



Cynulliad National  
Cenedlaethol Assembly for  
Cymru Wales

## **The Petitions Committee**

### **Completion Report**

**Summary of the Petitions Committee's consideration of  
P-03-171 Fire Safety**

**November 2008**

**E-Petition Received**

15 August 2008

**Ruled Admissible**

29 September 2008 (following collection of signatures)

**Initial Consideration****16 October 2008**

The Committee gave initial consideration to the petition, and agreed to write to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government to ask for the Welsh Assembly Government's new risk reduction plans.

(See Annex 1 for the relevant extract from the meeting on 16 October 2008, and Annex 2 for the letter sent to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government)

**Further Consideration****20 November 2008**

The Committee considered a response from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, and agreed to close the petition as it was unable to progress it any further

(See Annex 1 for the relevant extract from the transcript of the meeting on 20 November 2008, and Annex 2 for the response received from the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government)

**Petitions Clerk**

**November 2008**

## Annex 1

## Extracts from Petitions Committee meetings

### 16 October 2008

**Val Lloyd:** The next petition is on fire safety. It reads:

'We, the undersigned, note the new risk reduction plans for the fire service in many parts of Wales. We believe that these plans may lead to an increase in risk for many communities. We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to take action to ensure that current standards of safety are not reduced'.

I think that we have to write to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government and bring it back. I am reading the petitions out because our audience does not necessarily have access to the papers.

### 20 November 2008

**Val Lloyd:** The last petition is P-03-171, on fire safety. This petition notes the new risk reduction plans, and calls on us

'to urge the Welsh Assembly Government to take action to ensure that current standards of safety are not reduced.'

We have received a comprehensive reply from the Minister, which has clarified issues that I was not aware of previously.

**Andrew R.T. Davies:** I believe that we have all been enlightened by the various points in the Minister's letter. I fail to see how much further the petition can progress.

**Val Lloyd:** I agree. We should perhaps send a copy of the Minister's letter to the petitioner. I can understand the petitioner's concerns, but I think that the Minister has addressed all of them. It might not be the answer that the petitioner wanted, but the concerns have been addressed in depth. Is everyone happy to close this petition and to send the letter? I see that you are.

## Annex 2

## Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

### Petitions Committee

Brian Gibbons AM  
Minister for Social Justice and Local  
Government  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: PET-03-171  
28 October 2008

Dear Brian

#### **PETITION: TO ENSURE CURRENT STANDARDS OF FIRE SAFETY ARE MAINTAINED**

At its meeting on 16th October, the Petitions Committee gave initial consideration to a petition to ensure that current standards of fire safety are not reduced in light of the new risk reduction plans for the fire service in Wales. A link to the petition wording is attached below:

<http://assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions/eform-sign-petition/p-03-171.htm>

During the meeting, the Committee agreed to write to you to ask you to provide details of the Welsh Assembly Government's new risk reduction plans for the fire service.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter, and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely



**Val Lloyd**  
Chair, Petitions Committee

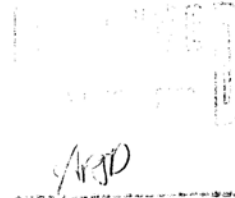
**Brian Gibbons AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a Llywodraeth  
Leol  
Minister for Social Justice and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-171  
Ein cyf/Our ref BG/00621/08

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



6 November 2008

*Dear Val,*

Thank you for your letter of 28 October regarding the petition on standards of fire safety.

Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) have developed knowledge and expertise in managing risk in their areas over the course of many years. This has been achieved by developing professional and local knowledge in the discipline of fire management and augmenting this with new technology, allowing FRAs to model risk to life and property. This, coupled with an emphasis on preventative activity, which since 2004 has been a statutory duty for FRAs, has meant the number of primary fires (including all dwelling, industrial, retail, road and others) has reduced from over 10,000 in 2004 to 8,692 in 2006 (the latest year for which figures are available).

Building on this, the Assembly Government developed guidance for FRAs on Risk Reduction Planning (RRP) in March 2006. The production of RRP is the responsibility of each FRA, as the statutory body with the responsibility for the provision of fire cover in its area. Over the course of the summer, each FRA has consulted on their draft RRP proposals for 2009-10. Our RRP guidance states that proposals contained within RRP should be based on robust evidence and developed in consultation with the communities and others affected. The plans have, or are, in the process of being finalised, in line with RRP guidance and will be available from each FRA.

Linked to our RRP guidance the Assembly Government also published Service Standards to domestic fires. These set a 10 minute standard for the arrival of the first appliance, 5 minutes where life risk is estimated to be higher, to 80% of domestic fire incidents. Where it is estimated that an FRA will be unable to meet this target in an area, then they are expected to undertake increased levels of fire safety preventative activity. Our recently published Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales 2008-2011, commits the Assembly Government to review the effectiveness of existing RRP guidance and Service Standards. We will also introduce new Standards (such as road Traffic collision and non domestic dwellings) to complement the existing activity.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0845 010 3300  
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0845 010 4400  
Ffacs • Fax 029 2089 8522  
Correspondence: Brian.Gibbons@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

*Wedi'i argraffu ar babur wedi'i ailwylchu (100%)*

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Ministerial powers to intervene in FRA operational matters are limited by statute. No powers exist under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to require FRAs to seek Welsh Minister's approval to proposals contained within RRP's. The underlying purpose of the National Framework, as enabled by the 2004 Act, is to provide strategic direction from government, while ensuring that FRAs continue to make local decisions.

Yours sincerely

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

**Brian Gibbons AM**