

# Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

[Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a  
Llywodraeth Leol](#)

[The Communities, Equality and Local  
Government Committee](#)

16/09/2015

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Cynulliad  
Cenedlaethol  
Cymru

National  
Assembly for  
Wales

## Cynnwys Contents

- 5 Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon  
Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions
- 5 Ymchwiliad Etifeddiaeth: y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a  
Thwristiaeth  
Legacy Inquiry: Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism
- 40 Papurau i'w Nodi  
Papers to Note
- 40 Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o  
Weddill y Cyfarfod  
Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public  
from the Remainder Meeting

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

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in  
the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation  
is included.

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

Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Christine Chapman	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Alun Davies	Llafur Labour
Janet Finch–Saunders	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
John Griffiths	Llafur (yn dirprwyo ar ran Gwenda Thomas) Labour (substitute for Gwenda Thomas)
Mike Hedges	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Gwyn R. Price	Llafur Labour
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

**Eraill yn bresennol**  
**Others in attendance**

Kate Clark	Cyfarwyddwr, CADW Director, CADW
Natasha Hale	Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr Sectorau a Busnes, Llywodraeth Cymru Deputy Director of Sectors and Business, Welsh Government
Kenneth Skates	Aelod Cynulliad, Llafur (y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth) Assembly Member, Labour (Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism)
Jon Westlake	Pennaeth yr Is–adran Chwaraeon, Llywodraeth Cymru Head of the Sport Division, Welsh Government

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

Sarah Beasley	Clerc Clerc
Sarah Sargeant	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Robin Wilkinson	Y Gwasanaeth Ymchwil Research Service

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:16.*  
*The meeting began at 09:16.*

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

[1] **Christine Chapman:** [*Inaudible.*]—put them on silent, as they may affect the transmission. We've had apologies today from Gwenda Thomas, and John Griffiths is attending in her place. We've also had apologies from Jocelyn Davies as well today.

09:17

**Ymchwiliad Etifeddiaeth: y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth**

**Legacy Inquiry: Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism**

[2] **Christine Chapman:** The first item today is a legacy inquiry. We are going to conduct this with the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism. We are nearing the end of the fourth Assembly, and the committee has agreed to review the work it has undertaken since it was established in 2011. We will be looking over our policy and legislation inquiries with a view to assessing the impact of the conclusions and recommendations contained in our various reports. To assist with this, we have written to each Minister with responsibilities in our portfolio so that Ministers can, hopefully, provide us with an update on the work that has been done.

[3] Now, today is the first of these evidence sessions, and I would like to give a warm welcome to Ken Skates AM, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism. I wonder, Deputy Minister, if you'd like to introduce your

officials for the record, and I'll come back to Mike Hedges then.

[4] **The Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism (Kenneth Skates):** Thank you, Chair. I'm joined today by Natasha Hale.

[5] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Mike Hedges.

[6] **Mike Hedges:** Can I just make a declaration of interest? Can I just declare—and I won't list them all—that I'm a president and patron of a whole range of sports clubs and choirs?

[7] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you.

[8] **Peter Black:** Can I declare that I'm a member of the City and County of Swansea Council, which may have a bearing on this and future items in this meeting?

[9] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. As you know, there are a number of sections, aspects, of your portfolio, so we are going to take them each in turn. I know a number of Members had questions on this first part of it. I just want to ask you some questions about the media, and then we'll move on to the other parts of the portfolio. Now you've got responsibility for broadcasting matters, I just want to ask your views, Deputy Minister, on the conclusion of the task and finish group that you chaired, that the Welsh Government needed to strengthen its means of dealing with broadcasting issues and with media organisations.

[10] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, thank you, Chair. It's good to be back before your committee. Can I thank you for the opportunity to be able to share with you an update across the portfolio on Welsh Government delivery? There's something of a paradox at the moment in Wales concerning the media and broadcasting in that the creative industries are growing faster than any other priority sector, and are growing faster in Wales than anywhere else in the UK bar London, which you would expect. It's an incredible success story, as was highlighted yesterday in a full-page article in *The Guardian*. In the last 10 years, we've seen an increase of something in the region of 23 per cent in the number of companies in the creative industries in Wales, and an increase in employment of something in the region of 60 per cent, so it is a magnificent success story. However, we are facing significant and serious challenges concerning the media and, of course, broadcasting in particular insofar as funding of public service broadcasters is concerned, and charter

renewal. The task and finish group that I chaired conducted an inquiry into the media and I think we took some very valuable evidence and we were able to take stock of that. The Welsh Government's been able to report, and you should have a written report on the outcomes of the work that was conducted. I am pleased that Tony Hall did announce, as part of his report, that the BBC will be working with local media and newspapers. That could address some of the primary concerns that we had—and I chaired that committee—concerning the print media, which I know is under immense strain and continues to be under immense strain. Since I chaired the task the finish group, I think it's fair to say that there has been considerable movement in terms of print media and online media yet again, and members of this committee—I know my colleagues on the left have signed the—

[11] **Alun Davies:** We're all on the left these days, Ken.

[12] **Kenneth Skates:** This is true. [*Laughter.*] They have signed up to the National Union of Journalists' campaign concerning the number of hits not being a mark of a journalist's integrity or value, and that, instead, the quality of their reporting should be the basis for how they are rewarded. I think we're seeing a huge increase in terms of online activity. However, there are very difficult challenges facing the print media still, and we are seeing revenues increase in terms of online advertising, but they're not increasing as fast as online traffic, so there are still challenges there, and there is still a significant journey to be taken.

[13] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you, Deputy Minister. I know Alun Davies had some questions.

[14] **Alun Davies:** Thanks very much. You started your reply to the Chair by outlining the increase in production in Wales, and I think that's something that everybody would welcome. But what we haven't seen is the same increase or even maintenance of the visibility of Wales on UK terrestrial networks. It would be interesting for me to understand the structures that the Welsh Government have in place, and the relationship that the Welsh Government has with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, when you are debating and discussing the charter renewal of the BBC, but also the conversations that you have with the BBC. I think that the BBC investment in Wales has been great in terms of what we see across the way, but I don't believe that we have sufficient coverage of Wales on the networks; we don't have sufficient visibility of Wales on the networks, and notwithstanding the investment we've seen, production in Wales is still marginal when considered

against other big production centres elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

[15] **Kenneth Skates:** Alun Davies makes a number of extremely important points. First of all, I'm pleased to be able to share with the committee news that yesterday I signed a memorandum of understanding with DCMS and the BBC concerning charter renewal. I'd be happy to be able to share that MOU with committee members. It presses for a further MOU with the National Assembly for Wales, which I know is something that the task and finish group was very concerned about as well.

[16] Our priority areas concern a number of issues: one, the visibility of Wales nationally, the portrayal of Wales and the presentation of Wales; secondly, production, that we need to see greater investment, particularly in English-language, non-news and sport production in Wales, for Wales. The amount of money available to public service broadcasters, to the BBC in particular right now, for non-news production in Wales is seriously, seriously hampering their ability to draw on talent and to produce for the people of Wales Welsh production. And there is also concern around the competitive element of production within the BBC and the proposals to enable production to go out of the BBC, effectively to compete for it, which could lead to, if we're not vigilant, production going back to London, potentially. So, this is an area of concern that we very much have. They are the priority areas right now for our discussions on charter renewal. We're also very, very clear in our message to DCMS, and to the BBC, that protecting and enhancing English-language television production should not come at a cost for Welsh-language TV production. We need funding for S4C to be protected. The cuts that S4C and the BBC have had to deal with are incredible. There is a serious question now about the ability of both to be able to produce for the people of Wales the sort of quality of television that we should be able to expect. Natasha, would you like to comment?

[17] **Ms Hale:** I would just like to comment on the robustness of Welsh Government in our communication with the DCMS and Ofcom and the BBC since this committee last looked into this. I think it has been increased quite substantially. One area that we have been focusing on with Ofcom is to make sure that Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales are represented properly at Ofcom. We did manage to get quite a result there as we kept going on about it all the time and, in the end, Ofcom have agreed that in their new business plan it will say that they not only represent the policies of Westminster, but also the policies of the nations' Governments. I think that that has actually come as a direct result of us being a lot more

robust in the way in which we deal with Ofcom and the BBC and the DCMS. I also wanted to pick up on what you were just saying about representation nationally. Obviously, we've done very well with our independent sector to grow the economy in Wales through production, but this having more of Wales on network and on national television is obviously the most important thing that we're focused on. I really do think we need to see the correlation between the huge cuts in spending that have gone into English-language programming, right across the board, whether it be ITV or BBC, and our lack of ability to get more and more on network TV. If we don't have enough money to spend adequately on English-language programming in Wales, it will affect the talent that is able to then go on to network; it will affect the ideas and innovation that can go onto network; and, it will also affect the amount of productions that can be made that can go on to network. So, I would say getting more finance from BBC and DCMS to spend on English-language programming will end up with a direct result in getting more on network of Wales.

[18] **Kenneth Skates:** We need £30 million.

[19] **Alun Davies:** All right, well that's sorted then.

[20] **Kenneth Skates:** If I can just remind Members of some of the figures: actually, there's been a 17 per cent reduction in the hours on BBC for English-language programmes made specifically for Wales, that's in the space of just five years between 2008 and 2013; a 31 per cent reduction in the hours on ITV Cymru Wales for English-language programmes; and, a 22 per cent decrease in spend on nations' programming. In addition, there's been a 36 per cent reduction in funding for S4C since 2010. As I've already mentioned, in terms of our ability to grow the creative industries, we need to make sure that we protect and build that sector, not just in Cardiff, but outside of the capital—which we are doing—because there's £2.4 billion available for production by the BBC. They're developing a compete-and-compare strategy that would remove quotas from the BBC's production operations and convert them into a commercial subsidiary. It's absolutely essential that Wales continues to capture a major component of the money available for production in the BBC, and indeed builds on that with additional funding for English-language television made in Wales for Wales.

[21] **Alun Davies:** I think it's quite clear from what's been said that the current structures of accountability and regulation of public service broadcasting have failed. They haven't delivered protection for the interests



of Wales. I think that's absolutely clear from the numbers that you've quoted, Minister, and also some of the points made by your officials, in terms of the way in which they've had these conversations with decision makers within the BBC and elsewhere, but, at the same time as we have these conversations, we continue to see these declines in indigenous programming, in the English language particularly, but also the attacks on S4C from the United Kingdom Government have meant that the integrity of the broadcast environment in Wales continues to be eroded. It appears to me, Minister, and I'll put this to you: doesn't that mean that the structures of governance, both of the BBC and the overall regulation, are simply not succeeding in defending the national interests of Wales?

09:30

[22] **Kenneth Skates:** And, I think, accountability, as well. This is why the MOU is just so important and why the MOU that should supersede it, which concerns accountability to the National Assembly, I think is absolutely vital now.

[23] **Alun Davies:** Okay. Could you talk us through the memorandum of understanding quite briefly, because you do have, as you've already said, an MOU with the DCMS over—it is over charter renewal specifically, yes?

[24] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[25] **Alun Davies:** I know that the DCMS also have a similar, parallel structure in Scotland. Does that provide you with the structures that you require to ensure that the Welsh Government's points of view are fully taken into account during this process?

[26] **Kenneth Skates:** We would hope so. The MOU that we've been able to devise is a direct read across of the elements of the Scottish MOU that relate to enshrining the devolved government role in the charter review process itself. So, we would very much hope so. That'd be a fair assessment of where we're up to at the moment.

[27] **Alun Davies:** Thank you. And—

[28] **Ms Hale:** I was just going to say that the Minister had also met with his counterparts in the other nations and that there's an absolute commitment from all three nations that we need to be working together in order to make

sure that the memoranda of understanding do work and are listened to.

[29] **Alun Davies:** Thanks. I should say, as a former member of a management team of S4C, I think that many of us have been quite appalled at the attitude that the United Kingdom Government has taken towards S4C. I've rarely seen examples of such public bullying of a public broadcaster in my life. I think it's an absolutely appalling way of treating any broadcaster. Are you confident that, as a Welsh Government—. I wouldn't want to see the devolution of S4C separate from devolution of broadcasting in other areas. Are you confident that the structures that exist at present are able to provide for the independence of S4C and also to enable us to have a conversation about the funding levels of S4C—which I think are approaching critical, frankly—to provide a service of quality for the Welsh-speaking population in Wales and outside of Wales in the UK?

[30] **Kenneth Skates:** These are very much questions that I put to the chief executive of S4C on Monday. I think, in terms of the funding and the treatment by the UK Government of S4C, and the expectations that they're now placing on them, it's simply not reasonable to expect S4C to be able to make the same level of savings that are being expected at the BBC now without serious implications for what the viewer and the audience see and hear. It just cannot be achieved.

[31] On the structure, the Silk commission supported our view that the overall regulation of broadcasting should remain a responsibility of the UK Government. We've got a rapidly changing environment and, given the vital role that broadcasting institutions play in creating a common cultural citizenship for people across the UK, I think the PSB system would not be strengthened at present by dividing the overall responsibility for regulation of broadcasting amongst its component parts, but we are continuing to monitor what is a fast-moving feast, and we want to make sure that our voice is heard loud and clear in the debate that is taking place.

[32] **Alun Davies:** Thank you.

[33] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, I've got Rhodri Glyn Thomas, and then, if there are any other Members who want to ask any questions on this particular section of the reports—. Rhodri, first.

[34] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Thank you very fawr, iawn, Gadeirydd. Fel mae'n much, Chair. As it happens, the

digwydd, mae'r sylwadau rydym ni wedi eu derbyn oddi wrth y Gweinidog yn arwain at y cwestiynau sydd wedi eu dynodi ar fy nghyfer i'r bore yma. Roeddwn i'n gwrando'n astud iawn ar yr hyn yr oedd gennych i'w ddweud, Weinidog, ynglŷn â'r angen am gyllid sylweddol—£30 miliwn, rwy'n credu, oedd y swm yr oeddech chi'n sôn amdano fe—ar gyfer darlledu yn bennaf trwy gyfrwng y Saesneg o Gymru, ac na ddylai hynny effeithio ar yr arian sydd eisoes wedi'i ddynodi ar gyfer darlledu trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg o Gymru. Fe wnaethoch chi gyffwrdd hefyd â chomisiwn Silk a chasgliadau'r comisiwn ynglŷn â darlledu. Rwyf wedi bod o'r un farn ag Alun Davies dros y blynyddoedd na fyddwn i am weld S4C yn cael ei datganoli ar ei phen ei hun ac ar wahân i ddarlledu yn gyffredinol. Rwy'n ail-ystyried y farn honno erbyn hyn, oherwydd bod sefyllfa S4C mor ddifrifol. A ydych chi wedi rhoi ystyriaeth i gasgliadau Silk, ac, yn arbennig, yr awgrym y dylid datganoli cyllid S4C i Lywodraeth Cymru?

comments that we've had from the Minister lead to the questions that have been allocated to me this morning. I was listening very carefully to what you said, Minister, about the need for significant funding—£30 million, I think, was the sum that you mentioned—for broadcasting mainly in the medium of English from Wales, and that that shouldn't affect the money that has already been allocated for Welsh-medium broadcasting from Wales. You touched also on the Silk commission and the conclusions of the commission on broadcasting. I've been of the same opinion as Alun Davies over the years that I would not want to see S4C being devolved on its own and separately from broadcasting generally. I am reconsidering that opinion by now, because the situation of S4C is so serious. Have you given consideration to Silk's conclusions, and, particularly, the suggestion that funding for S4C should be devolved to the Welsh Government?

[35] **Kenneth Skates:** We'd need security of the funding. We'd need surety of what that funding level is, and, at the moment, we're not getting that. We're being told the budgets for S4C need to be reduced, in line with the savings the BBC are expected to make. Our position at the moment is that the devolution of broadcasting would not be desirable right now, whether that's for S4C or BBC or any of the public service broadcasters. That remains our position, but, as I say, we're monitoring the situation very much as the days pass and we are trying to ensure that our influence is resulting in the right decisions from DCMS and within those PSBs themselves.

[36] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Dim ond **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Just to be clear

i fod yn glir ynglŷn â'ch safbwynt chi, a ydych chi'n dadlau bod y diffyg cyllid ar gyfer y rhaglenni trwy gyfrwng y Saesneg o Gymru yn dod oherwydd y toriadau y mae'r Llywodraeth yn San Steffan yn eu cyflwyno, neu a ydych chi'n dadlau bod yna ddyraniad annheg o fewn y BBC o ran Cymru, a bod angen i'r BBC yn ganolog roi mwy o arian i ddarlledu o Gymru?

about your position, are you arguing that the lack of funding for English-medium programmes from Wales is coming because of these cuts from the Westminster Government, or are you arguing that there's an unfair allocation within the BBC in terms of Wales, and that the BBC centrally needs to give more money to broadcasting from Wales?

[37] **Kenneth Skates:** Both.

[38] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Wel, diolch yn fawr iawn am hynny, Weinidog. I fynd yn ôl at sefyllfa S4C, onid y gofid yw y bydd yna doriadau pellach yn digwydd, a bod S4C wedi cyrraedd pwynt ar hyn o bryd lle y byddai'n anodd iawn iddyn nhw barhau fel darlledwr cyhoeddus pe bai yna doriadau pellach? Onid oes yna ddadl, felly, y dylid ceisio datganoli'r arian sydd yn cael ei gyflwyno trwy'r drwydded ar hyn o bryd i S4C er mwyn diogelu hynny i'r dyfodol?

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Well, thank you very much for that, Minister. Returning to the situation of S4C, isn't the concern that there will be further cuts, and that S4C has reached a point now where it would be very difficult for it to carry on as a public broadcaster if there were further cuts? Isn't there an argument, therefore, that we should try to devolve the money that is introduced through the licence at present to S4C in order to safeguard that for the future?

[39] **Kenneth Skates:** In terms of the sustainability of S4C, I think it could continue if it had to make further cuts, but how it would continue is very much open to question. What it would be producing is very much open to question, and the impact on the audience, I think, would be incredibly negative. I'm not convinced that seeking devolution of S4C alone—or responsibility for S4C alone—given the relationship with the BBC, would make most sense at this moment in time, and our position remains as it was when we gave evidence to Silk, and it was supported by Silk's recommendations in turn.

[40] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** A gaf i droi at eich sylwadau chi yn y papur

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Could I turn to your comments in the paper on the

ynglŷn â'r ddarpariaeth o Gymru o fewn sianel 3? Fe adnewyddwyd y drwydded ar gyfer sianel 3 ddiwedd y flwyddyn ddiwethaf. Beth yn union a wnaeth Llywodraeth Cymru er mwyn sicrhau bod yna fwy o ddarpariaeth o Gymru o fewn y drwydded honno cyn iddi gael ei hadnewyddu?

provision from Wales within channel 3? That licence was renewed for channel 3 at the end of last year. What exactly did the Welsh Government do to ensure that there was more provision from Wales within that licence before it was renewed?

[41] **Kenneth Skates:** We believe that increasing the provision is appropriate, especially considering ITV's current healthy financial position. We did welcome the creation of a separate channel 3 licence for Wales, which we believe should reflect Welsh identity not just in name but also in output, as has been the case with channel 3 licences in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and, of course, we are committed to a constructive dialogue with Ofcom and ITV to maximise the impact of the licence in Wales. We've been very clear that simply protecting the existing coverage provision should have been a minimum condition for renewal of the channel 3 licence. We, indeed, expect provision to be increased and improved. Considering the reduction that we've seen in ITV Cymru Wales in terms of production and spending, we believe that there is a very, very compelling case for increasing production and spending within Wales.

[42] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rwy'n croesawu eich dyheadau chi yn fawr iawn, fel Llywodraeth, ond y cwestiwn roeddwn yn ei ofyn oedd: pan adnewyddwyd y drwydded ddiwedd y flwyddyn ddiwethaf, onid y pryd hynny oedd yr adeg briodol i sicrhau bod y dyheadau hynny yn cael eu gwireddu o fewn y drwydded? A beth yn union a wnaeth Llywodraeth Cymru i sicrhau hynny? Mae'n ymddangos braidd yn hwyr i fynegi dyheadau yn awr, â'r drwydded wedi'i adnewyddu diwedd y flwyddyn ddiwethaf.

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** I welcome your aspirations greatly, as a Government, but the question I asked was: when the licence was renewed at the end of last year, wasn't that time the appropriate time to ensure that those aspirations were realised within the licence? And what exactly did the Welsh Government do to ensure that? It appears a bit late in the day now to express aspirations, with the licence having been renewed at the end of last year.

[43] **Kenneth Skates:** Have members of the committee seen the response to the Ofcom consultation from the Government? Because, if not, I'd be happy

to provide that response.

[44] **Christine Chapman:** No, we haven't.

[45] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rwy'n Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I welcome that croesawu hynny hefyd yn fawr iawn. very much as well.

[46] **Christine Chapman:** Are there any other Members who want to ask the Deputy Minister questions on this because we've got other parts of the portfolio that we want to pursue? If you're happy, I'll move on now, then, to—

[47] **Alun Davies:** Can I just say, Chair, that the answers that the Deputy Minister and the Minister have given to these questions are very illuminating, but what they also demonstrate is that not only the Welsh Government, but the National Assembly itself, should be actively involved in debates and discussions over the BBC charter renewal. I would say that I think that that's something that this committee should address later in the year.

[48] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. I want to move on now to another aspect of the Deputy Minister's portfolio, and that is the—. Well, certainly, our committee did our inquiry into the Welsh Premier League, so we've got a series of questions from Gwyn Price.

[49] Could you introduce your official as well?

[50] **Gwyn R. Price:** Perhaps we should wait for the substitutes to come on. *[Laughter.]*

[51] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, exactly, substitutes: I'm now joined by Jon Westlake.

[52] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you.

[53] **Gwyn R. Price:** Thank you, Chair, and good morning to you. Just to follow up on a couple of questions, could you tell us the extent to which the joined-up approach to developing Welsh football has been created between the Welsh Government and the Football Association of Wales, bearing in mind the committee's criticism in the 2012 report that the relationships had been 'non-existent' in the past?

[54] **Kenneth Skates:** I think we've made great progress in this area and I think investment has been made across Wales that is helping the game. The Welsh Football Trust and the relationship that we have with the trust as well is very beneficial to the sport. There have been good results in terms of investment and in terms of participation right across Wales. So, I think we've moved in the right direction since the inquiry took place.

[55] **Gwyn R. Price:** Thank you for that. Could you give us an update on the Welsh Government's approach to promoting 3G and 4G pitches amongst WPL clubs and how exactly will the project's investment so far be assessed? Could you tell us the Welsh Government's future plans for developing 3G and 4G pitches?

[56] **Kenneth Skates:** Significant investment is going into the development of 3G pitches right now, in part because of an excellent collaborative scheme involving football, rugby and hockey in Wales. So, we're seeing the development of 100 3G pitches across the length and breadth of Wales. This is very significant, not just for football, but for many other sports as well, given the ability to be able to utilise 3G pitches day and night repeatedly in a way that you can't utilise traditional turf pitches. So, significant sums: I think football themselves are investing £5 million in the scheme to upgrade Welsh Premier League facilities to include 3G facilities, and I think that's very much welcomed. I visited one myself recently in Bangor.

[57] **Gwyn R. Price:** What has the Welsh Government invested in it before today?

[58] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, the investment largely is channelled through Sport Wales and is then directed towards the national governing bodies and also supported through funding from the Welsh Football Trust.

[59] **Gwyn R. Price:** So, you do recognise, Minister, that the inclusion of 3G and 4G pitches is essential to a lot of places.

[60] **Kenneth Skates:** Oh, crucial. In terms of being able to increase participation by increasing the availability of space to be able to play football, 3G pitches are vital.

[61] **Gwyn R. Price:** Thank you, Chair.

[62] **Christine Chapman:** I've got a couple of questions—. Oh, sorry. Jon.

[63] **Mr Westlake:** I was just going to add, Deputy Minister, that recently we've been working with colleagues in education to make sure that appropriate sport development is put in place for the twenty-first century schools programme. Many of those developments include the provision of 3G pitches.

[64] **Gwyn R. Price:** Yes. I can back that up—the new Oakdale project in the school in my constituency is going to have a 3G pitch, and thank you very much for that. Thank you.

[65] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. I've got a couple of supplementaries now, first of all from Mike Hedges and then John Griffiths. So, Mike.

09:45

[66] **Mike Hedges:** Obviously, I'm a great fan of 3G and 4G pitches and the ability to play continually on them rather than be limited to one or two games on Saturday and Sunday means that you get more use out of the facility. The question I've got is: have you published anywhere, or are you going to, the number of 3G and 4G pitches currently in Wales and where they're actually based? If you haven't, will you? Also, will you, in conjunction with other bodies, actually produce a plan for future development, because I know some areas are very strong in 3G and 4G pitches, and some are less so?

[67] **Kenneth Skates:** Absolutely. I'm pleased to be able to say that, yes, we've asked Sport Wales to look at not just 3G and 4G pitches, but also sports facilities across the board, right across the length and breadth of Wales. They're conducting a mapping exercise, they're looking at what is fit for purpose, what may need to be invested in, and where there are new and emerging sports facilities—not just 3G, but other facilities as well. So, yes, that work is being undertaken at the moment.

[68] **Mike Hedges:** And it will be published—

[69] **Christine Chapman:** What's the timescale for that? Sorry, Mike. When are you expecting that report?

[70] **Kenneth Skates:** Imminently.



[71] **Christine Chapman:** Oh, right. Okay.

[72] **Mike Hedges:** Will you publish what we've got and where they are now or in the near future?

[73] **Kenneth Skates:** It will include both: it will include what we've got now and what is being planned at the moment.

[74] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. John.

[75] **John Griffiths:** Thanks, Chair. I think it is to aim for to have that more strategic approach to ensure good coverage across Wales and make sure that there aren't any gaps and there isn't unnecessary overprovision in some areas, which would be wasteful of resource. So, I very much welcome that, but I just wonder more broadly, Minister, whether you could say something about that more strategic approach in terms of the links with schools and the Tanni Grey-Thompson report and now the work that's going on around Donaldson to make sure that we get physical literacy at the heart of our school life—particularly with regard to the hub approach, because, if we are going to have these opportunities to create sporting hubs, I think it's really important that we link well with the schools. I think the idea is to get the coaches and the sports clubs into the schools, but also the pupils out of the schools into the hubs, where they can, perhaps, experience a variety of sports in one place at one time and see where their interests, abilities and passions lie and develop them for the future. So, in terms of strategic join-up within Welsh Government and with key partners, I wonder if you could say just a little bit—I know we haven't got a great deal of time, Chair—about those connections.

[76] **Kenneth Skates:** Okay. On the facilities side, you're absolutely right, we need to a) avoid duplication of facility development, and that's why I'd really welcome the Welsh Rugby Union, the FAW and Hockey Wales's collaborative approach to developing facilities that they can all use. Also, in tandem with our work on twenty-first century schools and, of course, local authority provision as well, it's essential in an environment where public funds are so stretched that we don't duplicate what is offered to members of the public. But then, secondly, we need to ensure that the right support is available, whether in the form of the physical literacy framework within schools or community sport facilities and the support that goes with them.

[77] Now, it might be worth Members having a look at the WRU's school

club hub model, which has resulted in a phenomenal increase in participation, particularly amongst girls and black and minority ethnic pupils as well. What they've been able to do, by working with schools, by making schools the hub for rugby within a community, linked in with rugby clubs, is to create a seamless pathway and attract new entrants into the sport. It's the sort of model—. John Griffiths talks about the need to ensure that schools become the hub, if you like, for sport and physical activity—well that's exactly what the WRU are able to deliver through their school club hub model, and I think it's an interesting model that other national governing bodies are looking at as well. Welsh gymnastics, as well, I think it's fair to say, have been astonishing in their success by generating interest and going into the hearts of communities and creating hubs of activity as well. Recently, we've seen the opening of the Somersault Gymnastics club in Cardiff, where there are 1,000 new young members taking part—a fantastic community hub. It engages adults and children in physical activity at all levels and it creates, again, that seamless pathway. Of course, they've brought in Frankie Jones to be able to help in terms of coaching and inspiring young people. So, there are some fantastic models out there, but we need to make sure that we don't take our eye off collaboration at any step.

[78] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Sounds good. John?

[79] **John Griffiths:** Could I, just very quickly, Chair, thank the Minister very much for that response, which I think is very encouraging. I do think Welsh Gymnastics and their social enterprise models are very innovative and effective. I just think that community-focused schools and a more consistent approach to that is a part of the picture as we move forward as well.

[80] **Kenneth Skates:** And this equally applies to other services—libraries, for example, arts and leisure services. Creating hubs where schools are the focus of the community is really important.

[81] **Christine Chapman:** Yes. Okay. I think I'd like to move on now to the next aspect, which is participation in the arts in Wales. In January 2013, a task and finish group of the committee published its report into participation in the arts in Wales. I'm saying this slowly so you'll have time for your officials to move.

[82] **Kenneth Skates:** I'm joined again by Natasha Hale.

[83] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. We've got a number of questions there.

Janet, would you like to—. I'm sorry, would you like to introduce your official again?

[84] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, sorry. I'm joined by Natasha Hale.

[85] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thanks.

[86] **Janet Finch–Saunders:** Right. Minister, if you could just advise the committee the ways in which you're measuring progress towards your intentions for Wales to become the most active and creative nation within the UK. How realistic is this aim?

[87] **Kenneth Skates:** It is very realistic. I think it's within our DNA to be sporting, to be physically active, to be artistic, to be creative, and we need to set a very bold ambition for Wales to become the most creative and active nation in Europe in order to encourage people to take up physical activity and to take up participation in the arts. We now have an action plan for participation with a monitoring regime. I think it's quite striking that we are seeing increases in participation—not just passive, but also active participation in the arts—just as we are, if you look at what's happening across the border, seeing a decrease in participation rates in sport. Here, we're seeing an increase. We need to make sure that that trend continues, and I'm pleased that, through working with institutions right across Wales, we are reaching out, and I think the Fusion project is going to be really important in this regard. We are reaching out to new audiences and new communities who previously might have felt that there were insurmountable barriers to them participating in cultural activities, whether they be psychological or in terms of infrastructure or physical in other senses.

[88] **Janet Finch–Saunders:** Okay. Just on the sports point, in previous committees, I've raised concerns that, whilst you say that there's increased participation, certainly in minority groups there is an awful lot of work to be done there. I just wonder how you're conducting further work into that.

[89] **Kenneth Skates:** If we go back then to—

[90] **Christine Chapman:** I was hoping to keep to these sections really—

[91] **Janet Finch–Saunders:** But it's important; it's all related—

[92] **Christine Chapman:** I'll allow this one then—

[93] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, I was going to say that, if we're not going back to sport, I think this is a really, really valid point. Not just in terms of black and minority ethnic communities—and I mentioned earlier the school club hub model, which has been particularly striking—Sport Wales are working very closely with other organisations in partnership to ensure that they can first identify barriers to participation, but then eliminate those barriers. There has been a focus on BME so far within this committee today. I think it's worth flagging up that there is an urgent need to make sure we tear down any barriers that exist that are preventing women from participating in sport. There's a really frightening drop-off at the age of 13 amongst girls and women. That needs to be addressed. We're identifying the barriers and they are being dealt with, but also amongst disabled people as well—

[94] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Absolutely, yes.

[95] **Kenneth Skates:** I've got to pay tribute to Disability Sport Wales. Their participation rates—participation by disabled people in sport and physical activity as a whole has increased, and what they are doing right across Wales is really quite inspiring. It's worth mentioning them, I think. But there are also many elderly people who wish to be physically active. I think the key is that we don't just consider sport to be the be-all and end-all. Sport is a component, in my view, of physical activity. Again, Sport Wales have been working with the likes of StreetGames and with the Ramblers and so forth, and with the National Trust. There's a great scheme now taking place at National Trust properties in Wales, attracting in young mums for pram-pushing exercise and older members of the community for Nordic walking and so forth, and reaching out to new groups that previously have felt that, if you like, sport in the traditional sense, is not for them. It's crucially important. I'm pleased to see that funds are being diverted to non-traditional forms of sport and physical activity to engage more people.

[96] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** And then, just on that point, a little point to bring in there, though, bearing in mind, with cuts to local government funding by your Government, we are seeing local authorities threatening to close leisure centres. How are you working with the Minister for local government to ensure—? You can't have one department pushing one thing and then another department, through funding cuts, then contradicting the aims that you have.

[97] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes. I mean, tragically, the reality is that there is a

legacy that was announced for the London 2012 Olympics that has been shattered because of the UK Government's decimation of public funding. What we've seen across the border is a drop in participation in sport as a direct consequence of local authority funding being strangled. By comparison, local authority funding in Wales has not been reduced by anywhere near the amount that has been reduced in England. In addition, 47 per cent of local authorities have gone against the UK Government's wish to freeze council taxes because they recognise that even more local authority leisure centres are going to have to close across the border in England. In contrast, what we've done in Wales is that, at a far earlier stage, we've notified local government of the need to look at alternative delivery models for leisure and sports facilities. They've done that. We've worked with them on the development of a toolkit for community asset transfer and for looking at alternative delivery models. I'm pleased to say that, right across Wales, local authorities are considering alternatives to closure and we have not seen the sort of widespread decimation of sport and leisure in Wales that, sadly, we've seen across the border. That shows in the participation figures. We simply have not seen that sort of decline in Wales, and that's something that we should be proud of. Nonetheless, there are huge pressures. We know that DCMS have been asked to model for a 40 per cent cut in their funding. Now, if I had to do that here, with my very limited resources, and if I wanted to stop salami-slicing, which I think we would have to stop doing otherwise everything would fall apart, in order to save 40 per cent of my budget you're looking at stopping sport. You're also looking at closing all national library sites, just about—. Oh, and also, you'd probably have to close down the royal commission, and then you'd probably just about make a 40 per cent saving. That shows how desperate the savings—

[98] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** With all due respect, Deputy Minister, I didn't ask for a party political speech here. What I asked was about the threats that are coming through in Wales from local government—local authorities—where they are actually threatening still to cut leisure centres. So, the question is: how are you working with the local government Minister? That was my question.

[99] **Kenneth Skates:** No, sorry, as I said, you know, we are working together, whether it be on the toolkit for community asset transfer—. We've been working together—and with the WCVA—on a programme for looking at alternative methods of raising funds. You know, whether it's in my constituency or other constituencies, we have seen successful transfers to the community of leisure facilities where local authorities have decided that

they cannot continue to run them. There have been cases of transfers that have not been successful, and that's precisely why we developed at an early stage that toolkit that combines advice with best practice.

[100] **Janet Finch–Saunders:** Okay. Thanks. Going back to the arts—

[101] **Christine Chapman:** Janet, before you move on—I'll come back to you—Peter has a supplementary. I'll come back to you.

[102] **Janet Finch–Saunders:** Yes, that's fine.

[103] **Peter Black:** I accept what you say, Minister, that local government in Wales was not cut as deeply as in England, but of course, the protection that they've had has effectively ended with the current settlement. We know that there are threats to the settlement in future years; so, local authorities will be, I think, paring back on non-statutory functions such as sport and leisure.

[104] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[105] **Peter Black:** Now, you've talked in the past about bringing additional resources into the arts, particularly. I am just wondering how far advanced that agenda is and what measures you're thinking of doing to try to achieve that particular aim.

[106] **Kenneth Skates:** We've done some very interesting work—can I share it with the committee? Looking at best practice from right across Europe and alternative methods of leveraging in funding for the arts, which could be applicable to sport as well. I'd be very happy to share that with the committee. Also, I may ask the Arts Council of Wales to provide a briefing paper for Members, which is basically a response to some of the work that we've conducted ourselves.

10:00

[107] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, if you could do that.

[108] **Peter Black:** Right, okay. That would be good; thank you.

[109] **Christine Chapman:** Is this a supplementary on this? Then I'll come back to Janet. Just on this point, and then I want to come back to Janet.

[110] **John Griffiths:** It was just about Arts & Business Cymru in terms of leveraging money into that, because I think they've got quite a successful model in terms of a high ratio of dealing, so that for every pound of public money that is provided to them, the money that they then generate from business is quite impressive. I know that they've suffered cuts in recent years, and there have been fears about their ability to continue leveraging in that money from business. So, I just wonder what the latest position is with Arts & Business Cymru and Welsh Government support for them.

[111] **Kenneth Skates:** The Arts Council of Wales have taken over responsibility for monitoring both its own and Welsh Government's core funding for Arts & Business Cymru, so the impact of our funding and of Arts & Business Cymru's performance generally is currently being assessed. That will then inform any longer-term decisions on how best to support this activity. Again, I'd be more than happy to share with the committee any analysis and report.

[112] **Christine Chapman:** Okay, thank you. Janet.

[113] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Thank you. Back to the—. What specific measures are you taking to tackle the decline in adults taking part in arts activities between 2012-13 and 2013-14?

[114] **Kenneth Skates:** Fusion. The Fusion project is absolutely crucial in this regard. The six pioneer areas have begun work—

[115] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Where are those areas?

[116] **Kenneth Skates:** They are—. Right, now you're testing me there. They are Cardiff, Gwynedd, Wrexham, Torfaen, Newport—. Is that five? There's a sixth, so I'll need to get you the sixth one. [*Interruption.*] Swansea; that's it—Swansea. I shouldn't have forgotten Swansea; Mrs Hart will be very angry. [*Laughter.*]

[117] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Nor in this committee should you forget it. [*Laughter.*]

[118] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes. Mike's fortunately not here at the moment. So, the six pioneer areas have begun work and there have been some early successes. Basically, through Fusion what we are doing is linking together some of the most deprived communities with key cultural institutions and

with local authorities and other partners to make sure that people who previously, as I've already talked about, have not accessed opportunities to participate in culture or the arts are given every opportunity to do so. So, it's about identifying barriers and opening up opportunities, whether they be in terms of transport, whether they be in terms of confidence-building or in terms of just overcoming other physical barriers.

[119] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I just wondered whether you would be attending the Llandudno Arts Weekend this weekend.

[120] **Kenneth Skates:** Oh, is it this weekend?

[121] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes. It's going to be a very good event for anyone wishing to—

[122] **Kenneth Skates:** This weekend, I'm pleased to say that I will be at Surf Snowdonia for the Red Bull event, and also I'll be at the outdoor festival in Dafydd Elis-Thomas's constituency.

[123] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** That's in mine.

[124] **Kenneth Skates:** Oh, is it?

[125] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes.

[126] **Kenneth Skates:** Sorry—your constituency twice.

[127] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Capel Curig's mine.

[128] **Christine Chapman:** Any other questions, Janet?

[129] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes. The extent to which the Welsh Government is providing support to help Arts & Business Cymru become less reliant on subsidy, and the extent to which this has been successful.

[130] **Kenneth Skates:** I think the response that I've given to John Griffiths applies. It's currently being assessed and a report will be produced presently.

[131] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** And also your views on why taking part in arts activities is significantly higher among Welsh speakers than non-Welsh speakers, and what action he is taking to address this.



[132] **Christine Chapman:** Natasha?

[133] **Ms Hale:** I just wanted to mention the levering in of more private money into the arts. I think the position that we've taken with the arts council and the piece of work that you'll see is that it's really important that all of the arts take a responsibility for levering in private money, rather than just one organisation. Actually, it's the responsibility of all of those people who receive public money to get the most of that public money to lever in other moneys from wherever possible. It won't be the responsibility, or can't be the responsibility of one single organisation; it needs to be the responsibility of everybody who is receiving public money for the arts.

[134] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes. And this is why the WCVA conference is being held in the autumn. I think it's absolutely crucial, because it looks at how arts organisations can lever in additional funding and utilise new digital technologies for that purpose as well.

[135] The Member raised a really important point about disparity. Actually, we could go further and look at how people from other demographics are more likely to participate in the arts. That's precisely why we've developed the action plan and why there is going to be robust monitoring of activity, so that we can identify and then address any barriers and any other reasons why specific groups of people are not participating in the arts.

[136] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Thank you.

[137] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Janet, any other questions?

[138] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** No.

[139] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. We can move on now, but I just want to remind you we've got about 25 minutes left. I want to move on now to discussing or asking the Deputy Minister his views on our report on the Welsh Government's historic environment policy. So, Peter, you've got some questions on this.

[140] **Peter Black:** Indeed.

[141] **Kenneth Skates:** And I'm now joined by Kate Clark.

[142] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Peter.

[143] **Peter Black:** Thank you. Minister, you've issued new policy guidance and advice alongside the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill. I'm just wondering how that will simplify the listing system, as recommended by the committee, and what your evidence base is for believing that will happen.

[144] **Kenneth Skates:** I'm sorry; I was chatting with another Member when—

[145] **Peter Black:** I saw that and I thought I'd carry on anyway.

[146] **Kenneth Skates:** Sorry. I apologise.

[147] **Christine Chapman:** Peter, do you want to—?

[148] **Peter Black:** You've issued new policy guidance and advice alongside the Historic Environment (Wales) Bill. I'm interested in how you believe that will simplify the listing system, which is what we, as a committee, recommended, and what your evidence base is for believing that will happen.

[149] **Kenneth Skates:** Okay. First of all, I think that the updated historic environment chapter of 'Planning Policy Wales', the technical advice note and also the good practice guidance on managing change to listed buildings in Wales will help with the further understanding of the listed building process and hopefully lead to shorter determinations through better understanding. Kate?

[150] **Ms Clark:** I think the key factor with listed buildings is to understand—excuse me; I've got a cold—why they're important and why they're significant, and that enables people to make better decisions on them and have more clarity about how they need to be managed. The guidance is aimed at doing that.

[151] **Peter Black:** Okay, but does it simplify the system?

[152] **Ms Clark:** I think by making the significance clearer, the decision making becomes simpler and easier.

[153] **Peter Black:** Right. So, you're talking about the decision-making process being clearer, but if somebody owned a listed building or wanted to get a building listed, does this new guidance make it easier for them to do

that?

[154] **Ms Clark:** To make a—

[155] **Peter Black:** To get a building listed or to understand the process by which that decision is taken.

[156] **Ms Clark:** The new guidance will and does include information about how decisions are made and will certainly, I think, assist people in understanding why buildings are listed and why their importance is the key to good decision making.

[157] **Peter Black:** So, there are clear criteria in there that people—. And are those criteria national criteria, or will people be able to apply them in terms of local significance?

[158] **Ms Clark:** I think the committee, as part of the Bill, have been looking at the issue of local listing and local significance and how we manage that. I think we're looking forward to recommendations on that and how we take that forward.

[159] **Peter Black:** Okay.

[160] **Christine Chapman:** Peter, before you move on—is it a supplementary on this, Rhodri Glyn?

[161] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Ydy, **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yes, Chair. Gadeirydd. Diolch yn fawr iawn. Rŷch Thank you very much. You say that chi'n dweud bod y broses o ddod i the process of making a decision is— benderfyniad yn cael ei— [*Inaudible.*—because of the guidance [Anghlywadwy.]—oherwydd yr that is currently offered by the Welsh arweiniad sy'n cael ei gynnig bellach Government. We have an increasing gan Lywodraeth Cymru. Mae gennym problem in Wales where a large ni broblem gynyddol yng Nghymru lle number of chapels, and churches for mae yna lawer iawn o gapeli, ac that matter, are listed when there is eglwysi o ran hynny, wedi'u rhestru no use made of them at present, and pan nad oes yna unrhyw ddefnydd the trustees find themselves in a iddyn nhw bellach, ac mae'r position where it's very difficult for ymddiriedolwyr yn cael eu hunain them to then sell those buildings, mewn sefyllfa lle mae'n anodd iawn because they have been listed. Will iddyn nhw werthu'r adeiladau hynny, the type of guidance that the Welsh

oherwydd eu bod nhw wedi'u rhestru. A fydd y math o gyfarwyddyd y mae Llywodraeth Cymru'n ei gynnig nawr yn help yn y broses o sicrhau bod modd gwaredu rhai o'r adeiladau yma a dim ond cadw'r rhai sydd o bwysigrwydd arbennig o ran treftadaeth?

Government is putting forward now be of assistance in the process of ensuring that we dispose of some of these buildings and only keep the ones that are of special interest in terms of heritage?

[162] **Kenneth Skates:** I think the Member makes a very important point here in that we need greater degrees of flexibility, which is precisely what the managing listed buildings guidance will provide. Also, there are opportunities, where appropriate, to de-list chapels and places of worship. The numbers of chapels and churches that are listed I don't think are as high as what many people actually think. Shall we provide a note on the numbers by grading as well—I, II and II\*—because, actually, the numbers are not that great? The key is ensuring that a listed building, whether it be a place of worship or any other building, has a use fit for the twenty-first century and that the community or the owner or owners are able to make best use of a historic asset, and to turn what some people might deem to be a liability into a unique opportunity. So, it's very much about being able to value what that asset is, but also having the flexibility to be able to design it for a purpose, so that it suits twenty-first century living. There are some fantastic examples. I was at Hay castle just at the weekend and I recommend to the committee, if you want to view an outstanding example of how a listed building can be converted in a very imaginative way that shows an enormous degree of flexibility, Hay castle would be it. Kate?

[163] **Ms Clark:** The other thing that's worth mentioning is the places of worship strategy. We're working very closely with the different faith bodies in Wales on finding practical future strategies for our places of worship.

[164] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Yr unig beth y byddwn i'n ei ddweud, a byddai John Griffiths yn gallu cadarnhau hyn, yw ein bod wedi bod yn gweithio ar y strategaeth yma ers rhai blynyddoedd bellach—yn sicr yn mynd nôl i 2007—ond nid ydym fel petaem yn agosach at y lan o ran galluogi pobl i wneud defnydd

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** The only thing that I would say, and John Griffiths would be able to confirm this, is that we have been working on this strategy for a number of years now—certainly going back to 2007—but it's not as if we're getting any closer to reaching a point where we can enable people to make purposeful

pwrpasol, fel mae'r Gweinidog yn use, as the Minister said, in terms of  
dweud, o ran anghenion yr unfed the needs of the twenty-first century,  
ganrif ar hugain, o'r adeiladau yma. of these buildings.

[165] **Kenneth Skates:** I think there are good examples, but I would admit and I would agree—the Member is right—there are still too many listed buildings that are not being utilised and equally there are too many buildings that are not listed that are not being utilised, whether they be high-street shops or empty homes. There is a need, I think, for us to address, particularly given the shortage in housing within Wales, empty properties and properties not being utilised for any purpose whatsoever. This is where I think one Bill, in terms of the historic environment, cannot address all of the problems that we face. It's very important that we link in with the planning Bill and the environment Bill to make sure that there's flexibility in terms of planning and to make sure that there are opportunities. This is why it's important as well for us to work as closely as possible with colleagues in local government as well, and with communities and tackling poverty, to make sure that funding, whether it be through 'Vibrant and Viable Places', is channelled in the most effective way to address not just poverty but also the poor use of buildings or the non-use of buildings.

[166] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Ydych chi, Weinidog, yn cynnal trafodaethau? Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Minister, are you conducting discussions? You talked about the relationship with berthynas gyda llywodraeth leol yn y local government there. There is a fan honno. Mae yna gysail bod concern that heritage departments of adrannau treftadaeth awdurdodau local authorities can be much less lleol yn gallu bod yn llawer iawn llai flexible than Cadw, for example, in hyblyg na Cadw, er enghraifft, yng the context of the use of these nghyd-destun y defnydd o'r buildings. Are you having those adeiladau yma. Ydych chi'n cael y discussions with local government to trafodaethau hyn gyda llywodraeth ensure that authorities also move in leol i sicrhau eu bod nhw hefyd yn the same direction as the Welsh symud i'r un cyfeiriad â Llywodraeth Government on these issues?  
Cymru ar y materion yma?

[167] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, both as part of the historic environment group and, of course, as part of the statutory group that will be formed, if and when legislation is passed by the National Assembly. I think it's essential that we get standard good practice right across Wales. In terms of engagement, it's very positive, it's very strong at the moment, but the organisation of a

statutory group as a consequence of legislation I think will only strengthen it further.

10:15

[168] **Christine Chapman:** Kate, did you want to add to that, and I'll ask Peter then to come in? So, did you want to add to that?

[169] **Ms Clark:** I was going to say the other framework in which we work with local conservation officers is the built heritage forum. So, we meet with them regularly and we talk through cases and we look at some of the issues. I think also the aim of the guidance is to provide greater clarity on decision making and greater consistency on decision making.

[170] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. Peter?

[171] **Peter Black:** Just following on from Rhodri Glyn's questions, I think it's a very important point that, yes, there are good examples of listed buildings that have been brought back into use, and I've been to Hay castle and I think it's an excellent example of that, but there are also examples of where the process has failed. We saw this morning in the paper Kinmel Hall; there's the Palace Theatre in Swansea, and Dunbar House, of course, near Mike Hedges's home in Mike's constituency. There are a lot of very good buildings that basically have rotted away for decades and require huge amounts of money to be spent on bringing them back into use. I think the issue is that local authorities have, in some ways, been less robust than they should be in terms of getting owners to face up to their responsibilities, and they've done that because they fear the financial consequences of serving the relevant orders on them. So, is there a way of addressing that particular problem?

[172] **Kenneth Skates:** There's a really interesting—. I'll try to get details if I can, but I'd point Members towards Barcelona and look at how Barcelona are dealing with empty buildings. It's very interesting. There are a number of reasons why owners—again, whether it be listed buildings or non-listed buildings—may not have them in use. It might be because they are banking property ready to sell on at a higher price at a later date. We know that that was a serious problem during the economic downturn, and it continues to be. There are reasons around, for example, the fact that a lot of owners don't have the ability to draw down the sort of resources required to maintain and enhance a property. So, that's why we intervene if we can with grants that then enable lottery grants to be pursued. But specifically with regard to local

authorities and their ability and their willingness to be determined in ensuring that properties are brought back into use, I would point the committee towards what has happened in Barcelona. I'll—

[173] **Christine Chapman:** If you could send that—

[174] **Kenneth Skates:** I'll provide a news article on it. Basically, in Barcelona, they fine if buildings are not in use. So, they have fined if buildings are not in use—

[175] **Peter Black:** And do local authorities have that power here?

[176] **Kenneth Skates:** I'd need to check on whether they have that power at the moment.

[177] **Peter Black:** If not, are you proposing an amendment to your Bill?

[178] **Kenneth Skates:** Let's provide a briefing note. [*Laughter.*]

[179] **Peter Black:** I think that would be a useful tool, which local authorities would like to—. I don't actually think they do have that power. We'll find out.

[180] **Kenneth Skates:** At the moment, the powers concern the ability to be able to recoup any money that local authorities have spent on buildings.

[181] **Peter Black:** Indeed, as they have done in terms of Dunbar House, of course, where they've compulsorily forced a sale of that property and taken their share.

[182] **Ms Clark:** And to take enforcement action.

[183] **Peter Black:** But the point I'm making is that enforcement action hasn't been taken because local authorities have been afraid of the economic consequences. Dunbar House is one thing. The Palace Theatre—we're talking £6 million. God knows how much we're talking in terms of Kinmel Hall in terms of bringing the property back into use.

[184] **Kenneth Skates:** I think this would be a really interesting area for both the committee and for Welsh Government to look at.

[185] **Peter Black:** I think we look forward to your view on that. We are

looking at our report later, as it happens. I think we also need to make a distinction between listed empty properties and empty buildings—

[186] **Kenneth Skates:** Absolutely, yes.

[187] **Peter Black:** —because, you're right, there are lots of empty shops, but they can be demolished or they can be converted without having to go through the sort of rigmarole you would have to in terms of a listed building—quite rightly so. I think there is a clear distinction in terms of ownership of those different properties. Okay. If I move on then—

[188] **Christine Chapman:** Just one supplementary from Mark. I'll come back to you then. Mark on this.

[189] **Mark Isherwood:** Closer to home than Barcelona, how do you draw and could you be drawing on the expertise available in Wales from people in north Wales, such as the Gwrych Castle Preservation Trust or the Victorian Society, Edwardian society, and so on, who've been actively involved in this work for a very, very long time?

[190] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, of course, we do draw on their expertise, and we also fund many of those organisations—we support them. So, many members of those organisations are members of our historic environment group. There will be opportunities for them to apply to become more involved once the legislation has hopefully been approved by the National Assembly for Wales. But there's no doubt about it, whether it's in the north, the south, the east or the west, there is a great depth of talent in Wales and enormous insight that we constantly tap into and call on for advice.

[191] **Peter Black:** Moving on, Minister, could you give us an explanation of the roles and responsibilities of the new Wales heritage group and what it's supposed to achieve?

[192] **Kenneth Skates:** Sorry?

[193] **Peter Black:** The new Wales heritage group. What are its roles and responsibilities and what do you hope it will achieve?

[194] **Ms Clark:** Are you referring to the advisory panel post that's in the Bill?

[195] **Peter Black:** I'm referring to the new Wales heritage group, which is



slightly different from the advisory panel, as I understand it.

[196] **Ms Clark:** The umbrella body, looking at recommendation 14.

[197] **Peter Black:** I haven't got it in front of me, but it's the new Wales heritage group. As I understand it, you've got a Wales heritage group, a historic environment group, and you've got an advisory panel for the Welsh historic environment.

[198] **Ms Clark:** The main body is the historic environment group, which provides advice to the Minister and to us in relation to the historic environment. What we've also done, following the recommendations of the committee, was support the creation of a small group to bring together third sector bodies such as the Victorian Society and the amenity societies that provide advice on listed buildings in Wales. So, that's the group that we've been—. The civic trust have been helping to bring them together and to create a stronger network of those voluntary bodies.

[199] **Peter Black:** So, that heritage group is a network.

[200] **Ms Clark:** Yes.

[201] **Peter Black:** Does it have a role with Government or is it just a network of those particular groups in terms of helping them with their work?

[202] **Ms Clark:** Those bodies are statutory consultees in relation to the historic environment and particularly listed buildings. So, their role comes from their function as statutory consultees, but we're also looking at what other networking they could provide, what other services they could provide and what other ways in which they could bring together the very, very powerful and important voluntary sector in Wales, because I think there is a wide range of voluntary bodies in Wales that have an interest in the historic environment.

[203] **Peter Black:** And how does that link into the historic environment group and the advisory panel on the Welsh historic environment?

[204] **Ms Clark:** Members of that network are represented on the historic environment group and they have been bringing back reports on their work and have been talking to us about what they're doing.

[205] **Peter Black:** And the advisory panel.

[206] **Ms Clark:** That would be a separate body, established under the Bill.

[207] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, that's specifically for the Bill.

[208] **Peter Black:** Just for that Bill.

[209] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[210] **Peter Black:** So, once the Bill is passed—

[211] **Ms Clark:** We've got an advisory panel that has been advising on the Bill, but, under the Bill, there is a proposal to create a new panel that will advise the Welsh Government and that will be an ad hominem panel, based on people with expertise, rather than a representative panel.

[212] **Peter Black:** And how does that new advisory panel fit in with the historic environment group and this new heritage group?

[213] **Kenneth Skates:** I thought that we'd provided the committee previously with a table of roles and responsibilities.

[214] **Peter Black:** You may have done, but could you explain it again?

[215] **Kenneth Skates:** Okay, I'll provide that again then because it's quite extensive. It identifies basically what the individual roles and responsibilities are of the groups.

[216] **Peter Black:** Okay. It just seems to me that there's a lot of duplication here.

[217] **Kenneth Skates:** That was one of the concerns that committee had, which was why we decided to provide that information. So, we acknowledge that there were concerns about possible duplication, but we then provided the briefing note on it. So, we'll do that again, if Members wish.

[218] **Peter Black:** Okay.

[219] **Christine Chapman:** We are running a bit short of time.

[220] **Peter Black:** Sorry.

[221] **Christine Chapman:** No, it's fine, Peter. We've got two other sections. If we have 10 minutes extra, are you able to stay, Deputy Minister?

[222] **Kenneth Skates:** No, sorry. I've got a teleconference with the Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and another five Ministers as well from around Britain. Sorry; apologies.

[223] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. We've got about six minutes, so we'll keep going and if you can supply us then with a written response, that will be fine.

[224] **Kenneth Skates:** I'd be happy to—any questions that Members have.

[225] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. We'll move on now to participation levels in sport. I've got some questions here from Mike and Mark on this section.

[226] **Mike Hedges:** I've only got one: when will the physical activity executive group publish its pan-Wales physical activity plan?

[227] **Kenneth Skates:** I think I mentioned that earlier, did I? It's imminent.

[228] **Mike Hedges:** Does 'imminent' mean September? Does 'imminent' mean October? Does 'imminent' mean at the end of this year or does 'imminent' mean before 30 March?

[229] **Kenneth Skates:** No, I'd expect it by the end of this year.

[230] **Mike Hedges:** By 31 December.

[231] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes.

[232] **Mike Hedges:** Thank you.

[233] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Do you have any other questions, Mike?

[234] **Mike Hedges:** No, that's me.

[235] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Mark, have you got any questions?

[236] **Mark Isherwood:** How will you monitor outcomes and value for money

for the community asset transfer toolkit you referred to earlier and the sports facilities capital loans scheme for local authorities?

[237] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, the toolkit itself basically provides information and guidance, so, I don't believe there is a necessity to be able to—and it's basically static; it's on the Welsh Government website, so it would be very difficult to assess the cost benefit of that, given that the cost is negligible by providing information online. In terms of the interest-free capital loans scheme, bids are currently being assessed, and there are strict criteria that have to be met in order to draw down the funding. I can provide the criteria if you wish, but they very much focus on the need to ensure that there is sustainability, that the facilities provided are new and compelling, drawing in people, particularly from disadvantaged communities. So, one element of the criteria places an emphasis on proximity to or being within Communities First areas. Basically, we're trying to cut across a number of Government priorities with that interest-free capital loans scheme to ensure that we tackle poverty, tackle social exclusion, ensure that sports and leisure facilities are fit for purpose for the twenty-first century for as many people as possible.

[238] **Mark Isherwood:** Could you provide us with a very brief update on the roll-out of those schemes thus far, not just Communities First areas. As a Bevan Foundation report on poverty said two weeks ago, simply place-based approaches miss huge numbers of people in need.

[239] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, this is where, I think, StreetGames are really valuable, and park runs, where you're able to take sport and physical activity essentially to the doorstep. It's incredibly valuable.

[240] **Christine Chapman:** On the StreetGames, has there been some sort of work on the gender dimension?

[241] **Kenneth Skates:** That's right.

[242] **Christine Chapman:** It's because it's culturally been difficult, hasn't it, really?

[243] **Kenneth Skates:** Yes, absolutely. Funding. A significant amount of funding has been granted to StreetGames specifically to roll out a project, basically involving girls—it's an Us Girls project—and it aims to increase the number of young women who are participating in physical activity.

[244] **Christine Chapman:** So, that's been looked at as well. Mark, do you have any other questions?

[245] **Mark Isherwood:** Yes. You referred earlier to the impact of funding changes in local authorities on leisure facilities and how, therefore, local authorities need to approach service delivery. How do we avoid presenting that as a threat rather than, perhaps, as an opportunity, drawing on good practice established in Wales and in many parts of England before the credit crunch, but also ensuring that advice is offered immediately, for example, the Wales Co-operative Centre and the Co-production Wales networks?

[246] **Kenneth Skates:** The Wales Co-operative Centre, I have to say, have been incredibly valuable in helping to put together the toolkit in particular, and I know that they have offered invaluable advice to a number of community organisations across Wales that are looking at community asset transfer. I think we do need to see public funding constraints as a threat primarily. However, in many cases, regardless of whether or not public funds were being reduced, there is a clear need for leisure services to be fit for purpose, and, in many cases, leisure centres, sports facilities, regardless of whether there were funding cuts, require consolidating in some areas. Overprovision can lead to instability for all of the facilities within a given area. That's why the work of Sport Wales in mapping and assessing what is fit for purpose, what is being developed, what may not be sustainable is so, so important.

[247] **Mark Isherwood:** That's clear, and there's a good example in part of my patch, which is in your patch.

[248] Finally, in terms of the aquatics group report, what action have you taken to improve the performance of the free swimming scheme?

[249] **Kenneth Skates:** Well, as a consequence, partly, of this committee's desire to see us improve outcomes from the free swimming initiative, we asked Sport Wales to look at the initiative, to make sure that it was delivering best value and to ensure that, where it wasn't delivering, changes were made. So, they put together an aquatics group—representatives of Sport Wales, of local authorities and of the national governing body—and the recommendation was made to change the funding criteria, which has now been done and which better aligns free swimming initiatives with anti-poverty strategies.

10:30

[250] The funding now is targeted at ensuring that all young people are able to swim. So, the money is being spent on essentially giving people those life skills to swim, learning to swim, but with a particular focus on deprived areas because we also know that there is a higher proportion of young people living in Communities First areas and in deprived areas who are unable to swim than there are in more affluent areas. So, effectively, we are both increasing—or aim to increase—the number of young people who are able to swim and also challenge poverty and a lack of life skills in those areas where people face enormous challenges in life.

[251] **Christine Chapman:** Okay.

[252] **Mark Isherwood:** I won't go further because of the time.

[253] **Christine Chapman:** Yes, okay. Unfortunately, we're going to have to draw this session to a close. We wanted to talk about public libraries, but if you could respond to the questions in writing, Deputy Minister, we'd be grateful for that.

[254] **Kenneth Skates:** Definitely. Okay. Sorry.

[255] **Christine Chapman:** It's okay. I know that you've got another urgent appointment.

[256] **Kenneth Skates:** And it's a great story—public libraries.

[257] **Christine Chapman:** Yes.

[258] **Kenneth Skates:** I was looking forward to that.

[259] **Christine Chapman:** If you respond in writing, we will have on record then your responses.

[260] **Kenneth Skates:** Absolutely.

[261] **Christine Chapman:** So, can I thank you and your officials, Deputy Minister, for coming in today and answering the questions? We will provide you with a transcript of the meeting so that you can check for factual

accuracy.

10:31

## Papurau i'w Nodi

### Papers to Note

[262] **Christine Chapman:** Before I just close this part of the session, there are a number of papers to note.

### Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o Weddill y Cyfarfod Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the Remainder Meeting

*Cynnig:*

*Motion:*

*bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to gwahardd y cyhoedd o weddill y exclude the public from the cyfarfod yn unol â Rheol Sefydlog remainder of the meeting in 17.42(vi).*

*accordance with Standing Order 17.42(vi).*

*Cynigiwyd y cynnig.*

*Motion moved.*

[263] **Christine Chapman:** I'd like now to invite the committee to move into private session for the remainder of the meeting. Are you happy with that? Okay. Thank you.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.*

*Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 10:32.*

*The public part of the meeting ended at 10:32.*