



Cynulliad National  
Cenedlaethol Assembly for  
Cymru Wales

## **Y Pwyllgor Deisebau**

### **Adroddiad Cwblhau**

**Crynodeb o ystyriaeth y Pwyllgor Deisebau o P-03-152 Peidiwch â  
chau gwaith Flexsys Rubber Chemicals, Cefn Mawr**

**Mawrth 2009**

## **Cyflwynwyd yr e-ddeiseb**

11 Mehefin 2008

## **Dyfarnwyd yn dderbyniadwy**

5 Ionawr 2009 (ar ôl casglu llofnodion)

## **Ystyriaeth gychwynnol**

### **13 Ionawr 2009**

Ystyriodd y Pwyllgor y ddeiseb am y tro cyntaf a chytunodd i ysgrifennu at y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog yn gofyn y canlynol:

- A yw'r Dirprwy Brif Weinidog yn cymryd unrhyw gamau i liniaru ar yr effaith y bydd y diswyddiadau hyn yn ei chael ar y gymuned leol?
- Pa drefniadau sydd gan Lywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru er mwyn cael gwybodaeth gan y diwydiant cemegol yng Nghymru am y problemau sy'n wynebu'r diwydiant?

(Gweler Atodiad 1 ar gyfer y darn perthnasol o'r trawsgrifiad o'r cyfarfod ar 13 Ionawr 2009 ac Atodiad 2 ar gyfer y llythyr a anfonwyd gan Gadeirydd y Pwyllgor at y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog)

## **Ystyriaeth gychwynnol**

### **2 Mawrth 2009**

Trafododd y Pwyllgor ddau ymateb gan y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog a chytunodd nad oedd modd mynd â'r ddeiseb ymhellach. Gan hynny, daeth ystyriaeth y Pwyllgor o'r ddeiseb i ben.

(Gweler Atodiad 1 ar gyfer y darn perthnasol o'r trawsgrifiad o'r cyfarfod ar 2 Mawrth 2009 ac Atodiad 2 ar gyfer yr ymatebion a gafwyd gan y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog.)

## **Clerc y Pwyllgor Deisebau**

### **Mawrth 2009**

# Atodiad 1

# Trawsgrifiadau o gyfarfodydd y Pwyllgor Deisebau

**13 Ionawr 2009**

**Val Lloyd:** We have six new petitions and we will start with those. The first petition, P-03-152, is in relation to a rubber chemicals plant in Cefn Mawr.

**Andrew R.T. Davies:** I am led to believe that this is a private company. Is that correct? If so, that makes it difficult for us as a committee to get involved with such a decision. Obviously, people have been affected by this through job losses and the community impact. There is an incumbency on the Assembly Government and all public servants to try to mitigate those losses. I suggest that we might write to the Deputy First Minister, who is responsible for this, to try to ascertain the action that the Welsh Assembly Government has taken to mitigate the job losses.

**Val Lloyd:** Does anyone disagree with that?

**Michael German:** The broader issue is about the chemicals industry in Wales. There are a number of problems that are having a disproportionate effect on it in Wales. We had problems with Dow chemicals recently. I wonder whether we could ask, in the letter, about the arrangements for transferring information from the chemicals sector in Wales to the Government. We could ask how the Government gets its information about the chemicals industry and whether there is a forum or body that works in that respect, and what its interests are, and what issues have been raised with the Minister. That might be useful to know.

**Val Lloyd:** Is everyone content with that? I see that you are.

**2 Mawrth 2009**

**Val Lloyd:** We will now move on to discuss petition P-03-152 on the Cefnmawr FlexSys rubber chemicals plant. I think that we have taken this petition as far as we can take it, unless Members have a different viewpoint.

**Andrew R.T. Davies:** Sadly, Chair, I think that you are correct in saying that we have taken this petition as far as we can. We have had a level of correspondence that has given us an understanding of the situation. I think that we could proceed to closing the petition.

**Val Lloyd:** I do not think that there is anything more that we could do with it. The plant has closed, and we are told that the Health and Safety Executive is dealing with it. Is everyone agreed that we close the petition? I see that you all agree.

## Atodiad 2

## Y Pwyllgor Deisebau

### Petitions Committee

Ieuan Wyn Jones AM  
Deputy First Minister and  
Minister for Economy and Transport  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

Our ref: PET-03-152

15 January 2009

Dear Ieuan

#### **Cefn Mawr FlexSys Rubber Chemicals Plant (P-03-152)**

At its meeting on 13 January, the Petitions Committee considered a new petition calling upon the National Assembly for Wales to:

"investigate the circumstances surrounding the closure of Cefn Mawr FlexSys Rubber Chemicals Plant and take any action it considers appropriate in light of its findings."

We have been told by the petitioners that FlexSys is proposing to close its manufacturing facility in Cefn Mawr and that the loss of this site will have a devastating effect on the local community. The Committee would like to know if you have held any discussions with Flexsys regarding its proposals, and if you are considering taking any action to mitigate the effects of the likely job losses?

We would also like to know how the Welsh Assembly Government interacts with the chemicals industry to exchange information and intelligence on this sector as a whole.

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

Yours sincerely



**Val Lloyd**  
Chair, Petitions Committee

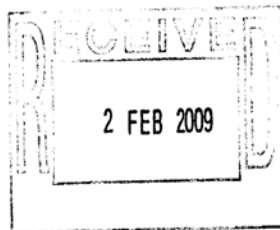
Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-152  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00108/09

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



02 February 2009

*Dear Val*

I refer to your letter of 15<sup>th</sup> January regarding the Petitions Committee's investigation into the closure of the Flexsys chemicals plant in Cefn Mawr, Wrexham.

Flexsys, owned by Solutia of the US, was formed by a merger of operations between Monsanto and Akzo Nobel. Employment peaked at 400 in the 1990's on what was then a 160 acre site but there has been a steady decline in employment since that time. In April 2008, Solutia reluctantly concluded the site could no longer deliver in line with their corporate strategy and a decision was made to cease production. Latterly the company had sought to encourage other chemical businesses to locate on the site and utilise the established site services, but with very limited success.

My officials have a long-standing relationship with the business and this support has continued throughout. Several meetings have been held including a meeting with the company's senior management team and Wrexham County Borough Council; I also met with the company's Union representatives in June 2008. We are currently in discussion regarding the future redevelopment of the site. However, there is concern regarding potential site contamination which may impact on any such redevelopment. The site is currently regulated by the Environment Agency under an Environmental Permit and the local Environment Agency regulatory team, along with Wrexham County Borough Council and the company, are working together to manage any issues. Ann Weedy (who leads the local team) will be representing the Environment Agency at a meeting with the Local Public Health Director, HSE and Wrexham County Borough Council on 3rd February to further discuss.

There are contractual arrangements between Flexsys and co-producers on site (to which my officials are also offering support) which requires the company to provide site services for a further 2 years, with complete exit expected by 2011. We will continue to work closely with the Flexsys management team to further explore future options for the site.

Support has been offered to the workforce through the Early Response to Redundancy programme (the company has also appointed consultants to assist each individual with their

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plans for the future). Redundancies have been phased, the last workers having left in December 2008 after being given 3 months notice.

Local views on the announcement were a mixture of concern for the livelihoods of those who have lost jobs, tinged with relief that operations are ceasing. There has been a long history of chemical production at the facility, which can be traced back over 100 years.

In terms of the Assembly Government's interaction with the chemicals industry, I can advise that officials have been engaged in various activities to highlight the deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 for businesses in Wales to pre-register their chemicals under the EU REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation and restriction of CHemicals) Regulation, including the following:

- Working with staff from the UK REACH Competent Authority based in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to arrange, publicise and deliver five REACH events for businesses in Wales (a launch event in Cardiff, awareness-raising road shows in Ewloe, Newtown and Swansea, and a dedicated pre-registration event in Cardiff).
- Working with Business Sustain to deliver an additional awareness-raising conference on REACH targeting the automotive sector.
- Delivering talks on REACH at events organised by the Engineering Employers Federation.
- Publishing pages on REACH on the Welsh Assembly Government (<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/epq/chemicalsradioactivity/chemicals/?jsessionid=mFcnJ5PG3XFCGV1GfFyJkTD4MhzWSHfLHJQ9rt9hn23QzqzLhptC!-1335101357?lang=en>) and Flexible Support for Business ([http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk/news/news\\_items/reach\\_regulations\\_for\\_manufact.aspx](http://www.business-support-wales.gov.uk/news/news_items/reach_regulations_for_manufact.aspx)) websites
- Cascading briefings on REACH internally to business-facing staff.
- Drafting communications on REACH for the waste recovery sector which have gone out to industry through Environment Agency (EA) Wales.

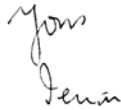
We will be working with the HSE and EA to deliver further information to businesses as REACH enters its next phase.

We hosted the October 2008 meeting of the UK Chemicals Stakeholder Forum in Cardiff, with a visit to the Dow Corning chemical works by Forum members the previous day. Jane Davidson, the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing gave the meeting's keynote address (draft minutes at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/chemicals/csf/081014/minutes-081014.pdf>) and issued a press release on REACH (<http://new.wales.gov.uk/news/topic/environment/2008/081014chemicals/?lang=en>). This was followed up in November with a written statement urging businesses to pre-register their chemicals (<http://new.wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2008/reach/?lang=en>).

DESH's regular point of contact with the chemicals industry is currently through the UK Chemicals Stakeholder Forum (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/chemicals/csf/index.htm>), of which Wales Environment Link are a member, alongside UK-wide chemicals trade associations and NGOs.



To close, you may be aware of recent press coverage reporting cancer risks to workers exposed to chemical production at Flexsys - 2-mercaptobenzothiazole (MBT). The process that produced MBT ceased in 1997 but had been operating since the 1930s. Please be advised that the Health and Safety Executive are leading on this MBT issue as it relates to worker health and safety.

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

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport

**Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM**  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-152  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/00108/09

13 FEB 2009

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Val Lloyd AM  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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11 February 2009

*Dee Val*

I refer to my letter to you of 2<sup>nd</sup> February concerning the Petitions Committee's investigation into the closure of the Flexsys chemicals plant in Cefn Mawr, Wrexham.

In closing my letter, I referred to recent press coverage reporting cancer risks to workers exposed to chemical production at Flexsys - 2-mercaptobenzothiazole (MBT). I also advised that the Health and Safety Executive were leading on this matter. One of my officials has now made contact with Mr Ron DeCort of the Health and Safety Executive Hazardous Installation Directorate, who is leading on this matter at the request of the Director HSE Wales, Mr Terry Rose.

Mr DeCort advised that the press coverage was linked to a recent report undertaken by the University of Birmingham which related to the period 1975 – 1984. Mr DeCort also confirmed that the Health and Safety Executive were aware of the concerns centred on MBT. The HSE Epidemiology unit, together with other interested parties, is presently looking at the University's report, together with any other evidence which may be at hand, to ascertain whether a correlation between MBT and cancer can be proven. Once this is completed a decision can be made, although this may take some time. The HSE is reporting no proven link at present.

I do hope that the above additional information will be of use to the Petitions Committee in its investigation.

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport

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