

# P-06-1373 Stop Welsh Government Wasting £4 million on Skyline private development Kilvey Hill, Swansea

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 13 Tachwedd 2023  
Petitions Committee | 13 November 2023

Reference: SR23/7092-6

**Petition Number:** P-06-1373

**Petition title:** Stop Welsh Government Wasting £4 million on Skyline private development Kilvey Hill, Swansea

**Text of petition:**

The plans for a skyline involve privatising a public open space for a project of very uncertain success. The shareholders of this private firm will benefit from this large injection of cash but there is a risk of major environmental damage with no guarantee of success in the long term.

It means the loss of a much used local nature amenity. Better action: Use existing plans to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of this wild part of Swansea. A big cash grant for no certain benefit is unwise.

Toxic pollution from Swansea's heavy metal industrial past turned our hill into a barren wasteland until in the 70's a partnership of our council and the university began its slow transformation into a pine woodland, the only species that could thrive. Involvement of the local community and schools began then and has continued till today with a volunteer group helping NRW rewild the woodland so that native species and creatures are now thriving.

We are proud our woodland is known as the finest example of regenerated urban woodland in Wales and it has a special place in the hearts of local people for enjoyment of a green lung for the city's Eastside. It is also an outdoor classroom for local schools. If money is to be spent, let's have woodland management, trails, maintained paths, rangers, none of which we've had for 25 years!



# 1. Background

The petition relates to proposals from Skyline Enterprises Limited (Skyline) to create a new leisure development that will be located at the Landore Park and Ride Facility extending up to Kilvey Hill.

Skyline describes itself as “an international tourism company delivering real fun to global communities”. Headquartered in New Zealand, Skyline has sites in Queenstown and Rotorua (New Zealand), Calgary and Mont Tremblant (Canada), Sentosa (Singapore), Busan and Tongyeong (South Korea) and soon to be Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia).

The development proposals consist of several elements including, a gondola cable car from Hafod Morfa Copper Works, three luge rides, a zipline and sky swing, new mountain bike trails, and walks and picnic areas.

In a recent Wales Online article a spokesperson from Skyline is quoted as saying:

“Our proposals for Kilvey Hill celebrate the hill and its wildlife alongside providing a fun new attraction for the residents of Swansea and its visitors. We recognise the value and importance of the site in ecological terms and, for this reason, instructed Welsh consultancy firm, EDP, back in 2018, to start ecological survey work. That work has continued to date and has informed the preparation of our proposals. Critically, our objective is to enhance the overall biodiversity of the site and to allow for the better management of these in the long term through our involvement.

“If our application is successful, Skyline will be investing circa £34million into the development of the site and we are already seeking local partners to assist with food and beverage retail at the proposed attraction and in the construction of the scheme. Local planning, environmental and engineering firms have already been appointed to develop the application proposals.

“Skyline has built recognised world class facilities like this across the globe in in New Zealand, Canada and Singapore. We believe Kilvey Hill is an excellent opportunity for our eighth site and we are committed to its sensitive development, as we have been with all our other sites. We held

several public consultation events in March this year and community support was very strong. We look forward to further engagement with the people of Swansea as the planning application progresses.”

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government’s response to the petition comes from the Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism. The response confirms that the Welsh Government has agreed to provide £4 million of financial support for the £34 million overall venture, which is forecast to deliver “up to 100 full-time equivalent roles”. A Welsh Government response to a [Freedom of Information request](#), dated June 2023, states that £1 million of the total £4 million package of financial support is repayable.

The proposed investment in Skyline was examined by the Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board (WIDAB) before the Ministerial decision was taken to support the project was made. WIDAB provides advice to the Minister for Economy on issues relating to the Welsh Economy. Central to WIDAB’s role is providing advice on individual projects requesting support of over £1 million from the relevant schemes within the Economy Futures Fund.

In the response, the Deputy Minister also addresses the environmental considerations associated with the project:

I can advise that the local planning authority is required to consider the application in line with national planning policy, which includes environmental considerations. Skyline has completed topographical, environmental and ecology surveys before applying for funding.

The Welsh Government has set out clear pathways and policy frameworks in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 11 for the planning system to respond to negative environmental trends and cycles and deliver better sustainable outcomes. PPW11 sets out a strong framework for the protection of trees, woodlands, and hedgerows, requiring compensatory planting by developers where woodland or trees are removed as part of a proposed scheme. This is in addition to protection afforded by Tree Preservation Orders which are also administered by local authorities.

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Skyline holds a New Zealand-led Qualmark Gold Award for its sustainable practices.

New buildings will achieve a BREEAM Excellent standard where required. A pre-condition of support requires Skyline to independently audit its environmental performance at Swansea through an external accreditation scheme, such as Green Key or equivalent.

In summary, our investment approach for the Skyline project aims to balance the environmental and economic considerations of the project and ensure that our funding is linked to clear targets being achieved.

### 3. Comment from local Member of the Senedd

The proposed Skyline development sits in the Swansea East constituency of Mike Hedges MS. He is quoted in an article on the [Nation.Cymru website](#) from April of this year as saying:

“£4 million is an awful lot to pay for 100 jobs – that’s £40,000 per job, which are likely to be low paid and, in the main, seasonal.

“Is it a good use of public money? I would say no.

“If you’ve got that money to invest, I’d much prefer to see it being invested in ITC (information and computer technology) and life science companies who provide high value jobs and will boost the economy.”

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.