also been press articles and undercover investigations in to greyhound racing:

RTE Investigates: Greyhounds Running For Their Lives

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYTb2qBjIMM>

Panorama investigates: Doping and rigging bets

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0p0bHSkIAk>

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/jun/26/activists-renew-calls-to-end-greyhound-racing-as-400-die-despite-lockdowns>

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/greyhounds-being-shipped-pakistan-illegal-23765480>

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/13086085/british-greyhounds-racing-dogs-mass-graves-bolt/>

A recent petition is due to be debated in Parliament after securing 104,882 signatures.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/554073>

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Ogmore
- South Wales West

GREY2K USA WORLDWIDE



3 March 2023

Directors

Christine A. Dorchak, Esq.
President

Eric Jackson, *Vice President*
Greyhound Companions of
New Mexico

Sherry Mangold, *Treasurer*
Animal Protection of New Mexico

Kelly Driscoll

Massimo Greco
Pet Levrieri

Tom Grey
Stop Predatory Gambling

Jay Kirkus

Charmaine Settle

Carey M. Theil
Executive Director

Directors Emeritus

Dr. Jill Hopfenbeck, DVM
Kevin Neuman KCREGAP
Michael Trombley, CPAAlbano
Martins, ANIMA

In Memoriam

Kathy Pelton

Organization Listing is for
Identification Purposes Only

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair, Petitions Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF99 1SN

Dear Mr Chairman,

GREY2K USA Worldwide is a nonprofit organisation working to pass laws to protect greyhounds and promote the adoption of ex-racing dogs. On behalf of our more than 250,000 supporters in Wales and around the globe, we are writing to provide the Committee with additional information regarding Petition P-06-1253, Ban greyhound racing in Wales.

Specifically, we would like to share with the Committee the results of a public poll, conducted on our behalf between 23 February and 28 2023 by Panelbase, one of the preeminent public opinion research firms in the UK. Enclosed you will find the full text of all six questions that were included in the survey, with complete digital results.

The polling indicates that the Welsh public support ending greyhound racing by a wide margin. Some of the key findings include:

- **57%** think that the Welsh Senedd should vote to phase out greyhound racing, while only 21% are opposed.
- **55%** think that greyhound racing is not important to the Welsh economy, while only 16% think that it is important.
- **50%** would vote yes in a referendum to phase out greyhound racing in Wales, while only 21% would vote no.
- **46%** think that greyhounds bred for racing have a bad quality of life, while only 28% think that they have a good quality of life.
- **43%** have an unfavourable view of greyhound racing, while only 21% have a favourable view.

We hope that Panelbase's polling data can serve as an additional resource for you ahead of the Senedd debate on 8 March.

Thank you for your work on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Christine A. Dorchak, Esq.
President and General Counsel

- 1) What would you say is your impression of greyhound racing today?
 - Very favourable
 - Somewhat favourable
 - Neither favourable or unfavourable
 - Somewhat unfavourable
 - Very unfavourable

- 2) Generally speaking, do you think greyhounds bred for racing have a good or bad quality of life?
 - Very good quality of life
 - Somewhat good quality of life
 - Neither good or bad
 - Somewhat bad quality of life
 - Very bad quality of life

- 3) How important do you think greyhound racing is to Wales' economy?
 - Very important
 - Somewhat important
 - Neither important or not important
 - Not very important
 - Not important at all

- 4) If a referendum was held tomorrow to phase out greyhound racing in Wales how would you vote?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

- 5) There is currently one greyhound racing track operating in Wales, and the Welsh Parliament may soon vote on a proposal to phase out greyhound racing. Animal protection groups say that many greyhounds suffer serious injuries and some dogs test positive for dangerous drugs. Dog track supporters say that greyhound racing has the highest welfare standards and has made transformative improvements over the past few years.
Based on everything you know, do you think lawmakers should vote to phase out greyhound racing?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

- 6) If a political party supported phasing out greyhound racing, would that make you more or less likely to support that party's candidate in an election?
 - Much more likely
 - Somewhat more likely
 - Neither more or less likely
 - Somewhat less likely
 - Much less likely

Agenda Item 3.3

P-06-1323 We request that the Welsh Government purchase St David's Hall as a national resource for Wales

This petition was submitted by Ben Herrington, having collected a total of 3,575 signatures.

Text of Petition:

This is a heartfelt plea to prevent the loss of a vital cultural resource to the people of Wales; We call upon the Welsh Government to step in.

Additional Information:

A transfer of management of The National Concert Hall of Wales to a commercial organisation would risk this vital and vibrant resource for the community and cultural life of Cardiff inevitably leading to impacts on the wider creative infrastructure of Wales.

The venue hosts over 330 performances per year, many of national and international profile, attracting attendees from every postcode in Wales as well as the highest percentage of English visitors of all Welsh venues.

It is the only purpose-built orchestral concert hall in the country able to host a full symphony orchestra. It is the home of Cardiff Singer of the World, National Orchestra of Wales, and the world class International Concert Series—alongside a varied cultural offering including ballet, pop/rock music, comedians, jazz and folk.

The venue delivers to all ages the opportunities for creative participation and engagement, representing a invaluable community and learning resource for the people of Cardiff and whole of Wales.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Cardiff Central
- South Wales Central

Do you have any other comments on this proposal?

Respondents were invited to comment on this proposal; 1,221 comments were received and grouped into themes. The top three themes are shown below, with the full list provided in [Appendix 2](#).

Theme	No.	%	Example Comments
Concerns over programme: classical, community, minority genres	271	22.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I am not persuaded, having looked at the proposed tenants’ other venues, that they would be prepared to ‘maintain a classical and community programme’ of the kind we presently enjoy.</i> - <i>This is a misguided and naive proposal, which will fail to safeguard the classical, folk, jazz and community offer which is so crucial to the Arts in Wales.</i> - <i>It must continue to be a classical music venue first and foremost</i> - <i>The approach to classical music seems adequate and is unlikely to affect the programme at the Hall. However there is no mention of how the O2 model is going to protect the concerts by musicians in ‘minority’ genres, eg folk, jazz, blues etc. Currently a full programme of such music takes place on Level 3, eg Roots Unearthed. Supporters of these types of music deserve as much protection as classical and pop/rock fans. If all of the Level 3 concerts are not maintained at the Hall there is no other city centre venues putting on such a programme. Please ensure that the O2 has to protect these genres as well as classical.</i> - <i>The lease should only go ahead if the classical and community programmes are protected in law.</i> - <i>Will they ensure a similar level of community and classical programmes? What kind of commitment do they have for this as we really enjoy the options offered by St David’s that is not available elsewhere. E.g. cardiff city voices Christmas service</i>
If they can run it at a profit so can Council / Should promote/run it better	256	21.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I think leasing this is the start of the decline in offerings. Better to invest in better management and engagement on possible other additional uses or streams of revenue</i> - <i>If a tenant can make this a profitable venture by running it slightly differently/ adding a wider variety of events, then surely this can be achieved with the current management arrangement too.</i> - <i>The bizarre thing is if an outside company can invest and make money by taking this on why can’t we?</i> - <i>A senior council officer saying ‘I don’t know’ when asked in scrutiny why the council can’t run this at profit themselves is unacceptable and offensive to the people of</i>

			<p><i>Cardiff. What's the proper answer? The follow up comment that AMG have better industry access is coming close to supporting a monopoly and it's short term, unambitious thinking. Cardiff deserves better.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>If a private company can make the hall profitable then the council should also be able to. You need to be more commercially minded and turn it into a profit making enterprise. The more of these type of things you have the less you will need to raise council tax</i> - <i>A private tenant would only be interested if they think the hall can be made profitable. How is it a private company can make something viable, yet the status quo cannot?</i> - <i>I'm a big music fan and I attend several gigs per month and I support this decision. I think the new tenant will bring new and exciting acts to Cardiff and help modernise the building which the Council has failed to do. I'm delighted to hear that they will still protect the classical music programme. I think its disappointing that the venue made a loss as it should be one of the areas that the Council should be generating income.</i>
Belongs to the city/Wales.	172	14.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>This is a national asset, should be a decision made by the whole of Wales</i> - <i>St David's Hall is a vital part of Cardiff. You cheapen yourselves, you cheapen the people of Cardiff, and you cheapen music and the arts through having no pride or value in our buildings, culture, and music. As long as someone can make a profit eh? It's a crying shame. Live Nation will be the only ones to benefit from this. Start acting like a council that cares about its city.</i> - <i>As the National Concert Hall of Wales this needs to be kept. Maybe ask Welsh Government for an annual grant to secure the 'national' part of the concert hall.</i> - <i>It would be a great loss to Cardiff if St David's Hall were to be long or changed in any way</i> - <i>St David's Hall is an important asset for Cardiff and Wales where there are not many venues that can accommodate a 100 piece orchestra, that allows them to perform to their full potential with a rich acoustic quality. Cardiff surely has enough venues for pop & rock concerts and needs to retain management & operational control of the hall to balance cultural choice. Where else could visiting orchestras perform in Wales. London has the Royal Albert Hall, Cardiff & Welsh people deserve St David's Hall.</i>

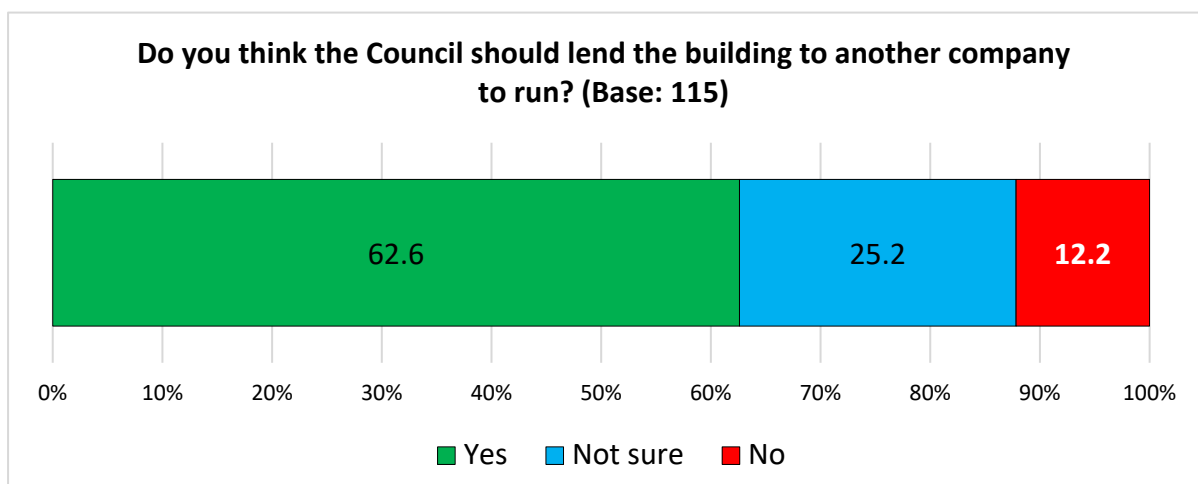
Youth Survey

St. David’s Hall currently costs the Council £689,000 to run. This money is given to St David’s Hall by the Council to help reduce the costs of running the business. If St. David’s Hall ever has a problem with money, the Council steps in to help them pay whatever they cannot afford. Since the Covid-19 Pandemic and with prices going up right across the country for Gas, Electric, Fuel and more, there have been less people attending events at St. David’s meaning they make less money to pay for the business. For this reason, the Council believes they will need more support with money this year in 2023. They have predicted this to be £110,000 more, totalling to £799,000 this year.

The Council also is responsible to make sure the building is safe and in good condition which can cost millions of pounds to keep the building open. The Council believes supporting St. David’s Hall is becoming difficult as they are not sure they will have enough money to be able to handle any unexpected problems that will cost money to fix. For this reason, the Council has an idea to lend the building to someone else for them to use, as part of an agreement that will last for a long period of time. That company will be responsible for keeping it a safe place, in good condition, keep the classical and community events running that currently run there now and to keep the building open. The Council would still own the building and land. The business they have spoken to on this agreement has also said they would be willing to do work on the building to make it a better venue for everyone.

Do you think the Council should lend the building to another company to run?

Almost two-thirds (62.6%) of those taking part in the Youth Survey supported the proposal for a long-term lease arrangement, a quarter (25.2%) were unsure, whilst almost one in eight (12.2%) opposed it.



Do you have any other comments on this proposal?

Respondents were invited to comment on this proposal; 15 comments were received and grouped into themes:

Theme	No.	%	Example Comments
Save money here to spend on other things	5	33.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I think if the Council is struggling to keep up the payments and the support that they previously gave to St David's Hall it's important that they can find a solution that is sustainable. This is an option that someone's else takes over the responsibility of the building etc and this will cut down costs - I think that St David's Hall should stay open but should be given to a different company to save money.
Save money from other areas instead	3	20.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spend less money making bike lanes when most cyclists don't actually use them - the council should not be taking money from these services, they can find savings elsewhere
Oppose this	3	20.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Although this seems like a good idea I don't trust that they won't get rid of community events, increase prices and limit the overall usage of St David's Hall - It's an essential venue and a huge part of British Culture, and we have to keep it!
Suggestions to make money	2	13.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Run more charity events to raise money, there isn't many charity events to raise money now days, they are fun and raise money to support communities
Misc.	2	13.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I would like to know what the downsides of this project are and how is the business going to make money (is it a profitable venture for them?). Will the Council maintain control over the programme of events? - I believe we just need more creative solutions to the housing problem. Create living spaces where many members of the same family can live in a large shared property. This will prevent loneliness for the elderly, support parents with child care and provide many skills and experiences to the Youth. I think money can be saved this way. I want to live with my Grandad as he is lonely at the moment and has disabilities that my mum wants to help with but can't as we live apart and she works full time. If we lived together I could spend more quality time with him, and he wouldn't be on so much medication.

Respondents could leave comments on more than one theme, so totals will exceed 100.0%

Face-to-Face Interviews

There was a strong sense that cultural events should be protected, but opinions were split as to who should manage St David's Hall:

"Culture is important, protect it."

Male, 75+, Ely

"As long as it doesn't close and the services aren't affected then I agree, but we shouldn't lose services for arts and culture"

Male, 65-74, Llanrumney

"It should never be privatise. The Council should invest in it so they can make money from it. If outside bodies have shown interest it shows it can make money, so the Council should do that."

Male, 55-64, Adamsdown

"Yes, as long as it promotes culture and the arts, and it won't feel to the public as though something has been taken away from them."

Male, 45-54, Llanishen

"St David's - Unsure. The issue is mismanagement. It is important to increase engagement with classical music and culture, so perhaps an external organisation would do that better."

Male, 35-44, Ely

"Yes, find a tenant. Better than closing it."

Female, 16-24, Riverside

Agenda Item 3.4

P-06-1247 We call on the Welsh Government to lead the way by supporting trials of a four-day week in Wales

This petition was submitted by Mark Hooper, having collected a total of 1,619 signatures.

Text of Petition:

Moving to a four-day working week boosts productivity & workers' wellbeing.

After successful trials of a shorter working week in Iceland - with no reduction in pay - governments in Scotland, Ireland & Spain are all devising their own four-day week pilots that are scheduled to begin next year.

There's also serious moves towards a four-day week taking place in Belgium, New Zealand, Germany & Japan.

We call on the Welsh Government to lead the way by supporting trials of a four-day week in Wales.

Additional Information:

When Microsoft trialled a four-day week with no loss of pay in their Japan office, productivity went up by 40%.

(<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/nov/04/microsoft-japan-four-day-work-week-productivity>)

According to the Health & Safety Executive, 55% of all sick days taken last year were a direct result of work-related stress, depression or anxiety.

Moving to a four-day week would dramatically reduce mental health issues in Wales.

A study by the environmental organisation Platform London found that the introduction of a four-day week with no loss of pay would shrink the UK's carbon emissions by 127m tonnes, a reduction of more than 20%.

(<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/may/27/four-day-working-week-would-slash-uk-carbon-footprint-report>)

Four-day week 'an overwhelming success' in Iceland

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-57724779>.

Senedd Constituency and Region

- Vale of Glamorgan

- South Wales Central



Ein cyf/Our ref P-06-1247

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair of Petitions Committee

6 March 2023

Dear Chair,

Written Response by the Welsh Government to the Petitions Committee Report - From Five to Four? P-06-1247 Support trials of a four-day week in Wales

Thank you for the Petitions Committee report on the 4-day working week, published on 24 January.

I note the evidence provided to the Committee and the recommendations made by the majority on the Committee. A 4-day working week is just one model of flexible working and our ambition is that employers look at flexible working in the round and provide jobs which give greater choice in where and when people work. We are committed to working in social partnership to help further that ambition.

As the Committee report indicates, there are a range of factors that need to be considered in the development and roll-out of any pilot of the 4-day working week. It is important that social partners have a voice in informing our position. That is why we have sought and obtained the agreement of the Joint Executive Committee of the [Workforce Partnership Council](#) to set up a working group on the 4-day working week.

The proposal for a working group will be tabled at the next meeting of the Workforce Partnership Council on 29 March. If the proposal is agreed, we would anticipate that it would report its findings to the following meeting of the Workforce Partnership Council in November. I am keen that we do not take any final decisions on whether we should or should not support a pilot before we have our social partners to give this matter proper consideration. This desire to work through these issues in social partnership shapes our response to each of the recommendations made by the Petitions Committee.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

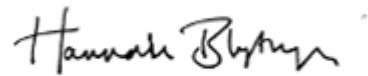
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Hannah Blythyn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

Hannah Blythyn AS/MS
Dirprwy Weinidog Partneriaeth Gymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Social Partnership

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Agenda Item 6

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

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