



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

Cofnod y Trafodion The Record of Proceedings

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[The Public Accounts Committee](#)

15/03/2016

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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

Mohammad Asghar Bywgraffiad Biography	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Jocelyn Davies Bywgraffiad Biography	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Mike Hedges Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Sandy Mewies Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour
Darren Millar Bywgraffiad Biography	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Conservatives (Committee Chair)
Julie Morgan Bywgraffiad Biography	Llafur Labour

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Mark Jones	Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru Wales Audit Office
Alistair McQuaid	Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru Wales Audit Office
Matthew Mortlock	Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru Wales Audit Office
Huw Vaughan Thomas	Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru Auditor General for Wales

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

Fay Buckle	Clerc Clerk
Claire Griffiths	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Joanest Varney-Jackson	Uwch-gynghorydd Cyfreithiol Senior Legal Adviser

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 09:00.
The meeting began at 09:00.

Cyflwyniadau, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Darren Millar:** Good morning, everybody. Welcome to today's meeting of the Public Accounts Committee. Just the usual housekeeping notices reminding every Member and those contributing to today's proceedings that the National Assembly for Wales is a bilingual institution and that we should all feel free to contribute to its proceedings through either English or Welsh, as we see fit. If we can all turn off our mobile phones or switch them into 'silent' mode so that they don't interfere with the broadcasting equipment. Obviously, in the event of a fire alarm, we should follow the directions of the ushers.

[2] We haven't received any additional oral declarations of interest other than those that have been declared during the course of the various inquiries that we've embarked upon as a committee. So, if we do have any other declarations to make as Members, we can raise those as we hit them on the agenda item.

[3] We've received two apologies this morning—one from Aled Roberts and one from Jenny Rathbone.

[4] **Mike Hedges:** Can I make a third apology? I'll have to leave at quarter to eleven, if we haven't finished.

[5] **Darren Millar:** Thank you, Mike.

09:01

Papurau i'w Nodi Papers to Note

[6] **Darren Millar:** Item 2, then: papers to note. We've got a number of papers in the packs. We've got a letter from the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport on the life sciences Wales investment fund. This was circulated to Members last week. I'll take it that that is noted. We've got a letter from Sir Derek Jones on senior management pay, just giving further information in relation to higher education institutions and their salaries. We've also got a letter from Dr Andrew Goodall relating to our work on the Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board and our recent report on that.

Can I take it that those are noted?

**Cronfa Buddsoddi Cymru mewn Adfywio: Trafod ymateb Llywodraeth
Cymru i Adroddiad y Pwyllgor
Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales: Consideration of the Welsh
Government's response to the Committee's Report**

[7] **Darren Millar:** Item 3, then: the regeneration investment fund for Wales. We've had a letter from the—

[8] **Jocelyn Davies:** I shouldn't be here for this item.

[9] **Darren Millar:** Okay. Thank you.

[10] We've had a letter from the Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty, along with an annex, detailing the Welsh Government's response to our report on the regeneration investment fund, and we've also had a commentary on that with some advice from the Auditor General for Wales. It is quite a positive response to our report, acknowledging the failures that took place in the way that that fund was managed and established. All of our recommendations have been accepted by the Government, bar one, of course, which is a matter for the National Assembly for Wales and our successor committee. Huw, did you want to touch on anything particular at all?

[11] **Mr Thomas:** No. As I said in my letter, the response from the Government is largely positive in terms of the recommendations. There are four recommendations that are referred to, which committee members will see represent similar themes that have cropped up in previous inquiries. I do think that it may be useful, before the end of this Assembly term, to write to Derek Jones as principal accounting officer in order to just make sure that these are being addressed and can be reported to the next Assembly.

[12] **Darren Millar:** There are also some timetable issues as well. There have been no timescales attached to the Government's response on some of those recommendations—

[13] **Mr Thomas:** That's true.

[14] **Darren Millar:** Perhaps we can pick up on those. Mike.

[15] **Mike Hedges:** I don't know whether we said anything about—we talked about it a lot at the time—this idea of middle-ranking civil servants being able to wander off to attend committee meetings because they think it's a good idea. I think Derek Jones needs to bring a greater level of discipline into an organisation. I wish Aled Roberts and others were here because they would say, 'That would never happen in local government.' You can't just wander off—'I think I'll go to a committee meeting'—not tell anybody and not report back. That level of indiscipline amongst middle-ranking Welsh civil servants really is the theme that I think has run right the way through everything we've dealt with. They act as if they can do as and what they like.

[16] **Darren Millar:** Yes, and we need to be confident that that's been addressed.

[17] **Mike Hedges:** Yes.

[18] **Darren Millar:** Julie.

[19] **Julie Morgan:** I just wondered, in terms of the fact that the Welsh Government is saying that it's going to take legal action, whether that affects our debate at all tomorrow. Does that restrict us? Does anybody—?

[20] **Ms Varney-Jackson:** Can we discuss it in private session?

[21] **Darren Millar:** Happy to do that, Julie?

[22] **Julie Morgan:** Thank you.

[23] **Darren Millar:** Any other comments on the correspondence? No. Okay. Thank you for that. We will take forward the auditor general's recommendation then, just to write to seek further clarity on some of the points.

09:04

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd
o'r Cyfarfod**

**Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public
from the Meeting**

Cynnig:

Motion:

*bod y pwyllgor yn penderfynu that the committee resolves to
gwahardd y cyhoedd o'r cyfarfod ar exclude the public from the meeting
gyfer eitemau 5, 6 a 7 yn unol â for items 5, 6 and 7 in accordance
Rheol Sefydlog 17.42(vi). with Standing Order 17.42(vi).*

Cynigiwyd y cynnig.

Motion moved.

[24] **Darren Millar:** Item 4, then: motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of our meeting. Does any Member object? There are no objections, so we'll go into private session.

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 09:05.

The public part of the meeting ended at 09:05.