

Save the Northern Meadows reacts to the decision to deny Cat Lewis the judicial review into the build of the new Velindre Cancer Centre on the Northern Meadows.

The rejection of Cat Lewis' application for judicial review of the decision to build on the northern meadows is a failure of the legal system to hold the Welsh Government accountable for decisions which are not in the best interest of the public, the climate, or future generations.

The decision made today ensures the people of South East Wales will always receive worse cancer care than what is provided in England, and slapped with a higher economic, clinical, and personal cost for it. As children's cancer services in London are held responsible for failing to colocate their centres, Wales is pushing forward with what we know is a highly dangerous and backwards model of care, that leaves patients receiving palliative care in the back of ambulances to die. We do not accept this future for us, our families, and our communities.

It raises questions over the purpose of Welsh Environmental law if the Welsh Government is not going to held legally accountable against them. It shows that politicians – regardless of the Environment (Wales) Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – will not be held accountable or responsible for environmental destruction, and do not have to apply sustainable development in all they do. Regardless of what Mark Drakeford told world leaders at COP26, the Welsh government is not a leader on climate. In fact, their policies amount to greenwashing, and the lacklustre language will spell tragedy for biodiversity across Cardiff and the whole of Wales.

This issue is compounded as Wales still does not have an environmental regulatory or enforcement body following the exit from the EU. In effect, we the public have no support to scrutinise the Welsh Government, or seek accountability and justice on environmental matters.

No matter how many protected species, the variety of biodiversity, or the importance for mental health and wellbeing, if the Welsh Government wants to bulldoze green space in your community, it can do it, and you'll be charged extortionate amounts for the privilege of simply trying to hold them accountable.

Campaigners will continue to stand with Cat Lewis, a cancer patient, in support of her plight for just cancer care model. Campaigners pledge to stand with those in their community at risk of increased flooding due to this development and with the senior clinicians from across the country who have been bullied, and suffered career damaging consequences for daring to voice their informed concerns regarding the development of a stand alone cancer centre for Wales.

Cat Lewis and other campaigners will continue to fight any development on the meadows because it is the right thing to do for our community, for our environment, for our children, and for our future generations.

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